

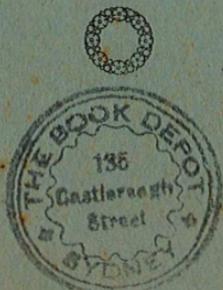
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The FIRE IN THE HEART

Studies in
THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*A Text Book for Conferences and
Bible Study Groups*

by
JOHN C. JAMIESON



Published by
BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
Office—T. & G. BUILDING, COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

Conference Prayers

Before Study

Let Thy Holy Spirit illumine the sacred page, O God, we humbly beseech Thee and as we read and expound Thy Holy Word, may our minds be opened to receive it; and our hearts taught to love it; and our wills strengthened to obey it; and this we humbly seek through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

An Ancient Prayer for the Spirit

We beseech Thee, Almighty God, let our souls enjoy this their desire, to be enkindled by Thy Spirit, that being filled by the Divine gift, we may shine like blazing lights before the presence of Thy Son Christ at His coming; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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INTRODUCTION



“Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.”

The Ancients had a story of Prometheus who brought fire from heaven for the benefit of humanity. The Baptist taught that Jesus was the true “Fire-bringer,” kindling the Sacred Flame in the hearts of men.

We are persuaded that incalculable good would result from the patient tracing of the idea of the Spirit through the New Testament, book by book. This method involves certain repetitions, but the phases of truth repeated in successive books deserve repeated study.

The investigation of facts should come before the formulation of theories. We should lay aside all fear and prejudice, and master the facts concerning the Spirit as recorded in Scripture and in biography, and seek to enter upon the same experience ourselves before we form our theory about the Holy Spirit. The Christian doctrine is the outcome of the Christian experience. This booklet provides some outlines to guide a study of the Spirit through the New Testament, and also some assignments for group discussion. The portions enclosed in square brackets may be omitted.

Literature.—“Power from on High,” by Greenfield, “The Work of the Holy Spirit,” by John Mackenzie (Student Movement), and “The Spirit-Filled Life,” by MacNeil would be helpful. “God in the Slums,” by Redwood, “Children of the Second Birth,” by Shoemaker, and “Life-Changers,” by Begbie, would show that the Dispensation of the Spirit is with us at this very hour. We specially recommend the comparison of the A.V. with Weymouth or Moffatt in the examination of the Scripture references.

The supreme object of this booklet is to promote first-hand contact with the life-giving message of the New Testament itself. “They searched . . . therefore they believed.”—Acts 17: 11, 12.

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The Fire in the Heart

Studies in the Work of the Holy Spirit

Study 1.—WHY STUDY THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Joel 2: 28, 29; Eph. 1: 13-19; Acts 19: 1-6.

After the first believers became convinced of the undying life and supremacy of their Lord, they attained a new level of spiritual endowment called in the documents—"the gift of the Holy Spirit."—Professor Kennedy.

God's life for us in Christ—in us through His Holy Spirit—that is the Christian life.—Barth.

My own thought and life have led me to give an increasing value to the experience and doctrine of the Holy Spirit.—Dr. Garvie.

The Holy Spirit means to us "the Life of God in the soul of man." We may think of God in Himself (the Father), God revealed in human form (Jesus), God at work in the heart of man, the Holy Spirit. Christian people throughout the ages have felt a joyful, indwelling energy, which they recognised as God working within, and which they gradually realised as the Holy Spirit and as personal. He is not an inner light merely, but an understanding Person Whom we can trust as the Comrade within.

(1) We should study the Holy Spirit, because the doctrine of the Spirit is a **central truth** of Christianity. The distinctive thing in our religion is not a ritual nor a philosophy of life, nor anything external, but a Dynamo in the soul, a Fire in the human heart. (John 1: 33; Acts 19: 2; 11: 16-18.) Christianity is not primarily precept and pattern, it is passion and power impelling us from within, giving us a sense of mastery and

adequacy in all the situations and enterprises of life.

(2) Because **extremists** have often sickened sane people of the very subject. The greater a theme the more liable it is to exaggeration; and unbalanced people, like scarecrows, may drive men away from the finest of the wheat. So calm a scholar as Bishop Moule once said: "I shall never forget the gain to conscious faith and peace which in my own experience . . . came from a clearer and more intelligent hold upon the personality of that Spirit. It was . . . a new discovery of Divine Resources." There is something here which no Christian can afford to miss through the prejudices created in them by the words and deeds of the unwise.

