

III. *The Holy Spirit.*

We believe in the Holy Spirit by whom God is ever at work in the minds and hearts of men, inspiring every right desire and every effort after truth and beauty.

We believe that the Spirit of God moves men to acknowledge their sins and accept the divine forgiveness and grace.

We believe that the Spirit was present with power at the beginning of the Church, enabling the disciples to bear witness to what they had seen and heard, filling them with love of the brethren, and hope of the coming Kingdom, and sustaining them in the sense of Christ's continuing presence in their midst.

We believe that by the same Spirit the Church is continually guided and empowered, and her members fortified against temptation, fear and doubt, and built up in faith and holiness unto salvation.

So we acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the Lord and Giver of life, through whom the creative, redeeming love of God is ever at work among men.

CHAPTER III. THE HOLY SPIRIT

As the Wind. Gen. 2: 7; Ps. 104: 29-30; Ezek. 37: 5-10.

Far back in the time story it must have happened many a time in the days when men dwelt in tents, trekked much under the stars, and paused to bivouac for the night. The mother laid down her ailing child and watched her through the livelong night with anxious eyes. The laboured breathing of the little one grew softer and died away. Was it death? Was life still flickering there? How could one tell? Did the mother hold her hand across the lips? Or was her hand too rough with toil, and insensitive? Did she hold her cheek over the motionless mouth? She was testing life by breathing, by air in motion. Satisfied and grateful, she passed out into the night. It was sultry and heavy. Then came the soft something upon her cheek like the breathing of her child. It was air in motion; the wind was rising. It came so mysteriously out of the nowhere, and into the nowhere it would pass as silently. She used the same word to describe the breath of her child and the current of air that blew in from the sea. It was *ruah*, the Hebrew word which means breath, air in agitation, and so came also to mean the spirit, the living viewless reality that declares its presence in the body by the act of breathing.

St. John takes us across the years to a housetop in Jerusalem (John 3). The learned Rabbi talks by night with the Master of all life about the deepest of all human concerns, the coming of God's reign to the soul. How shall a man be born again when he is old? The answer comes from the viewless breath of the night, the wind that, suddenly arising as if from nowhere, begins to fan his cheeks. The same Greek word *pneuma* is used for wind and for spirit. The mysterious zephyr comes and goes, incalculable and unpredictable. So with the visitations of the Spirit of God. You recognize the movement; but to the human eye the wherefore of it is unexplained, yet real. It can come soft as the breath of even: as a friend of Théodore Monod described his conversion: "I just felt happy in the love of God. God did to me as a mother will sometimes do to her child who has over-

slept himself: He woke me with a kiss." But that same power can descend with all the fury of a tempest casting souls like ships from ocean troughs to dizzy heights, from the "O wretched man that I am!" of St. Paul to his glorying in the Cross of Christ.¹

Ever at Work. Ps. 51: 11; Ps. 139: 7; Ezek. 11: 5, 19; Is. 11: 2-4; Is. 42: 1; Is. 61: 1; Joel 2: 28-31; Nu. 11: 29.

Among the Hebrews abnormal powers or sudden frenzies experienced by men were ascribed to the action of a spirit, good or evil. It was a spirit that gave Bezaleel the craftsman's skill to devise cunning works in gold, in silver, and in brass (Exod. 31: 3); it was a spirit that came to Samson so that he rent a lion as if it were a kid (Judg. 14: 6); it was an evil spirit that filled Saul with a mad jealousy so that he threw the javelin at David (1 Sam. 19: 9). The inexplicable and potent quality of spirit is often expressed in the language used about it. It may "leap upon," "rush upon," "fall mightily upon," "carry away" men. It can be "poured out" with fertilizing power on nature (Is. 32: 15, 44: 3). To the prophets in particular the gift of the Spirit was ascribed. In earlier days the schools of prophets were prone to induce enthusiasm and high ecstasy by dancing and wild music (1 Sam. 10: 5-11), but in the later days of the writing prophet it was rather with thought and grave utterance and stirrings of moral passion and religious truth that the Spirit marked its tarrying (Amos 7-9; Is. 6; Hos. 1-3; Jer. 1). The mood varied from the tempestuous Elijah to the gentle Hosea, from the rugged moral strength of Amos to the tender sensitiveness of Jeremiah. And, grand though the Spirit was, it was in the Old Testament ever fitful: it comes and goes unaccountably, and no man claims it as an abiding possession. As Jehovah unveils His nature throughout the centuries the Spirit comes to be known as pre-eminently holy (Ps. 51: 11).

