

191225-4 Doctrine Series, The Extraordinary Gifts-CThurman

55. The Extraordinary Gifts*

The extraordinary gifts given to the church in the first century such as healing, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, working of miracles, prophesying in part, and knowing in part are not in operation today. They were given while the New Testament Scriptures were being written and then ceased.

1Co.13.8-12.

*This is an added article not in the 1644 COF.

The word *extraordinary* refers to something that goes beyond what is usual, regular or customary, exceptional to a very marked extent: remarkable. (cf. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

Extra, more than is due, usual, or necessary: additional.

Ordinary, the regular or customary condition or course of things.

So extraordinary gifts refer to what is beyond the regular or customary condition or course of things. A church's service, apart from these, is comprehended as having a usual and customary way.

By this confession of faith, we state clearly our rejection of the present-day Pentecostal (began in the early 20th century) & charismatic (entering mainstream Christendom [Protestants 1960 & Catholicism 1967]) movements. What once was a legitimate operation of the Spirit of God among the 1st century churches was revived in the early 20th century by these movements into what is now the popular practice of a false religion. While some of us might reject the extraordinary gifts for no other reason than that we were raised differently and therefore uncomfortable with them, there is Biblical justification for judging that extraordinary gifts are heretical. So, let us consider what the word of God teaches about this issue. Our main text is 1Co.13.8-13.

It is sad, but there are unsuspecting Christians involved in these movements and caught up in the hype that is associated with the present-day revival of the extraordinary gifts. Clearly God's people are susceptible to being deceived. This is attributable to the fact that

they've never been taught and learned the truth of this from God's holy word. But there is no question that those who lead in these movements are wicked men, deceivers and liars.

1Co.13.8 ¶ Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Satan, when Eve was in the garden of Eden, began his deception by casting doubt upon what God had said. He said to her, 'Yea, hath God said (Ge.3.1)', Based on the text we just read these *extraordinary gifts* shall cease. '*... whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*' Doubt is sown not over the question of whether these gifts shall cease, but rather *when* they should cease.

That it is understood that the gifts had fallen into disuse is historical proof that they had ceased long ago. That they were *revived* means that they had been dead. But also, what was revived is not the same as what used to be in practice then? No, not at all.

The Legitimate & Illegitimate Purpose for the Extraordinary Gifts

In the churches of the 1st century extraordinary gifts provided an operational need. These churches needed to know what was the will of God because as yet the N.T. Scriptures were not completed. It was through the special means of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge that they received instruction and direction.

i.e., Ac. 11.28; 21.10, *prophesying* through Agabus; Ac.13.2, *knowing* to separate certain men to the work of God; Ac.2.11; 1Co.14.6, *tongues* to

communicate to men of other nations, which also revealed prophetic or instructive information concerning the will of God.

On the other hand, what has been revived today is not of the Lord to reveal His will to the churches, but is rather a work of deception for those who remain among the pseudo-religious organizations that are in Christendom. It might still be true that the majority of the true churches of Jesus Christ have continued to reject as heretical the *extraordinary gifts*. These extraordinary gifts *add* something more to the revelation of God. The idea of extra-Biblical revelation should be *anathema* to every true child of God.

Let me make a point to prove the uselessness of gifts today. How can anyone know that the present exercise of the gifts of prophecies, tongues and knowledge run contradictory to the will of God? Someone that ignorantly supports the use of these gifts will respond that the gifts are always understood in the light of the Scriptures. In other words, these gifts must be tested by the Bible. That's the point! These gifts have no purpose today. The early churches didn't have the Bible as we do today. Today the Scriptures supply all that the child of God needs to know about the will of God. But this is where the rub is.

People want the *feeling* generally associated with the extraordinary gifts of today. They want a sign from God about what job to take, what message to preach, which church to join, what car to buy, what the best fishing hole is, about whether they should give to this or that cause, if they should buy this house, or move to another area, marry this man or woman, go to this school, etc., etc., etc. And yet, for the discerning child of God so much of these kinds of things are answered in the Bible. But remember this, we walk by faith. The Lord isn't going to reveal that I should buy a silver automobile over a black one. But the Scriptures will guide my judgments about whether I should purchase a used automobile or a new one; a car versus a pickup truck, an economy vehicle or a large one. The word of God touches my judgments in an infinite number of ways. That said, the word of God gives us the doctrine that we should know and directs our manner of life.

What was the *original* purpose of the extraordinary gifts? Because they indicated, or pointed out something unknown about the will of God in a particular situation they were called signs. We could also refer to them as sign-gifts.

*Mk.16.17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

Through the sign-gifts bits and pieces of information were granted to the churches to understand God's will at the moment.