(3) We live in an age when Churches are tempted to rely upon **substitutes for the spiritual**, seeking to attract men by social benefits or by some aesthetic appeal rather than by offering them newness of life. The fragrance of the rose remains for a time after it is separated from its root, and congregations may live on by a certain "aftershine of Christianity" rather than by direct connection with the source of light. This study would make clear to us that it is not by machinery and methods, or beautiful rituals that life is radically transformed. (Zech. 4: 6.)

(4) A study of the Holy Spirit would reveal to us the dynamic and creative **possibilities of the Christian life**. Christianity is infinitely more than human striving after a beautiful ideal, stimulated and guided by the gracious memory of Jesus. It is God Himself coming down into human life, carrying us out of ourselves and lifting us to heights otherwise unattainable. Our possibilities are not measured by what we ourselves can achieve, but by what we can achieve when energised by the Spirit of God. Progress in material things is made by discovering and link-

ing ourselves to forces above ourselves. Thus man passes from paddling his canoe to being carried swiftly and easily up the stream in a motor boat, and across the plain in an electric train. So progress in the spiritual realm is made by discovering and relating ourselves to the spiritual energies resident in the universe. We must discover how to take advantage of those unseen forces which Jesus called "the Holy Spirit." Consider the possibilities of power suggested in such sayings as Mark 10: 27; 9: 23; Phil. 4: 13, and we shall see reason for the most painstaking investigation of this life-giving subject.

(5) A fresh experience of the Holy Spirit has often meant an **awakening of the soul in the whole community**. Pentecost in Jerusalem meant an unprecedented revival of religion. On August 13, 1727, in Herrnhut, Germany, the Moravians received suddenly a signal experience of the presence of the Spirit, and that little group—mostly young men and young women—became flaming evangelists, carrying the Gospel within thirty years to five continents and many peoples, creating an unquenchable passion for world evangelism. Then again, in 1739, sixty Moravians, John Wesley and a few comrades, were met in Fetter-lane, London, and there came to them another Pentecost, the effects of which have gone to the ends of the earth, and worked in England a spiritual and social revolution. (See "Power from on High," by Greenfield, pages 9-40.) The first Student Summer School, in 1886, under the leadership of D. L. Moody, was another such epoch-making time, when 100 students offered themselves for work abroad, and a new missionary movement of world power and significance was inaugurated. Similar awakenings have taken place ten thousand times on a smaller scale in the history of evangelism in all lands. The mission fields of Uganda, Manchuria and Korea, afford notable instances of the swift spread of

the Christian way of living after men have opened their lives to the special inflow of the Spirit of God. Pilkington and others in Uganda, in 1893, when their work was causing them anxiety, received a Pentecost-like inspiration of the Spirit, and the Church began to double itself. In 1899, instead of 20 Chapels, they had 400 Churches, 17,000 members and nearly 900 native agents, many of whom had refused Chieftainships to devote themselves to preaching the Gospel.

Our age needs just such a spiritual revolution to drive away the weakness of doubt and to effect moral transformations among the people. Therefore, the youth of to-day should begin to search for the sources of spiritual fulness. They should tarry at Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. (Luke 24: 49.)

Personal Thought

The many unsolved mysteries concerning the Holy Spirit need be no hindrance in our quest for practical personal help. There is much about electricity that we cannot really explain, but every day we receive from electricity the three benefits of light, heat and power. Though we cannot comprehend the person of the Spirit, nor His uprisings in the life of men, we may, every day, receive from Him light, heat and power; **light** to guide our footsteps in a world of perplexity; **heat** to warm our hearts into glowing love, and **power** to energise our wills for noble living. (John 16: 13; Rom. 5: 5; 15: 13.) Under His influence, cold, aloof people become friendly, and are united in glowing fellowship. The nature thaws. The tongues are unloosed. There comes flashes of intuition from this inner light. Power is generated, power to live a life beyond our natural possibilities. We should not desire strange raptures, but when we ponder the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit, we are on the brink of practical

accessions of insight, enthusiasm and strength. Let us search the Scriptures until we have a heart knowledge of "the working of His mighty power." (Eph. 1: 15-19.)

"Rush in, thou full flood tide of God, rush in!
Give us the power we have not of ourselves.
Lift us above the soul-engulfing shelves,
Of sordid slothfulness or empty strife;
And on thy surging waters let us win
The boundless sea of sacramental life!"

—Gilbert Thomas.