As we turn over the pages of the Old Testament we note with what dignified simplicity and moral purity the story unfolds from the first beginnings down to the hectic days of the Maccabees as reflected in Daniel; and as we compare the literature of other nations—*e.g.*, in their delineations of creation or in the records of their boastful kings—we are very conscious of a lofty ethical

¹ Cf. *ERE* vol. iv. art. 'Conversion.'

strain in the deposit of the Hebrew genius. Where can we find utterances of such deep and moving quality as are provided by the Psalms? We become aware of a gracious Spirit at work there in these singers of Israel as in the prophets. What is the meaning of this distinctiveness in a whole literature? And in the facts of their history as well as in their interpretation of that history there is the sense of a leading and guiding power, of a redeeming and purifying fire, that constrains one to exclaim: Surely a Presence was there through all the years, not always seen and known, but ever moving in the shadow! The Old Testament itself is a proof of the reality of the Spirit of God; as is also the whole story of the uniqueness of Hebrew development, not towards power or culture like other nations, but simply and frankly towards the knowledge of the Living God and the clearer vision of His coming Kingdom.

With Power at the Beginning. Luke 1: 35; Matt. 3: 13-17; Matt. 12: 28; Mark 3: 28-29; John 14: 16ff.; John 15: 26ff.; John 16: 7ff.

Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels has remarkably little to say directly on the Holy Spirit. He recognizes the truth that we have just noticed, that the Spirit of God is behind the rich legacy of the Psalter: "David himself said in the Spirit" (Mark 12: 36; Matt. 22: 43). The part that the Spirit played in emergencies when His presence was removed from the disciples, as in the early history of the Church, is forecast in Mark 13: 11; Matt. 10: 20; Luke 12: 12. One late version, in Luke, of the Lord's Prayer instead of "Hallowed be thy name" reads "Send thy Holy Spirit upon us," and there is the Lucan version of the saying about prayer: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (11: 13). But there is one pre-eminently clear and unmistakable pronouncement—that the unforgivable sin is sin against the Holy Ghost. What is this unforgivable sin? It is to see His good deeds and call them the work of Satan—the sin of deliberate resistance to the truth as we know it in our souls, a stubborn obstinacy that calls good evil and falsehood truth rather than acknowledge our defeat (Mark 3: 28-30; Matt. 12: 31-32; Luke 12: 10). That saying is the key to understanding the fewness of His words about

the Spirit. There was no call to speak much of it, because its presence was obvious in all He said and did. "If I by the Spirit (or finger) of God cast out demons, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" (Matt. 12: 27; Luke 11: 20). At the baptism under John the Spirit came to rest upon Him, and from that moment onward the beauty, strength, tenderness, and intensity of His daily life found their explanation in the continuing presence of the Spirit of God. In the experience of other men the heavenly visitant came and went; with Him it remained and shone so conspicuously from His words and deeds that not to acknowledge its presence was to turn one's back upon the Living God.

But perhaps even the disciples had not fully understood the source of His strength. They were to recognize the divine reality only when bitter need came upon themselves. As a young man often fails to mature while his parents are at his side but, when death takes away his father, rises suddenly to responsibilities and capacities his timid nature had never suspected, so with the disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16: 7). These apostles were to be like men on trial before an accusing world, and they would need an advocate at their side, a power that would clarify the truth of life for them.

Enabling the Disciples. John 20: 19-23; Acts 2; Acts 4: 31-37; Acts 5: 3, 32.

The Fourth Gospel does not own a time when the bereaved disciples did not know the sustaining of the Spirit. It is the first act of Jesus when He returns to them gathered behind closed doors for fear of the Jews: "Peace be unto you . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20: 19-22). And who can doubt that there was a Presence with them in the hours of bewilderment, grief, and prostration, as they groped their way out of darkness into light, out of the dull stupor of astonishment and desolation into the gladdening knowledge that made even gloom-set Thomas exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"?

