

Saint Michael and All Angels Parish Church, Bramcote



Wednesday, January 13th, 2021

Bible Readings: [Psalm 20; Amos 3; 1 Corinthians 2](#)
(Each reading may be viewed at www.biblegateway.com)

Reflection: ⑨

"We have not received the Spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us." (1 Corinthians 2:12)

This week, as we have looked at 1 Corinthians, we have looked briefly at the subjects of calling, the cross and salvation. Today's passage considers the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We will look now at three points that Paul makes.

Firstly, the Spirit of God proceeds from God, as the transcendent holy "Other", not merely as a human spirit or a "world soul" of the Gnostic philosophy which was prevalent at the time. When Paul was writing. In the words of the hymn, God is "Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes".

Secondly, Paul disengages the activity of the Holy Spirit from innate human 'spirituality'. 'Spiritual' relates to the Holy Spirit rather than to some notional 'higher' human capacity. God's Spirit transcends the boundaries of the human self. Only when Paul's readers have experienced the intimacy of their relationship with the Holy Spirit can they fully understand Paul's definition of 'spiritual'.

Thirdly, the Spirit explores the heart of the very being of God. In the words of an axiom of Karl Barth, "God is known through God alone". Athanasius makes a similar point about there being no natural relationship between the Spirit and created beings when he says, "The Spirit is from God". God's wisdom is known only to God. 'Spirituality' comes to nothing unless, in the words of Anthony Thiselton, "God's Holy Spirit activates the message of the cross and brings it home afresh".

These verses concerning the Holy Spirit prompt the following questions we may wish to ponder:

1. What criteria should we use when we apply the word 'spiritual' to people or events? Is there a danger in using the word 'spirituality' in an overly vague free-floating sense rather than in a more direct relationship to Christ and the Holy Spirit?
2. Contemplation of the depths of God requires patience, understanding, sensitivity, openness and worship – do we demonstrate these qualities ourselves as we seek to grow in relationship with Him?

Prayer:

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth". So, Lord Jesus, you have promised, and so we believe. Open our hearts to receive the Spirit in all his gracious fullness, and make us sensitive to his guidance, that we may know your mind and do your will, for your name's sake. Amen. (*Frank Colquhoun*)

"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." *1 Peter 5.7*