Assignments

1. What is for us the practical meaning of the Holy Spirit?
2. Why are some Christians unwilling to study this subject?
3. Is the study of the Holy Spirit likely to bring about any wide spiritual awakening?
4. What seem to you the strongest reasons for our generation studying afresh the work of the Holy Spirit?
5. Which passage of Scripture in this study has impressed you most?

(We can speak of the unseen only in symbols, and have no words adequate to describe our dealings with the Infinite, but the experience is wonderfully real all the same.)

Study 2.—THE SPIRIT IN THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

Jer. 31: 33, 34; Luke 3: 16; 11: 13; 24: 49.

To understand what is meant by the Spirit is to understand these two things—the New Testament and the Christian Church.—Denney.

Man is a vessel destined to receive God, a vessel which must be enlarged in proportion as it is filled, and filled in proportion as it is enlarged.—Godet.

When I was in college, two of us met for the study of the Bible. We wanted something to counteract the effect of sceptical philosophy. We took up the topic of the Holy Spirit, thinking we might finish it in three months. We spent a year upon it, and then felt that we had only opened the door. It proved, however, for us, to be the very unlocking of the Scriptures devotionally.—John R. Mott.

[In the Old Testament, the Spirit meant "the power of God in active exercise." In the Christian creeds the word denotes "an eternal distinction within the unity of God." In the first three Gospels, we begin to pass from the one conception to the other. We do not need at present to discuss the idea of the Trinity. The word "person" in the creeds has an ancient meaning, different from the present meaning of the word person. We do not believe in three Gods. The experience must precede the theory. The first thing is to have the dynamic experience of the Spirit, then step by step, we shall come to believe in God as Father, Son and Spirit.]

(1) **Jesus and the Spirit.**—The Spirit first comes into high prominence in connection with the life of Jesus. The advent of Jesus was heralded by unwonted manifestations. Divine illumination and divine impulses come to John and Simeon. (Luke 1: 15-17; 2: 25-27.)

(a) Jesus began His own public career by receiving a special spiritual endowment, both as a confirmation of His mission and as an equipment for it. (Luke 3: 22.) The life He lived on earth was not lived as God, but as man; a man, however, who was supremely inspired by the Divine Spirit. Thus He was in all points like as we are, living under the same human conditions and depending upon the same daily inflow of the Divine resources. By the power received from the Father, He taught, and wrought miracles. By that Spirit His footsteps were guided even when the pathway led into the wilderness of temptation. Examine carefully Mark 1: 12; Luke 4: 14; Matt. 12: 28; Acts 1: 2; 10: 38. In Luke 10: 21 (R.V. "in the Holy Spirit") we find Jesus thrilling with exaltation under the same upwelling influence. Jesus was no pale, unemotional figure, but a vital, vivid, vigorous, colourful Personality, warmly responsive to God and man and nature. In Mark 3: 20, 21, and elsewhere, we see traces of supernatural intensity all sanely controlled for moral ends.

(b) His greatest gift to His followers was the Spirit that would reinforce them for the most dismaying situations. His final injunction was that they should not take up the long campaign until they had received this supernatural equipment. (Matt. 10: 19, 20; Luke 11: 13; 24: 49.)

(c) Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit," a phrase that indicates an abiding condition rather than a temporary inspiration. Nevertheless, His habits of prayer suggest that this intensity had to be renewed from time to time by contact with the Living Source. (Luke 4: 1; 6: 12.) The masterful and beautiful life of Jesus owed its power to the unique way in which He yielded to the sway of the Spirit of God. If our Master needed heavenly reinforcement, if the men trained by Him needed such help, how much more do we in this far-off age? Only a spirituality whose roots stretch

down to the living springs can hope to maintain its freshness and power in our modern world.

(2) **Emblems of the Spirit.**—(a) **The Dove** serves as an emblem of the Spirit. (Matt. 3: 16; compare 10: 16; Gen. 1: 2.) The rabbis thought of the Spirit brooding over the waters, like a dove over her young. Here the dove signifies gentleness, and peace, and purity. This was to be the disposition and method of Jesus, and must be reproduced in His followers. (Heb. 7: 26; James 3: 17.) The Spirit never works by force like the Mohammedan, nor by craft and intrigue like the Jesuit. Lamb said of the Quakers' meeting: "I have seen faces in their assemblies upon which the dove sat visibly brooding." That is the only way for the friends of Jesus, but it takes some people a long time to understand that the Kingdom of God is never advanced by coercion nor by finesse.