But it is on the dazzling day of Pentecost that the remembrance of the Church has ever been focussed (Acts 2). That stands out in Christian history as the real birthday of the Christian Church, the advent of the Holy Ghost with power. It is not to

be dismissed as merely a case of mass hysteria, a flare up of emotional exuberance in a company of startled men and women. That day must be known by its fruits, and its fruit was the realization that God is God not of the dead but of the living; the Holy Ghost is a power that turns the world upside down. "As in the earth's core, so in the core of every vital religion lives a fire; on occasion it will break the crust of decent routine and will excite the terror or the laughter of the 'rational.' Yet without this fire there would be no spiritual life, and without its volcanic outbursts there would be none of life's cleansing and renewal."

The crucifixion of Jesus took place at Passover time, and we can imagine with what sadness of heart His disciples and other followers had sought to gather up once again the broken strings of life. Most had scattered to their homes, and the precious fellowship was broken into fragments. Yet there must have been meetings of friends with friends and communings like that of Cleopas and his companion on the way to Emmaus in the melancholy strain: "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." It was now the month of May, the unlucky month when no marriages took place to gladden the family and village life. It was the busy season of the ingathering of the grain harvest. But surely in the fields parables as Jesus told them were recalled and experiences exchanged. News must have travelled of the visions to the disciples, and a breath of hope and the thrill of surprise quickened even in shadowed souls a wondering and expectation. Thus seven long weeks passed away and then came Pentecost, so called because it was the fiftieth day from the offering of the first sheaf of firstfruits at Passover time (Lev. 23: 15-16). It was one of the great festivals that brought Jews from all lands to keep tryst in the Temple, and for the first time since the tragedy of Calvary Christian sympathizers from all parts had opportunity of coming together again. Kindlier seas and spring weather made it possible for many of the faithful to come from the greater distances of the Dispersion, and thus it was a more cosmopolitan company than gathered at Passover time. It was really a joyous harvest thanksgiving, and on this occasion Providence had marked it out to celebrate the beginning of a new and richer harvest.

^a Andrew Lang, in his biography of Lockhart, quoted in J. Moffatt, *Jesus Christ the Same*, p. 63.

By what planning or mysterious prompting the adherents of the Christian hope came together in one place we do not know. Soon after dawn, as good Jews, they would find themselves in the Temple for the morning sacrifices, and thereafter by a common impulse they sought each other's company in a generous home such as that of John Mark's mother, perhaps in the upper room of sacred memory; and there they would give themselves to prayer and worship, not breaking their fast until noon. Testimonies would be given by those who had seen the Lord, and new insight and hope would spring in the bewildered and wondering questioners as disciples recalled the Master's great utterances and showed how prophecy shed light on the strangely moving sequence of events. Then came the unexpected, the invasion by the Spirit of God, sweeping away all doubts and fears and rousing the whole assembly to heights of vision and expectation.

The psychological preparation, the tension of these long weeks of suppressed hopes and of wonders afoot, and then the eruption of gladness and thanksgiving in one cataclysmic experience—all that we can dimly discern. But there is an overplus that we cannot explain. There was the return of boldness and conviction to those who in panic had forsaken the cause and fled; there was the illumination of soul that changed a forlorn hope into a Gospel; there was the sense of power that swept unlettered men into confident and ardent testimony; there was an impetus that transformed a broken remnant into a fellowship able to consolidate and establish its life in the very heart of hostile Judaism. Leadership does not come to a man like Peter out of nothing, nor does the will to follow fall easily upon men who were so lately rivals for place and position. Most remarkable was the voluntary selling of property and the coming together in a communal family life of those who had not been lacking in either the acquisitive or the class spirit (Acts 2: 42ff.). Disciples who had been stubborn enough learners under Jesus became teachers, and a spontaneous flow of prayer and devotion inevitably centred in the breaking of bread. We might accuse Luke of painting too idyllic a picture; but we have to admit he does not suppress or extenuate: do we not read of Ananias and Sapphira caught in their fraudulent designs and of bickering between the Hellenists and the Palestinians? What emerges here is life on a new level, life that carried forward through misunderstanding and persecution, life

that illuminated the minds of a Philip and a Stephen just as it opened the heart of a Barnabas, life so conspicuous that authority had to take steps to stamp it out, life so challenging that an ardent young Rabbi like Saul of Tarsus thought it must become the consuming concern of his days to hunt out and destroy its representatives already raising their heads as far away as Damascus. Yes, so swift was this current that Saul himself was speedily drawn into it. Onlookers must have marvelled at the momentum of this movement. It flowed relentlessly on across the frontiers of Palestine and Syria into Asia, Macedonia, Greece, and Rome. And still it moves irresistibly: the Christian Church has never stood still through all the centuries.

