

THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

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We must give our attention a little closely to the Spirit's gifts. Let us distinguish between the Gift of the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts. The disciples before the day of Pentecost had many of the Spirit's gifts but they did not yet have THE GIFT of the Spirit. Many Christians who are not yet sanctified wholly have marked spiritual gifts but they do not yet have the gift of the Spirit Himself. None of the Spirit's gifts are to be compared unto the gift of the Spirit Himself. None of the bridegroom's gifts to the bride at her wedding, a check, a house, a silver set, or jewelry, compares at all with the gift of the bridegroom himself, and vice versa, there is no present the bride could make on that day that can compare with the gift of herself to him. So distinguish between the Gift of the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts. These, great as they are, are much lesser than that.

So supposing it should be found that any of us have the Spirit's gift of prophesy, that is of preaching, understanding the mysteries of God's word and preaching them with unction—the gift of wisdom, or the Spirit's gift of knowledge, or the Spirit's gift of tongues, unmistakably any or all of them the Spirit's gifts, not one nor all of them can be compared with the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself to abide within us. So don't ever confuse any of the Spirit's gifts with Himself. Don't ever think that unless you have such and such of the Spirit's gifts you have not the Gift of the Holy Spirit. They had the Spirit's gifts to cast out devils and to preach and to heal before they ever received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Many persons that have the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Many have gifts that never heal, to perform miracles, to preach. They all have the power to testify but many have not the gift to preach. They all have the power to testify. Now the fact that you have not this or that spiritual gift is no disproof of the fact that you have received the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Many have gifts that never did receive the full Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now the first thing that he tells us as he proceeds to have us "not ignorant concerning spiritual gifts," is about the Spirit's loyalty to Christ, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried about unto these dumb idols; wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of Christ" belittles Christ, minimizes Christ, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Apply this in testing and proving the supposed Spirit's gifts of some that are quite popular nowadays. Apply it to various cults, Scientism, Russellism, all of these claiming the gift of a superior revelation or gift of teaching. What do you find. In Christian Scientism there is no personality at all, not of you nor God nor Christ, and there is no blood of Christ. No wapply the touchstone of loyalty to the divine personality and to the atoning blood of Christ to all that seem to be popular and advanced teachers. Apply the same thing to destructive criticism and you will find a question as to the deity of Christ and you will find a discount of the blood of Christ. This is the

great touchstone, loyalty to Christ. If any man goes to the extremes of calling Jesus accursed, merely human, or simply a great leader or a great philosopher and denies His deity and His vicarious suffering and death no matter what superior illumination, what great revelation he seems to have, that is not of the Spirit. I would amplify that and make it thus: the Spirit's gifts are all loyal to the Person and Word and Blood and Resurrection and Coming of Christ.

We have mentioned the law of variety * * * Uniformity, however pleasing it is to the aesthetic taste, in anything but essential principles, is never of the Holy Spirit. So when you get into a meeting that just runs like clock work, everything to the dot and everything in order and everything just in the same form from time to time, hour to hour, year to year, you may know you have gotten to a morgue instead of a church. You ought not always to look the same if you are spiritual. Some of you have to look serious whether things are serious or not. You must quit that. The Holy Spirit will get some of those wrinkles out of your face. As serious as life is, as solemn as truth is, and awful as eternity is, it is wonderful how light hearted He keeps us. We are sometimes in danger of going over into frivolity and foolish talking and jesting, He keeps our hearts so light, varies our moods so, and we are so filled with joy, but if we abide in the Spirit we will maintain a sobriety. Solemnity is good for funerals if there is no triumph over the grave there, but sobriety is good everywhere.

The next thing that I will note of the Spirit's gifts is what they are for, and I am going to show you right here they are not to save or sanctify you. The manifestations of the Spirit are given to every man to profit withal. The grace of the Spirit is given to me for my own salvation. The Spirit's gifts are given to me for other people's salvation and you and I don't need to be around coveting gifts that are not needed for the furtherance of other people's salvation. They say that the first week after my conversion, it was evident to those at the church (though I was unconscious of it) that God had bestowed upon me a gift of teaching. If that was so, that gift belongs to you, not to me. He gave that to me to help other folks, and that itself will not save me nor sanctify me. That is a gift that He has bestowed for the feeding of His sheep and for the fighting of the goats and wolves. Please know, brother, sister, that if you have a gift of healing, or preaching, or teaching, or any gift at all, you have property that belongs to somebody else. The Spirit's gifts are bestowed to many for the profit of all and hence you see what a responsible trust it is to have a spiritual gift. By the way, that is where I apply the next touchstone to what sometimes passes for the gift of tongues—the touchstone of utility. What seems to be a tongue is often not a tongue, but is a guttural sound. But now suppose there is a real tongue. I have been told that some do really speak with the tongues. I am not here to deny that, but I am here to tell you that there is a discrimination between what comes from these throat organs and what really is a tongue. A tongue is an

instrument of language. Now then suppose there would be a really unmistakable exercise of tongues. My touchstone of how to determine whether that is of the Spirit (for who knows but what that Spirit that has power over men's minds appetites and passions, might also have power over tongues), is the touchstone of utility. Is it a tongue that brings the gracious gospel in their own language? That is what it did on the day of Pentecost. So, beloved, the Spirit's gifts are bestowed to profit always and we must try the test of profit. Sometimes you might think that we were in danger of grieving the Holy Spirit when we are responsible for the leadership of a meeting and we repress them or restrain or check them. It is not because we do not favor shouting or expression of this kind but if this is going to divert the seeking soul from praying, they are operating unto damage and defeat instead of utility. Beloved, it won't grieve the Holy Spirit for you to control your own spirit. You want to distinguish between your own spirit that is now stirred and exercised by the operations of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit Himself. "The spirits of the prophets are subject unto the prophets." The test of profit is utility.

I will take up one other point and that is (to coin a word), the covetability of the gifts. We have often thought that the gifts were wholly dictated and controlled by God's sovereign will and that He bestowed this gift to this one and this to another and that was the end of it. That was His selection, "all these worketh the one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Let me tell you another place where the will of God is just as positively asserted as that. Jesus says, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." What did He say the next minute. "Come unto me all ye that labor." So He says here He divides to every man severally according to His will, but the next minute "Covet earnestly the best gifts."

So though the gifts are bestowed by the sovereign will of God, yet the sovereign will of God is the gracious will of a Father. He invites us to seek them. I am going to give you two instances with a view of encouraging you, beloved, to get some added gifts for your own usefulness. Not just to make yourself seem like some big one.

Dr. Keene was a splendid evangelist and preacher. He was a pastor and presiding elder before he was a special evangelist, and in all these capacities very successful. As Dr. Keene himself said, he had no gift at all in child evangelism. He was adjusted more to the adult mind and had no adaptation to the child mind and it did not disturb him much till he was now presiding elder and was in charge of that great camp meeting at Sebring, Ohio. There many families brought their children for the summer and they had a big children's meeting. He had some very competent singers and talkers and teachers that interested them and instructed them, but there were not any that had the gift of child evangelist, of getting them to Christ, and it bore heavily on his heart till one day he could stand it no longer. He rushed from the children's meeting and went to the woods and began to pray, "Oh, Lord, I am not here to covet anything for