(b) **Fire.** (Matt. 3: 11; Luke 3: 16.)—Dr. E. E. Anderson thinks that the reference here is to the fire of judgment. At any rate elsewhere fire is used as a symbol of God, and an emblem of the Spirit's work. Fire is more penetrating and more cleansing than water.

"Be it by water or by fire,
O make me clean."

The new order would be a time of greater intensity when there would be men with burning hearts and tongues of fire. (Luke 24: 32; Acts 2: 3.) The new enthusiasm would have a remarkable purifying effect upon human nature. Wesley said of that memorable Wednesday night in 1738: "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Henceforth he loved to describe religion as a flame of sacred love kindled on the altar of the heart. (Lev. 6: 13.) Chalmers, after his awakening at Kilmany, passed into Glasgow in the fervour and force of his richer experience, and Rosebery tells

us that "Chalmers warmed all Glasgow." The Spirit-impelled man's religion, has a spreading power, a glow, a friendliness, a zest and a zeal unknown before. Every true revival proves this.

(3) **Title.** (Mark 1: 8.)—Why is the Spirit called the **Holy Spirit**? (a) In contrast to other spirits, He is undimmed, moral purity, at war with every compromise with the unworthy. Some, therefore, contend that "Holy Spirit" was equivalent to "Divine Spirit." (b) It is His function to make men holy. He is the sanctifier as Jesus is the Saviour. (2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 2.)

(4) **Trinity.**—At the Jordan, we see a Trinity, the Son praying, the Spirit descending, and the Father speaking. So also in the baptismal formula. (Luke 3: 21, 22; Matt. 28: 19.) Finite man need not be surprised if he can find no language to express what he dimly feels about the "social life" of the Infinite. Let us not forget how **practical** a truth the doctrine of the Spirit is. (See Study 1.)

(5) **The Spirit and the Disciples.**—Jesus taught clearly that the Spirit which He had received would bring vast enlargements of life to His followers also. (a) **Inner Light.** (Luke 2: 25-27; 10: 21; 12: 12.) They would receive habitual and penetrating insight into all spiritual issues. Moreover, the lives of Booth, Hudson Taylor, Muller, Finney (and shall we say Socrates?), show that flashes of illumination come to believing men, and the receiver knows that these wireless messages from "The Beyond that is Within" are the Voice of God to them.

(b) **Ardent Speech.** (Luke 1: 67; 4: 18; Matt. 10: 20.)—The new and powerful sense of the Divine Presence sweeps away from us all paralyzing introspections and fears. The waters rush up in the once choked springs and burst forth in spontaneous song and moving speech.

(c) **Power.**—John and Jesus received a special fitness for their careers by being animated by a power from above, which enabled them to do efficiently the work planned for them. Jesus promised the same power to His followers in continuing the work. (Luke 1: 15, 16; 4: 14; 10: 19; 24: 49.) Here we have the beginning of that "sense of the limitless human possibilities in the transforming power of the Spirit of Christ," which Dr. Barry calls "the dominant note of the New Testament."

These mystic tides of energy which
 "Come from the mighty ocean,
 Whose rim no man has trod,"
 are the free gifts of a Father's love available and accessible to all His children. (Luke 11: 13.)

Practical Thought

There is no need now for us to "tarry" for the coming of the Spirit. He has arrived and surrounds us like the sunshine of heaven. But we may have to "wait" until we are able to open our natures to Him, and until our faith is vivid enough to realise His Presence. The Spirit has often to wait for us. Do not wait for some high feeling to sweep over us, but spend the time before God in calm acts of believing and receiving. (Matt. 21: 21, 22.)

Assignments

1. What may we learn about the Spirit from the emblems of (a) the dove, (b) fire?
2. Did Jesus have to rely upon the daily inspiration of the Spirit as much as we do ourselves?
3. What things did the Spirit do for Jesus?
4. According to the teaching of Jesus, what place would the Spirit take in the life of the disciples? (Illustrate from the hymn book or prayer book.)
5. Can we receive the endowment of power at once? What is the main practical lesson you have learned in this study?

Study 3.—THE SPIRIT IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Ezek. 37: 9; John 3: 5-8; 7: 37-39; 16: 7-15.

The Spirit, wherever He is, is a glowing fire.—Bengel.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus will take a larger place in their lives, and a more decisive place in history than was possible while He is still on earth.—Strachan.

“It is expedient for you.”
“Greater works than these.”