This was obviously a superhuman force. Starting out from a group of Jews, the proudest and most aloof of peoples, to whom the common contacts of daily life with other nations had been reckoned defiling in the sight of God, this movement yet opened its heart to all the races of earth. Age-long enmities and ancestral feuds were buried in this fellowship. Class division was broken down, slave and master met on the same platform, women were received on the same terms as men. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28; Eph. 2: 12ff.). Springing from a nation that centred its religion in the holiness of God that none might draw near save by the stated ritual of Judaism, and cherishing the belief that all the nations would yet come to her to learn her law, this movement changed the emphasis to the love of God, proclaimed His will to seek after and bring into the fold all sorts and conditions of men, and sent out from Jerusalem apostles of this gospel of the open door to all the ends of the earth. Such conversions only come from a divine impact, and that impact made itself felt first at the festival of Pentecost.

The Spirit . . . of God. Acts 6: 3-5; 7: 55; 8: 15-24; 8: 29, 39; 9: 17, 31; 10: 19, 44; 13: 2.

How then are we to designate this power that was the enabling and creating factor that sent the early Church on its way and sustained its developing life? It is plainly insufficient to call it vaguely a force or influence. It is a propelling energy, no doubt,

but it is more: it enters the mind and widens the sympathies and broadens the horizons; it invades the whole manhood, appropriating and heightening the gifts and graces of the soul. It has all the varied qualities of personality, and to the New Testament writers it is *personal*, affecting as it does the thought, the will, and the emotions. It is none other than *God Himself* reaching into the souls He has made and firing their world with His purposes. Nay more, it is God Himself, somehow brought into closer relationship than before, now speaking in more intimate terms, expressing His mind and master concerns in compelling ways and drawing men with bonds of love. It is indeed the God who had drawn near and made Himself known in the graciousness of Jesus Christ and was now available in a new way to His people. It was like having *Jesus Christ back again* among men. And indeed that was the truth of the matter: through this outflowing the dynamic work and worth of Jesus were being multiplied and made contemporary and effective to men in the changing circumstances of individual lives. God was in Christ, or was it Christ in God, reconciling the world unto Himself?

Is the Spirit then a supplement to the work of Jesus Christ? Does this cast the shadow of insufficiency on His life and death? No, it is rather that the once-for-all-ness of His unique service to mankind must continually be made present and potent in the here and now. The Jesus of history must be revealed as also contemporary, "the eternal contemporary of every human soul," as Dr. Cairns has expressed it³. It would be an unconvinced and dissatisfied world that merely heard that God was *once* alive and available to a needy world in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in the first century of our era. It would be an unpersuaded humanity that learned of the efficacy of a mighty deed once done by the love of God on Calvary *long ago*. There must needs be that movement of God to and within the soul in this very hour that makes real and credible that storied entrance into history in the witness and death of the Man of Nazareth. Souls that fell in love long years ago are for ever flowering forth in gifts and tokens that declare how love renews its ardour. So the Spirit must ever be taking of the things of Christ and be shewing them unto us (John 16: 14). The revelation made in

³ *The Riddle of the World*, p. 359.

the beginning of our Christian era is made real and effective *now* through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Does someone object that this constraining Spirit of God must violate the unity of the human personality? If it comes cajoling or coercing, are we any longer free, with sovereign rights in our own souls? But our experience of God's Spirit is not that He is an imperious dictator staking upon us totalitarian claims. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" sums up the facts of the case. It is a constraint like the moral constraint of person upon person. The nearest parallel that we know is the persuasive power of that ever new affection that we call love. Love is insistent, sometimes to our thinking unreasonable, but never a blind force. Personality is not disrupted by such constraint, but rather developed and enriched. In fact we go farther and claim that this gracious pressure of spirit upon spirit is creative, a continuation and renewal of that first act of God in touching us and making us men. Organisms of sensitive and delicate structure once planted in mother earth and furnished with the means of appropriating the virtues of the soil yet need the continual ministry of the dew and the rain, the sun and the cloud. So we who are set in the complex of human life and environment and draw virtue daily from the culture and activity of our civilization still need an elixir of life from above, a power that will open our sordid nature to the inflow from that higher realm made real to men once in Jesus Christ and renewed to us daily by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Happy is he who has his soul open to a universe of larger dimensions.