Through tongues [known languages] the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jerusalem church was revealed:

Ac 2.1 ¶ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Through the working of miracles the Lord revealed to Samaria His servant Philip:

Ac 8.5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

Through a vision Peter knew to do what he otherwise would never have done in going to the Gentiles:

Ac 10.19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Through tongues [languages] Peter and the brethren knew the Holy Spirit had come to the new Gentile converts so that they might baptize them:

Ac.10.44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Through tongues and prophesying Paul knew that the Lord had sanctioned the re-baptism of twelve brethren in the area of Ephesus:

Ac 19.5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

Through miraculous protection Paul was not harmed when bitten by a venomous and deadly serpent:

Ac 28.3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

The Extraordinary Gifts Would Give away to Something Greater

Next, something greater was coming that would eventually superseded the sign gifts. That something was the N.T. Scriptures. Consider that 1Co.13.10 says.

1Co 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Proponents of the extraordinary gifts read the words, *when that which is perfect is come* to mean that *when* Jesus Christ returns then the sign-gifts will pass away; but is this interpretation correct?

Notice first the phrase '*that which*.' In the Greek text '*that which*' is translated from a single article τὸ, accusative, singular, neuter. '*That which*' simply means *what*. The verse could read, 'But when what is perfect is come ...' or we might say, 'But when comes what is perfect, *then what is in part shall be done away.*' The point is that the phrase '*that which*' never refers to a person, but a thing. It is never translated with the personal pronoun *who*, which would have certainly referred us to some person. So, there is no way to interpret this text so that it refers to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The pronoun '*what*' always refers to a *thing*. This is very important know in order to correctly interpret & understand the Scriptures.

For example: *2Th 2:6 And now ye know what (refers to something, not someone, which is the revelation of Antichrist) withholdeth that he [Antichrist] might be revealed in his time.*

That thing which is holding back [the coming of Christ] is the revelation of the Antichrist.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary says 'that which: the one or ones that <no income but ~ he gets from his writings> – sometimes used in reference to a clause or phrase that is yet to come or is not yet complete <gave also, ~ is more valuable, understanding>

So, there is *something* coming that will replace *what* is in part. The sign-gifts provided just a part of the N.T. revelation of the will of God?

1Co.13.9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

Prophecies, tongues and knowledge shall all be replaced by something that is perfect, full, and complete. Paul compares the replacement of the sign-gifts to a child that reaches adulthood.

1Co.13.11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

As a child grows into an adult he begins to put away more and more of the childish speech and understanding. (cf. 1Co.14.20, *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*) The illustration teaches that the means of God's revelation to the churches will go from an immature or youthful means by prophecies, tongues & knowledge to a full-aged, complete, perfect revelation of God in the N.T. Scriptures. Paul then adds:

1Co.13.12 For now (ἄρτι, presently, here, this hour) we see through (διὰ, by means of) a glass, darkly (or, with difficulty); but then (τότε, referring to that time) face to face: now (ἄρτι) I know in part (the knowledge that we presently have is partial and incomplete); but then (τότε) shall I know (1ps. fut. ind. mid.) even as also I am known (1ps. aor. ind. pass.)

darkly, cf. LXX, Pv.1.6 dark sayings; 1Ki.10.1, hard, Gr. αἴνιγμα, ainigma, English, enigma)

The last clause, *but then shall I know even as also I am known*, refers to greater means of revelation that is coming. Instead of revelation being dark and obscure, the time will come when it will be crystal clear. Not meaning that we have a full understanding of the infinite mind of God in the Scriptures, but that the revelation of God is clear in it.

2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ...

Pr 30:5 Every word of God is pure ...

So, the N.T. revelation of God went from being a part to becoming a whole; from sign-gifts to N.T. Scriptures.

Conclusion

To press the point before closing our topic now let me ask these two questions:

What was coming that could and would suitably replace the sign-gifts?

What was it that the early disciples did not have in the first century that the churches of Jesus Christ have had ever since?

The answer to both questions is obviously THE WORD OF GOD, the Bible.

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

God gave to the O.T. saints the Old Testament Scriptures. And God gave to the N.T. saints the N.T. Scriptures. (The O.T. Scriptures are interpreted in the light of the N.T. Scriptures.)

Through the history of the O.T. saints there were various extra-Biblical revelations of God made to His people. It seems to me that this means of revelation continued until the Old Testament Scriptures were completed. Then there were no more special revelations of God through the various means of miracles and prophecies. It was not until just before the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ that these special revelations began again, and they continued only until the New Testament Scriptures were completed. Since then all special revelatory gifts of prophecies have failed, of tongues have ceased in themselves, and of knowledge have vanished away. Think about this: How can the revelation of God's will be improved upon better than what He has given to His churches in the Bible? Well, the answer is obvious: it can't be.

Pv.30.5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

It is right to reject the extraordinary gifts that we see all around us today. It is right and it is best to receive the inerrant, infallible, inspired word of God as the

only, all-sufficient rule of our faith and for our practice. The churches of Jesus Christ have been shut up to this one revelation for almost 2,000 years. Outside of Biblical revelation the men expose themselves to the corrupt and deceitful works of others.