

Biblical Notes — 1 Corinthians 12:28

28 – And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. (28. Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ιαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν)

"Apostles and prophets ... The preeminence of these is apparent in all Paul's writings. See Ephesians 2:19. There is a conscious ranking of offices and functions of the Lord's church in this passage, as indicated by "firstly ... secondly ... thirdly ... then." It is significant that teachers of God's word are ranked next to the highest. It is of no consequence that the order of "miracles" and "healings" is reversed, due to their similarity."

— James Coffman, Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"1 Corinthians 12:28. God hath set some, &c.— "As God hath placed some members in more eminent stations in the body, so also some Christians in the church. He hath placed in the first rank Apostles, who are honoured with an office of the higher distinction, and furnished with endowments peculiar to themselves. In the 2nd place are ranked prophets, whose business it is to foretel future events, or to speak by immediate interpretation, for the edification of the church. In the 3rd, teachers of a more ordinary kind; afterwards those who are endued, upon some particular occasion, with miraculous powers; then the gifts of healing diseases, by anointing the sick with oil, and praying for their recovery."

— Thomas Coke, Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"1 Corinthians 12:28. ἐν, in) So, ἐν, in [the body], 1 Corinthians 12:18, occurs with the same verb set.— πρῶτον, first) The apostles, not Peter apart from them, are in the first degree; the others follow them, according to the nature of their office, their time, their dignity, their usefulness.— προφήτας, prophets) Acts 13:1.— τρίτον διδασκάλους, thirdly, teachers) Teachers hold a high place, and are preferred to those very persons, who work miracles. Under prophets and teachers are included also evangelists and pastors; comp. Ephesians 4:11.— ἔπειτα, then) The other classes are not distinguished by members."

— Johann Albrecht, Johann Albrecht Bengel's Gnomon of the New Testament, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"28. οὓς μέν. St Paul evidently (see Winer, Gr. Gram. § 63) meant οὓς δὲ to follow. But he breaks off the construction by πρῶτον, and, instead of the simple enumeration he had intended, he arranges the offices in order of rank."

— Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"First—Paul traces the first three in order of rank, the remainder miscellaneous."

— Whedon's Commentary on the Bible, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"The ranking of these gifted individuals is evidently in the order of the importance of their ministries. When Paul said all the members were essential earlier (1 Corinthians 12:21)."

— Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.

"1 Corinthians 12:28 expounds the μέλη ἐκ μέρους.— οὓς μὲν (cf. 8 ff.) should be followed by οὓς δέ; but πρῶτον intervening suggests δεύτερον, τρίτον in the sequel—"instead of a mere enumeration P. prefers an arrangement in order of rank" (WrGrammar of N.T. Greek (8th ed., 1877). (1939), pp. 710 f.); and this mode of distinction in turn gives place to ἔπειτα, at the point where with δυνάμεις abstract categories (as in 1 Corinthians 12:8 ff.) are substituted for the concrete—a striking instance of P.'s mobility of style; the last three of the series are appended asyndetically."

— The Expositor's Greek Testament, Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12:28.