By whom God.

What then is the function of the Holy Spirit today?

1. It assures us that we are in the hands of a Creator who keeps faith with His creatures. God has made us in His own image and set us down with bodies of strong passions in a world of conflicting forces. We have ideals and aspirations, a dream universe in the soul of us, a will to climb and strive and set the marks of our achievement ever on higher heights; and yet we are continually baffled and beaten back from without or dragged down by the dead weight within. With failures behind us and formidable foes to right and left of us we lose heart and would

give up the battle. That is how the first disciples felt with the tragedy of Calvary behind them, their own fears within, and enemies without to discourage any further cherishing of hope in a dead cause. But God did not leave these disconsolate men without a witness. A Presence came upon their bewildered sight, and now they knew that they were not alone. They had been encouraged by the presence of Jesus in their midst to believe that God had set about the consolation of Israel. They had left their nets, the counting-house, the claims of home, and had fared forth in faith like voyagers braving the ocean in search of a new world. And then came Calvary, and God seemed to have failed them, leaving them gazing at the wreckage of their hopes and of the nation's cause. But with the return of Jesus they became aware of a breeze that was filling their sails and bearing them out of the torpid seas where they had been becalmed. God had kept tryst with them and would keep faith to the end. So to us today the Spirit is the guarantee that God is alive. Now we know that the God who burst into history in Jesus Christ has still the will to keep a world astir. Our God is one whose name is Yea and Amen, the one who is ever coming (Rev. 1: 8).

Inspiring. Acts 6: 3-5; 1 Cor. 2: 4ff.; Rom. 8: 26-27; Eph. 4: 3-15; Rev. 1: 4, 8, 10; Rev. 2: 7, etc.

2. The Spirit moreover spells inspiration and illumination, invigoration of will and enlarging of mind. What made Peter arise after all his blundering and his betrayal? What gave the others, equally discouraged, the strength to rise and follow him? The poet knows the divine afflatus. There are seasons of dullness when no idea will take shape in music and no words will flow in rhythmic order. Then in a trice comes the flash of illumination and the poem is born. Christian men have given us their testimony to like effect. The blind preacher Dr. Matheson was passing through the most severe mental suffering. Suddenly in his brooding sorrow he was moved to take the pen and write, and in so few moments there flowed forth the moving hymn, "O Love that wilt not let me go." "I had the impression of having it dictated to me by some inward voice."^a

Some of us lived through the period of the Great War 1914-

^a Alexander Macmillan, *Hymns of the Church*, p. 270.

1918, and recall the promises and hopes of "a world fit for heroes to live in," "a world safe for democracy," "a peace that would put the war-mongers out of business for a thousand years"! And we know the disillusionment that has mocked our days. Yet in the midst of a conflict far deeper and more bitter the same voices rise in confident hope: this time it will be a better order, a stable and enduring peace, a lasting victory for the democratic ideal. What makes the Christian statesman lift up his soul in fervent hope? Is it not the Holy Spirit of God that all through history has awakened men from the despondency and despair which their human plight would justify? There is an urge in the midst of Christian civilization that will not let us acquiesce in a fatalistic "Wars will always be as they always have been." There is an impetus that ever sends another flight of birds into the summer sky.

The recognized sphere of operation for the Spirit is the Church of God (Eph. 4: 3ff.). The Christian society is the temple of the Spirit. Yet we must acknowledge that God is at work beyond ecclesiastical frontiers. The Old Testament conception owned the Spirit at work in the artist who adorned the Temple, and in Samson, a man of extraordinary power. What of the amazing gifts poured out on the masters of Greek drama and sculpture? What of the pioneer spirits of Socrates and Plato? In the experience of a scientist like Henri Poincaré, a modern French mathematician, there have been time and again startling upsurgings of ideas and problem solutions when his active interest was for the moment elsewhere. Dr. Richard Roberts^b quotes examples of these and makes the comment: "That there is at work in the world an influence which may be described as creative wherever it operates, which is capable of reinforcing life and enhancing natural faculty and of producing characteristic effects in the intellectual, aesthetic and ethical fields—for this there is impressive evidence." Without entering that field of enquiry we may reflect that a poet like John Milton, born in pre-Christian times, would have been a master craftsman, but his poetry would not have had that depth and grandeur and enlargement of soul that only one inspired by the specifically Christ Spirit can know. He would be a brave person who would

