

is likely that James is addressing those who thought themselves qualified to teach, not necessarily those who were functioning in the office. Whoever they were they were approaching the task of teaching with the wrong spirit and thus with an earthly rather than heavenly wisdom.

R. W. Dale expresses his disdain for the display of such wisdom in the church and underlines this warning:

This is a dreary and depressing passage. It reminds us that the joy and strength of the churches of apostolic times were impaired by the very spirit and temper which have desolated the religious life of so many churches in later generations. Even in those early days, there were men who had a measureless self-conceit, a bitter jealousy of those whom their brethren regarded with affection and trust, an arrogant confidence in their own opinion and their own judgment; men in whom there was very little of the spirit of Christ, but who were quite certain that they, and they alone, had the mind of Christ; men who were resolved, whatever might come of it, to force upon the Church their own beliefs, either with regard to doctrine or practice; who made parties in the Church to carry out their purposes, held secret meetings, flattered those who stood by them as being faithful to the conscience of Christ, and disparaged the fidelity of all who differed from them. Even then such men broke up the peace of churches, and in the confusion which they created many wicked things were said, and many wicked things were done. These men had power, real power of a kind, but it was not a wisdom that came 'from above.' They showed the same kind of faculty that is possessed by men whose ambition is wholly earthly and unspiritual; they practiced the same arts. Their power was a real power; but it was 'earthly, sensual, devilish.' The passage stands on the pages of the Epistle as an awful warning to the Church of every generation.<sup>22</sup>

Dale's comments still ring true even though he wrote in the nineteenth century. As applied to ministries involving more than one 'teacher,' the warning is especially significant. Where a number of

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<sup>22</sup>R. W. Dale, The Epistle of James, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1895), pp. 108, 109.