

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

By Allon Maxwell

In our time there are many who have become disenchanted with a formal religion, which offers little more than the traditional Sunday "Four Hymn Sandwich", (to be taken looking at the backs of other people's heads). We have developed a system which relieves us of the necessity to look each other in the eye while we share "fellowship". By tradition handed down through several generations, our church services have been carefully structured to leave little opportunity for those unwelcome, unusual, unexpected, embarrassing interruptions, which so often disturbed the "worship" in the synagogues where Jesus was present.

I confess, to my shame, that in my earlier years I have been present in church services where, when such interruptions did occur, our response was to "preserve the sanctity of the meeting" by removing the "offender" and shutting the doors to keep them out!

What we were really doing, of course, was shutting out (from ourselves) our lack of power to deal with the problem as Jesus would have done. We simply didn't know what to do!

This sort of religion creates a deep spiritual void which drives many of us to ask what is lacking in us and in our church, that we are so obviously different now, compared with the first century church. We begin to hunger for what we read about in the Gospels. We begin to search for something better.

If we are not careful, we may begin to reject the good things that we already have.

It doesn't take long for most of us to decide that what is lacking, is the power of the Holy Spirit and the gifts through which that power is revealed.

At that point we have discovered a wonderful truth.

We have also, unwittingly, exposed ourselves to great danger!

In our search for the reality of the Holy Spirit, we shall also discover the reality of the warning given by John, that many false prophets are abroad in the religious world.
(1 John 4:1)

We are not to believe every spirit. We are to test the spirits to see whether they really are from God.

There would even be, Jesus warned us, miracles so real in their appearance, that even the elect would be in danger of deception. (Matthew 24:24)

We will not travel far in our search for the truth about the Holy Spirit before we encounter the Pentecostals and their bright "happy clappy" meetings.

This same hunger for experiential religion, which we now have, resulted in the emergence of the Pentecostal churches in the first half of the 20th century, and the Charismatic movement of the second half. The charismatic movement has been remarkable for the twin streams of Protestant and Roman Catholic followers who have embraced the Pentecostal teaching, whilst still retaining their separate denominational identities.

For these, the foundation stone of their existence has been the claim that they have experienced the same "baptism with the Holy Spirit" as those first century disciples did in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. Special emphasis has been placed on the gift of

tongues as THE SIGN which validates the "baptism" as real. (Some even go so far as to say that no one is saved at all until they have spoken in tongues!)

However, these claims are not without their problems. Many of them present us with impossible confusion and conflict. There are many awkward questions to be answered questions which we must meet in total honesty of heart questions which Jesus Himself warned us that we would ignore at our peril. Signs and wonders are not necessarily a proof of truth.

Is this "Pentecostal Spirit" really the Spirit of Truth which Jesus promised to His disciples?

The Pentecostal movement is comprised of an incredibly diverse mixture.

Amongst most of them (but certainly not all) it is now common to ignore the uncomfortable fact that the Holy Spirit is not speaking the same "truth" to all of them!

Some stay apart still, but there is a vast number who now make the terrible mistake of accepting almost anyone at face value, on the sole ground that they share the same gift of tongues.

Amongst those who claim the Pentecostal experience, most are Trinitarian, but there are also some who are "Oneness" and some who are Arians.

Lately, even a few "Abrahamic Unitarians" are also reported to now speak in tongues!

There are "Spirit filled" Calvinists and Armenians and Roman Catholics, and Sabbath Keepers, all wedded firmly to their different theologies and claiming that the Holy Spirit has confirmed to them the truth of their own positions.

There are "Spirit filled" infant baptisers, others who practice "Believer's" baptism, and yet others who reject the need for baptism altogether!

Large numbers of them embrace false Gospels, such as the "Prosperity Gospel", or the "Gospel of Faith Without Works", or one of the many other destructive lies which replace faith in the real Abrahamic Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Most of them seem to live and die, comfortable with the lie inherent in the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, taking false comfort from it in times of bereavement and never finding the truth of Conditional Immortality.

There are also other vital differences.

It is significant, I believe, that I have almost never found the true faith of Abraham, anywhere amongst them.

All of this is confusion a confusion which is compounded by one further major problem, which we may not ignore. Almost without exception, they regard our own "Abrahamic Unitarianism" and our rejection of the Trinity (or Oneness or Arianism, as the case may be) as a heresy which places us outside the limits of acceptable Christianity!

But all of these speak in tongues, and they all tell us that their gift is from the same Spirit of Truth, and they all tell us that we also need to speak in tongues, in order to be real Christians like them!

WHY SHOULD I ACCEPT AS REAL, any spirit which labels as heresy, what in all honesty before God, I know to be truth?

Why should I accept that anyone who actively rejects important truth, has gifts from the Spirit of Truth, given to bear witness to Truth?

Why should I believe that Jesus is confirming their dangerous errors, through any sign or wonder offered in support of their claims?

It is much more likely that such signs and wonders are amongst those described in [Deuteronomy 13:1-4](#).

The conclusion that I have reached about all this, is simple and Biblical. I no longer believe every testimony I hear about gifts of the Holy Spirit, or about signs and wonders.