^b *The Spirit of God and the Faith of Today*, p. 52ff.

say that *always* down the centuries the Church has been led by the Spirit into truth. There were churchmen who upheld the institution of slavery, and non-churchmen who had more of the divine leading in that matter. There have been times when Christians have been less than hospitable to insights of the mind that should have been recognized as the Spirit's pleading. The way of revelation by the Spirit is not that of the mechanical dictaphone, but the way of the human mind with its proneness to error and confusion and self-deception.

It is impossible to distinguish mental illumination from inspiration. They are so often interlaced. The classic example is the vision and truth flashed forth by the inspired Hebrew prophets. The sharpened insight of Stephen blended with the heightened will that sent him boldly to proclaim that new truth. The inspiration of the Spirit that guided Paul throughout his volcanic career firmed his resolution amid difficulties, but it also forged the Rabbinically trained and cramped mind into a statesman's massive judgment and far-sightedness. Delivered from the thralldom of law and tradition, he thought with a new clarity and set the issues before men with a penetrating power. It is not mere accident that Renaissance and Reformation overlap in history, and it is unescapable that there is a direct connection between the coming of the Protestant faith to England and the flowering forth of the manifold brilliance of the Elizabethan age. The revival of religion of which John Wesley was the instrument saved England because it gave the common man a new appreciation of those things that make for a nation's greatness. So also we cannot study Italian art without recognizing the fresh beauty and delicate sensitiveness that religious inspiration gave to the artist and the craftsman.

Convicting. Acts 5: 3.

3. The Spirit must often intervene to cross our human wills. Our foolishness, stubbornness, impetuosity, unpreparedness are checked by a power gentle as it is strong. We see how Paul was turned aside in his missionary campaigns (Acts 16: 6, 7). He was all eagerness to set up the standard of Christ in Ephesus, the religious and intellectual centre of Asia. But the Spirit diverted his path. He had first to cross the Dardanelles to

Europe, found his bestloved church at Philippi, discover in cold, critical Athens that the Gospel is not preached easily by logic to the intellectuals, but that Christ crucified appeals to the needy sinners of corrupt Corinth. Even then he had still much waiting and journeying before he could set up the standard of the Cross under the shadow of the great temple of Diana of the Ephesians. Paul had to learn likewise that for a good end in the spiritual life a thorn in the flesh is not removed at the first asking (2 Cor. 12: 7ff.). Many of God's servants have reached their vocation only after the Spirit closed this door and that before them. We need discipline and the frustrations that teach patience before we are ready and able for our destined tasks.

But in particular the Spirit convicts the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment (John 16: 8), confronts man when he wills to take the downward path. How often did the Spirit strive with a Judas before he succumbed to the tempter, and how often did He return after the tempter had won and peace of mind had gone! The Spirit is the Holy God warning, pleading, claiming. He must stab the soul broad awake before the angels of faith and penitence can do their work and open the way for grace and forgiveness. The ice-bound Niagara can yield no power. So with sinbound men and women. There must be a thawing of our cold hard natures. The obstructions must be removed, the dead mass melted away, before there can be the free flow of the Spirit of God. Jesus starts with that fact in His intercourse with men. "Thy sins are forgiven thee": that word alone can release the pent-up energies in the paralytic and let health tides surge again through the body. Peter was the leader in the first gladness of the early community because he came fresh from contrition and forgiveness and restoration (John 21: 15ff.; Acts 2: 38). The dynamic power that made Paul so nervous and daring and challenging a preacher can be charged to the enormous sense of indebtedness he had for sin piled up in persecution and bitter hate being taken marvellously away in the grace of a great love. The source of his consecrated energy was that indebtedness he felt towards Him "who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2: 20). He had opened his heart in faith to the stupendous news of pardon, and into that open heart the Spirit could be poured without stint. So with the other members of that first community. They had all been faithless, unbelieving, despairing,

and yet to them the undeserving the gracious God had come in the Risen Christ; so, touched to the heart, they swung back and were roused by the Spirit to the eager and ardent passion that made the first Christian history. And so in the years since, the saints have testified again and again in their experience to this activity of the Spirit. It comes dramatically often in the mission-field with the burning of books of magic (Acts 19: 19), the abandonment of slavery and immorality, and in the home field there is the eternal warfare against the practices that destroy life. Evangelism is ever the nerve of social service and redemptive effort.

