Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Spirit's True Work, Part 2
Scripture: Matthew 12:25–26; 1 John 2:15–16; 1 John 4:4–5
Code: A107

Last time we saw that a true work of the Holy Spirit exalts the true Christ. Today, we will continue by looking at another mark of the Spirit's work. The following material is condensed, adapted and excerpted from Jonathan Edwards's *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*.

It Opposes Satan 's Interests

"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them." (1 John 4:4-5)

When the spirit that is at work operates against the interests of Satan's kingdom, against sin, and against worldly lusts—this is a sure sign that it is a true, and not a false spirit.

Here is a plain antithesis. The apostle is comparing those who are influenced by two opposite spirits, the true and the false. The difference is plain: the one is of God, and overcomes the spirit of the world; the other is of the world, and is obsessed with the things of the world. The devil is called "he who is in the world."

What the apostle means by "the world," or "the things that are in the world," we learn by his own words: "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (1 John 2:15-16). So by "the world" the apostle evidently means everything that pertains to the interest of sin. The term also comprehends all the corruptions and lusts of men, as well as all those acts and objects by which they are gratified.

We may also safely determine from what the apostle says that whatever lessons people's esteem of the pleasures, profits, and honors of the world; whatever turns their hearts from an eager pursuit after these things; whatever engages them in a due concern about eternity and causes them earnestly to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness; whatever convinces them of the dreadfulness of sin, the guilt it brings, and the misery to which it exposes — must be the Spirit of God.

It is not to be supposed that Satan would convince men of sin or awaken the conscience. It can no way serve his end to make that candle of the Lord shine the brighter. It is for his interest, whatever he does, to lull conscience asleep and keep it quite. To have that with its eyes and mouth open in the soul would tend to clog and hinder all his designs of darkness. The awakened conscience would evermore disturb his affairs, cross his interests, and disquiet him. Would the devil, when he is about to establish people in sin, take such a course? Would he make them more careful, inquisitive, and

watchful to discern what is sinful, and to avoid future sins, and to be more wary of the devil's temptations?

The man who has an awakened conscience is the least likely to be deceived of any man in the world; it is the drowsy, insensible, stupid conscience that is most easily blinded. The Spirit that operates thus cannot be the spirit of the devil; Satan will not cast out Satan (Matthew 12:25-26). Therefore if we see persons made sensible of the dreadful nature of sin and the displeasure of God against it, we may conclude that this concern is from the Spirit of God.

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