In the Gospel according to John, the main emphasis is not upon the Kingdom of God, but upon the eternal life within us, not upon a future Second Advent, but upon the present power of the Spirit. Salvation is inward and dynamic, a living spring leaping up within us. (4: 14.) By His death and ascension, Jesus has opened up for humanity a vast reservoir of spiritual forces, which give victory over all evils and circumstances; forces which are at once available for the believing heart. This “spiritual Gospel,” as Clement of Alexandria called it, represents the Spirit as a Person and not as an influence. He and not It. The successor of Jesus, “another Comforter,” must surely bring into the heart the understanding love and **personal touch of God**. (14: 16, 17.) The stress, moreover, is not upon “tongues” or ecstasies, but upon life and illumination, not upon sudden uplifts, but upon a permanent condition; a Spirit that will “abide forever.”

(1) Titles.

(a) **The Spirit of Truth.** (16: 13.)—His work is to show us the road like a guide conducting a traveller over unknown country. It is His function to show us more deeply the meaning and application of the life and principles of Jesus.

There are revolutions yet to break forth from a growing appreciation of the truth as it is in Jesus and its application to modern problems. The Spirit works not through some “undecipherable impulse from the unseen,” but by making truth clear and commanding to the mind.

(b) **Paraclete.** (14: 26; 15: 26; 16: 7.)—The Greek word, “paraclete,” means “one called in to aid,” especially an advocate or helper in a lawsuit. The idea here is one who “champions” the disciples in their conflict with the world. “Paraclete” is variously translated, comforter (in the old sense of strengthener), advocate or helper. The same word is applied to Jesus in 1 John 2: 1. The idea, though not the word, is to be found also in Luke 21: 15. Compare Acts 6: 10. “Paraclete” suggests not consolation in sorrow, but help in conflict, a meaning which is well illustrated by the victorious campaigns recorded in Acts.

(2) Emblems.

(a) **Wind.** (3: 8, compare Acts 2: 2.)—To primitive man the wind whirling leaves or overturning buildings was an impressive symbol of invisible power. It is independent of the will of man (1: 13), mysterious in its workings, and manifest in its results.

(b) **Breath.** (20: 22.)—The same Greek word, *pneuma*, means breath, or wind, or spirit. Breath symbolised the communication of life. (Gen. 2: 7; Ezek. 37: 9, 10.) “The Spirit of God acting in the human world for the communication of His own life,” the Breath of God coming from His inner Being, and passing over into us.

“Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew.”

(c) **Water.** (7: 38, 39.)—As in 4: 14, water here symbolises not the cleansing, but the satisfying and life-giving qualities of religion. Picture in the imagination the effect of rain after

drought, and realise how this water fertilises wherever it goes. (Ezek. 47: 9; Rev. 22: 1, 2.)

(3) **The Spirit's Relation to Jesus.**—The Spirit attests Jesus as the Messiah, and equips Him for His mission. (1: 32, 33.) Jesus is the Baptiser with the Spirit as well as the Lamb of God. The Spirit continues Christ's work on earth, "another Helper" to us men. The Spirit reveals the full meaning and glory of Christ. (15: 26; 16: 14.) Jesus may be to us only an inspiring Figure in the distance. The Spirit makes Him a present reality, the Christ of Glory holding for us unsearchable riches for daily living. (Phil. 4: 19.) The Spirit, like a great searchlight, illuminates the Lamb upon the throne. No man can truly call Jesus Lord save by His inspiration. The Spirit ever points to Jesus and witnesses to Him and glorifies Him. His mission is Christ-centred. The relation, then, of the "Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 11) to Christ is threefold: (a) The Spirit dwelt in Jesus in measureless endowment, as the inspiration of all His life. (3: 34.) (b) Christ bestows on His people the same Spirit that energised His own life; (c) that Spirit is the effective and convincing witness to the real significance of Jesus. When we think of the Spirit, let us always think of the Spirit as revealed in the life of Jesus, the Spirit of unfathomable communion with the Father, of joy in God's beautiful world, and utter friendliness to men, women and children.

(4) **The Spirit's Relation to the Unbeliever.**

(4) **Conviction.** (16: 8-11.)—To the world it seemed as if Jesus were a sinner, His judges righteous, His cause judged and exposed. The Holy Spirit brings home to men that God, like an Appeal Court Judge, had reversed all this. The great Advocate convinces men of the sinfulness of the unbeliever. The crowning sin is the refusal to welcome the Saviour from sin, the failure to love the highest when they see it. (16: 9.)