Filling Them with Love of the Brethren and Hope of the Coming Kingdom. Acts 2: 44-47; Acts 4: 32-37; 1 Cor. 13; 2 Cor. 1: 22; 2 Cor. 5: 5; Eph. 1: 13, 14; Eph. 4: 3-15.

The Spirit opened the Christian era by drawing together in one place the scattered adherents of the Master. It was the first considerable congregation of the faithful that was startled by the sound of a mighty rushing wind and the appearance of tongues of flame. So the creation of the Christian society claims the opening pages of the Acts of the Apostles. This was no act of men: they were possessed and propelled by power from on high. The Spirit of the God of love inevitably confronts men with the obligation to come together and to love one another (Eph. 4: 3ff.).

Yet religion has been defined as what a man does with his solitariness. And there is much to support that view. Scripture shows the founder of the people of God as a lonely spirit Abraham setting forth from Ur of the Chaldees. Moses faces the burning bush alone. Elijah sought the desert alone. Jeremiah was a solitary. Ezekiel was a man apart from his fellows. Each prophet comes forth to make his pronouncements from a brooding silence before God. Jesus was driven into the desert alone, and Paul went unaccompanied into the peace of Arabia.

But the retreat with God is only a preparation for bringing God to the people, setting Him in the midst of society to judge or heal. An Amos could not speak except after living close to his folk, observing what was destroying society, and his aim was to bring about a better society. The Incarnation was a birth into a real home among brothers and sisters, and the Preacher of the

Kingdom drew about Him the nucleus of the kingly society. To preach God as love is to lay low for ever the notion that the hermit is a religious man. To link the Second Commandment of Jesus close to the First means that neighbourliness becomes a supreme concern. The Good Samaritan is closer to God than self-centred priest or Levite. Holiness under the old law depended on a kind of decontamination from the dust of one's fellows. But holiness to Jesus consisted in sharing the dust of the sinner and the outcast. The altar was no place to find God, even with splendid gifts, unless you were first reconciled to your brother. The prayer our Lord taught begins and ends on the first person plural—*Our* Father.

Paul's greatness was that he compassed Europe and Asia founding the finest clubs the world has ever known. But these "clubs" were not based on co-opted membership. They were societies of the redeemed, each member chosen by the Spirit of God, forgiven and called to be a "saint." And there were but few membership rules—to practise the mind of the Master, to seek much and often the Divine Presence in prayer, and to bear one another's burdens in the spirit of patience, faith, and charity. The little companies had one end—to seek and await with eager hope the coming to the world at large of that of which they had already a foretaste, the Kingdom of God.

Empowering. Rom. 8: 1-15; Gal. 5: 18; 2 Cor. 3: 17.

The spirit is the life-blood of freedom for the Christian man. The Jew in old days had the law as his guide, and the oral teaching of the Rabbis sought to provide a rule for every occasion in life, in the home, the field, or the highway. But these elaborate rules—so intricate that it takes a book of many pages to set out the rules for keeping the Sabbath—were like a heavy pack strapped on the back. The Spirit by contrast put a spring in the step. The burden was dropped from the shoulders and believers were exuberant, joyous people in a new-found freedom.

The teaching of Jesus must not be used as a new law to be automatically applied. Ours is a modern complicated social life with situations never contemplated in the time of Jesus. We cannot therefore expect to turn to the line and page of His teaching as to a lightning calculator to solve our problems. We

have our God-given moral senses, and these senses must be exercised like our muscles, or they will atrophy. We have the general principles like the stars in the sailor's heaven, and we must navigate by the stars. There is a margin always of human responsibility like the sailor's sea sense in the face of mists and storms, rocks and shallows. And human responsibility falters sometimes and knows its inadequacy. But there is always the guiding Spirit of God. As God has given us freedom in the Christian life, so He has left Himself freedom to intervene and aid us in our perplexities. The Spirit can always take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," said the Apostle (2 Cor. 3: 17). But he had to warn his emancipated converts that they must never use that liberty as license. We have to keep the strait and narrow way. His liberty is freedom to serve—to serve God and our fellow-men. As Christ's men we voluntarily enlist to uphold the principles of goodness, truth, and beauty. There are temptations without, enemies of fear and doubt within, and always we must fight to conquer. But we can fight with confidence in the knowledge that the Spirit of God is free to aid us. That is what the Spirit of God means. He is not limited by time or space. His Spirit is with us at each critical juncture to fortify our faith and keep us true to our responsibilities.

