

Try the Spirits (II)

By Rev. J. Kortering

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” I John 4:1a

Shall we try to run away from it all and nurse our wounded spirits in the bowels of past glories? No, my friend, that may seem appealing, but that is not the calling of the faithful church. Rather, the church of Christ Jesus is to enter into the storm as a battleship that is anchored firmly to the rock of Ages, our Lord Jesus Christ as He revealed Himself to us in His Word. Only then can we oppose the enemies of the truth, and sound forth in clear and certain words the pure preaching of the Gospel and not be dashed to pieces on the rocks of unbelief. When we do this we can be certain that our eye will be focused upon the beacon light of God that directs us safely to the Haven of Rest.

The faithful church must try the spirits whether they be of God!

We are confronted on every hand by the false spirit, the spirit of anti-christ.

This spirit is a triple-headed monster. In the first place, this evil spirit is strategically directed by the personal devil. Ever since the devil was cast out of heaven, upon the ascension of Jesus Christ, he is busy persecuting the “woman which brought forth the man child... and to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Rev. 12:13-17. The devil uses as his emissaries the heathen world of unregenerate men. Psalm 2:2, 3 describes this form of attack, “The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.” It is furthermore evident from Scripture, that not only the devil and heathen kings oppose the church, but also many who pose as “christians,” who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. II Timothy 3:5. We read in II Thess. 2:3, 4, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called god, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” This text indicates to us that the spirit of anti-christ will be manifest in the midst of the church, assuming a pious and religious form. The nominally christian church will produce this “son of perdition.”

This spirit of anti-christ is in opposition to the true God and to His Christ. Very cleverly he directs his line of attack not in bluntly saying there is no God and there is no Christ, rather he changes the Scriptural idea of God and Christ into one that flatters fallen man. The truth of the sovereignty of God and the binding power of His divine law upon every creature lowers man into the dust. The spirit of anti-christ is determined to change this. He comes with flattering words and presents a god that is loving to all creatures and would like to bring all creatures into his kingdom in only they let him. God is a universal father according to this spirit of anti-christ. His fatherhood is presented to us in His son Jesus Christ. Jesus did not come to atone for the sins of His elect, no, this spirit tells us that Christ came to teach and show us by very deed how we are to live together. Basically this spirit of antichrist denies Christ! It is anti, against Christ. The belief of anti-christ is that Man with a capital M, especially in the Man Jesus, is able to overcome the curse of death by his own cunning ways, by scientific advancement, by social evolution, by international diplomacy. Yes, we are to look for the kingdom of God upon earth, as all men will eventually beat their spears into plowshares and their swords into pruning hooks. We are to concentrate upon feeding the earth’s millions, instead of trying to destroy them. We are to remove racial prejudice, and not distinguish between the black race or the white race, rather we are to speak of the human race. We are not to categorize men by religious affiliation, we are not to speak of Protestant or Roman Catholic, rather of the one universal church of Christ. The ecumenical spirit reasons that the five main religions of the world are basically alike. Whether one is a Buddhist, a Confucianist, a Mohammedan, a Hindu, or a Christian, one thing is common to all, they all have a great leader, they all advocate human decency, therefore they all must live in peace together. The only difference between the world’s great religions is that of geographical origin. Essentially they are all alike.

Neither is it strange that the faithful church will not be allowed to live in the sphere of this false spirit of anti-christ. Perhaps you observe that if this spirit is so genial, they will certainly permit the true church to live alongside the rest of the religions of the world. If this is your conclusion, it is wrong. The reason is simple. All the world's religions including false christianity, agree in this, that the main ideal of man is to establish the kingdom of peace in this world through the means of universal brotherhood. The true Christian church cannot agree with this. The faithful church must condemn this false view of history. The Gospel of Christ is not universal brotherhood through a general fatherhood of God. It is that man is fallen into sin and an object of divine wrath. The only hope for fallen man is that his sins are covered by the redemptive blood of Jesus Christ. Because this is the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, the true church is forced to condemn the sinful approach of the false church, she must expose this as the lie, and without wavering refuse to cooperate with any program that advocates this false gospel.

Because the true church cannot compromise and speak the same language as the spirit of anti-christ, anti-christ will oppose the faithful church.

This is happening today. It is important that we are able to discern this great struggle. Right now the spirit of antichrist is using a soft approach in her attempt to destroy the church. It stands to reason that even as Nebuchadnezzar offered to the three friends of Daniel another opportunity to bow down to the beast, so today, the spirit of anti-christ would rather overcome the true church with subtlety than outward bloodshed. History shows us clearly the line of attack. First the devil lulls the church to sleep, his pet expression is, "It doesn't make any difference what you believe, just so you believe." Lethargy, doctrinal indifference, gross ignorance of the Word of God, constitute the first signs of the false spirit creeping into the church.

Next, if we are no longer concerned about the Bible, the archenemy lays his attack upon the Word of God itself. Of course, if he is to destroy the church, he knows all too well that he has to destroy the principle truth that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. The devil smiles when he hears seminary professors and future ministers cutting the Bible to pieces, calling one part myth and another part fable. When he has thoroughly poisoned the church with this lie, then the conclusion inevitably follows, the lie is sown and no one can keep it out. Soon the very fundamental truths of the Word of God are being denied. Creation is replaced by evolution. The fall of Adam is considered to be a story about pre-historic man. The miracles are storied that excite the imagination of children. The truth of the virgin birth points out in "mythological dress" that Christ was born with "heavenly" ambitions. You see, when the lie is made to be the "truth" then the "church" has become false and the spirit of Christ no longer dwells there. Rev. 2:5

It is important that we try the spirits.

There is only one true spirit, that is the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ poured out upon the church on Pentecost. The Spirit of truth that dwells in the church maintains the gospel of truth. Principally that Gospel centers in Jesus Christ. The faithful church preaches the gospel that salvation is realized only through the cover of the atoning blood of Christ. God eternally willed to glorify Himself in the salvation of His church through Jesus Christ. In the counsel of election, He decreed that the whole church would be redeemed unto glory through Jesus Christ. That salvation has been accomplished. Principally that salvation is realized at the cross. All the elect have been redeemed for Christ rose from the dead. This resurrection was God's seal of approval upon Christ's perfect work. This Christ, who knows His sheep with an everlasting love, now sends forth the call of the gospel to efficaciously draw all those for whom He died into the perfect fold of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whence do we know this spirit? Only one place my friend, that is in the Word of God. The bible is the inspired Word of God. Because God inspired the Word, it is infallible, without error. All the truth of salvation is written clearly within its pages. May God give us childlike faith to bow in humble reverence before His word.

We must expect persecution. Christ did not promise His church an easy road. He tells us, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27. That peace is not external, Jesus also said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matt. 10:34. Prior to the return of our Lord there shall be great tribulation for the faithful church, Matt. 24:21, 22. Yet, we have peace in our hearts, as Christ Himself assure us,

“Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me...I go, ... I will come again unto you that where I am there ye may be also.” John 14.

Many people are confused in our day. Some are outside the church. The tempest is increasing in its fury as the last days are upon us. May God give you His grace that you may not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but that you may set your eye upon the Word of God as a beacon that guides you to the eternal Haven of Rest.

Try the spirits whether they be of God!