I will question, prayerfully, the source of any "power", any miracle, and any answer to prayer, until I know whether it is truly from God or not. I will test all such claims by the standard of Biblical truth; I will accept only what can withstand the twofold test of harmony with Scripture and confirmation by independent, reliable, honest witnesses.

I will ask for THE TRUTH until it is given to me. I will search for truth until I know I have found it. I will continue to knock until the door of heaven is opened to me and I enter into total harmony with the Son of God who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.

I will expect that God will honour my reliance on Him to open my eyes and ears to recognise nothing else and nothing less than His Eternal Truth.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

We must never allow ourselves to forget that this Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, given to guide us to all truth. ([John 14:17 & John 16:13-15](#))

We must be careful here. I do not believe that this guarantees instant infallibility.

However, it surely must mean that those who are filled with the Spirit of Truth will not be found actively promoting dangerous lies!

It is given to call to remembrance the things that Jesus spoke. ([John 14:26](#))

This has been done already, for those who wrote the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament.

It will be repeated for us when the Holy Spirit directs us to those same words, and quickens them to us, to call to remembrance what we also have heard from Jesus.

The Holy Spirit will NEVER present as TRUTH, anything which contradicts the words of Jesus, adds to them, explains them away, or classifies them as non-essential.

THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO JESUS IS

The Holy Spirit will NEVER say that Jesus is part of a Triune God, or that Jesus is the "oneness" God, or that Jesus is the Arian pre-existent spirit.

The foundation Truth on which the true church is built, is the TRUTH that the Son of Man is also the Son of God. ([Matthew 16:13-18](#)) Whilst all of those three theologies pay lip service to that concept they do in effect, render it meaningless by making Him into something which can be neither really a Son, nor a man.

Jesus Himself said that His Father is the ONLY TRUE GOD. ([John 17:3](#)). THAT is the truth which the real Holy Spirit will call to mind!

Indeed, one of the very specific tests for the validity of the Holy Spirit, is what it says about this question. The Trinity, the Arian doctrine, and the Oneness teaching are ALL modern forms of that first century spirit of Antichrist which said that Jesus was not a real man. ([1 John 4:1-3](#))

John says that no lie is of the Truth, ([1 John 2:21](#)), and that any spirit which insists that Jesus is not really a man, is NOT the Spirit of Truth. Rather, It is the spirit of error. ([1 John 4:6](#))

Should we not be cautious about any Spirit which teaches any form of this lie?

THE TRUTH ABOUT OBEDIENCE

When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, the promise WAS conditional! The promise was for the truly repentant, who are baptised for remission of their sins. ([Acts 2:38](#))

It was NOT for those who baptise infants without either belief or repentance.

It was not for those who teach that baptism is not essential for salvation.

It was not for those who are baptised believing a false gospel.

It was not for those whose "repentance" ignores the teaching of Jesus about obedience.

The promise was for those who love Jesus and obey Him. ([John 14:15-17](#))

Jesus did not leave us in any doubt about what He meant by "Obedience". His commandments are clearly and simply defined in the Gospels, especially in the Sermon on the Mount.

They are far more than a new legal code replacing an old one. They actually define the NEW NATURE, created in those who are born of the Spirit, which finds expression in the fruit of the Spirit.

They teach us what we will become when we have been transformed into the likeness of God, by the Spirit of God. ([1 Corinthians 3:16-18](#)). They lead us into the TRUTH about what we must become in order to know God and receive Eternal Life.

In conversation with those who speak in tongues, (and also those who don't!), I have found few who are really interested in the costly radical obedience to the Sermon on the Mount, which lies at the very heart of the teaching of Jesus about repentance, as a condition of entry to the Kingdom of God. I have met too many who explain away the Sermon on the Mount, whose teaching pays lip service to Jesus, but actually amounts to rebellion against Him.

The personal challenge in this condition invites us to hunger and thirst after righteousness until we are filled to eternal satisfaction. ([Matthew 5:6](#)). It invites us to seek that quality of love for Jesus which really does obey.

It is people such as this who are promised the Holy Spirit and no other.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Nowhere did Jesus ever say that speaking in tongues was THE ONE ESSENTIAL SIGN of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Nor did any New Testament writer!

We need to remember that for all who are baptised into the one true body of Christ, God gives gifts as He chooses, and not as our own fallible human wills demand. Paul said that in [1 Corinthians 12:11-13](#). Paul also said that NOT ALL SPEAK IN TONGUES! That is found in [1 Corinthians 12:27,31](#).

Thus, tongues CANNOT be the infallible sign of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Any so-called Spirit which insists otherwise cannot be the SPIRIT OF TRUTH which Jesus promised!

CONCLUSION

This paper is NOT intended to be a treatise defining ALL Truth!

Rather, the intention here is to encourage all of us in our own personal dedication to Truth, so that we can avoid some of the dangers inherent in Pentecostalism, and by avoiding the LIE, be more open to the one who is Himself, THE TRUTH.

I pray God that this may be so for those who read these words.