Upbuilding. 1 Cor. 12-13; Gal. 5: 16-26; 1 Thess. 5: 19-20.

The Spirit that came dramatically like a mighty rushing wind and roused a whole company to an exhilaration and boldness and speaking in strange bursts of language might well have been identified only with the abnormal and the enthusiastic. But God gave the Church the gift of wisdom and understanding, and by the time that Paul was writing some twenty years on from Pentecost he was able to set a truer estimate on the manifestations of the Spirit. He recognized the variety of gifts and owns his own ability to speak with tongues; but the chief place is not to be assigned to such spasmodic utterances, but to the quiet, restrained, and enduring gifts—faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 12-14). And when he enumerates the fruits of the Spirit for the volatile Galatians (5: 22), he lists love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Of the wilder outgrowths of the Spirit he has not there even a mention. The fruits enumerated, be it noted, are in part the marks of the individual Christian life; but for the most part they are social qualities, those graces that make for the upbuilding and enriching of community life. Paul valued the more spectacular gifts of visions and revelations; but he knew how broken, embittered, and chaotic the common life could become where the ecstatic ran riot and cultivated individualism at the expense of the solidarity of the whole. Hence he stressed the gifts that are not ostentatious, but quietly transfiguring, those steady spiritual graces that grow with discipline and restraint and scatter their fragrance over the whole common life. The testimony of the centuries approves his wisdom. God has blessed the self-abnegating humble disciples who without parade or vainglory have never wearied in well-doing. But that does not mean that there is no place or time for the visionary and the exuberant. On the contrary the Church has often been awakened as from sleep by the trumpet notes of a clamant evangelism, and in the strength of that arousal she has kept her witness through long years of dullness. God tempers His visitations to our varying needs. "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5: 19).

There is a river I see in imagination now. Far up in the hills I have climbed, tracing its beginnings in spreading bogland and mountain tarn, but never quite reaching its hidden sources. That is like the Spirit issuing from the high and mistbound places and drawing from its unfathomed springs. The river is glorious in its upper reaches with cascades of waterfall and turbulent torrent foaming between rugged overhanging crags, sites for the power house and the dynamo to create light and heat. But on either side are only narrow strips of pasture land, just enough to carry a few crofters and their hardy sheep. Such was the course of the Church in the days of Pentecost with the fresh exuberance of the first believers who had seen the living Lord—a glorious time, romantic, exhilarating and uplifting, shared by few. But in the lower reaches the rivulet has become a river of peace, slipping through fertile fields with mills and factories and farms, villages and towns, upon its banks, alive with the manifold activities of *douce folk*—a sober stream, broad and dignified, with a wealth of water that "moving seems asleep" amid the quiet beauty

of fields and wild flowers and on either side a plenitude for bird and beast on its wide acres. Such is the life of the Spirit in the more developed stage of the Church, its earlier ecstasies dissolved into warm helpful fellowship of love, joy, meekness, and temperance. Life on the upland continuously is for the few or for the occasional visitor who seeks reinvigoration. But existence on the plain is for the many who with restrained emotion practise the graces and virtues of simple folk weaving Christlike patterns daily on the loom of their living.

To sum it all up we may say that it was the Spirit that sustained the life of Jesus in its beauty, strength, and elevation; it was the Spirit that created and illumined the Christian Church, transforming the cosmopolitan company into the unity of a new race; and it is the Spirit that daily works the miracle of fashioning the new man. Finest of all terms used to describe this gift is that of Paul—"the *earnest* of the Spirit." It is the pledge or promise (in modern Greek the engagement ring) of God, the foretaste of that new life that shall be ours in the consummated Kingdom of His love (2 Cor. 1: 22; 5: 5; Eph. 1: 13-14).