The coming of the Spirit was proof of Christ's exaltation to the Father, and that showed that He had been in the right in His conflict with man. (16: 10, compare Acts 2: 32, 36, 37.) The outpouring of the Spirit was immediately followed by this deep conviction of men. When the inner eye is opened to see Jesus as He is, men realise with overwhelming force their sin and their need of a Saviour.

(b) **Regeneration.** (3: 5; 1: 13.)—The new life is far more than a devotion to a higher way of living. Regeneration is a vital and supernatural act of God, the impartation by the Spirit of a divine life, a new beginning, a passing from death unto life. (1 John 3: 14.) No man can explain the contacts of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of man, but we must recognise frankly that the new life must frequently dawn into consciousness very gradually and quietly. The test of regeneration is not the ability to recall some striking experience in the past, but the fact that we now believe in Jesus and are now seeking to do His will.

(5) **Relation to the Believer.**—We have already considered His work as the believer's Inner Light, and His Support against the world and the Revealer of the Exalted Lord. We shall now centre our minds on the amazing promise in 7: 37-39. The Spirit makes the believer a channel of rich, overflowing, vitalising influence. In Ezek. 47: 8, 9, and Rev. 22: 1, the river of blessing issues from the temple of the throne of God. Here it issues from the believer. Jesus is the Light of the world, but the believer is also to be the light of the world. So the disciple, like his Master, is also to be a river of inspiration. In John 14: 12, 13, we are told that the ascension of Christ and the prayer of the disciples will open up incredible possibilities of usefulness. Here the believer passes from being a thirsty receiver to being a lavish supplier. When we consider the life of a Drummond, Thomas Charles or Mary Slessor, we see how

the healing streams gush forth when Christ is exalted. Truly, the Spirit in men was a greater blessing than the physical presence of Christ. (16: 6, 7.) How wonderful it must have been to see that Face, hear that Voice and feel the touch of that Hand! But in the new and more spiritual dispensation, mightier resources are available for us through the Spirit Himself, taking up His abode within us. Let us realise and use our privileges. Let us attempt the "greater works."

(6) **The Reception of the Spirit.**—The Spirit is the gift of Christ, but we must actively "receive" Him. (20: 22.) We receive by believing (compare 1: 12). By "faith" John means self-committal and the opening of our nature to the Divine Guest. The inflow and the outflow will be in proportion to the channel, and the channel is faith.

Personal Thought

Here are three ways of crossing great waters: We may toil at the oar. We may sail dependent on the wind. We may be carried on swiftly and easily by the power of the engine within our boat. So the Christian may be struggling on in his own strength. He may be depending on some external stimulus such as conferences and companions. Or he may be impelled by the power of God within his own heart. Reliance upon this inner personal dynamic is the Christian way. (14: 17.) (Circle members should collect and study hymns about the Spirit.)

Assignments

1. What did Jesus mean by calling the Spirit "the Paraclete"? What influences would the Paraclete exert upon the world?
2. What emblems of the Spirit do you find in John's Gospel, and what is the meaning of each?
3. What is the relation of the Spirit to Jesus?
4. Does John 16: 7 mean what it seems to say? What are some of the great things the Spirit will do for the believer? Which of these are we in danger of missing?
5. Where does the teaching in John show a difference of emphasis from the other Gospels? What thought in to-day's study has appealed most to you, yourself?

Study 4.—THE SPIRIT IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Acts 1: 8; 4: 31-33; 11: 12-18; 13: 2-4; 19: 1-6.

The age which followed the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ witnessed the most wonderful outburst of moral and spiritual energy that human history has ever seen. . . . The trumpets of the spring are sounding through all its pages. The narratives (of the New Testament) tell the story of the way in which the new life flamed over sea and land, kindling sad and weary men and women to joy and hope, abolishing enmities with love, lifting them out of sin into purity and peace, taking obscure lives and making them great.—Principal David S. Cairns.

It is surely no accident that the supreme possession in the Christianity of the New Testament is the indwelling of the Spirit of God.—Cairns.

In John, we learned that religion was not an outward ceremonial, but an attitude of the soul and an impelling power within. Now we shall see that inward religion bursting out into a generous "sharing" of its treasures through world evangelism and social service. The result of religion is richness of personality and completeness of social fellowship, and both are the fruit of the Spirit. Something came into the lives of the broken and scattered followers of the executed Carpenter, which changed them into a united and conquering society. That Something convinced them that God had vindicated Jesus by exalting Him to the throne. (2: 33, 36; 5: 31, 32.) An overwhelming sense of the Divine Presence gave a new vision of Jesus, created "the fellowship," and caused a great uprush of power within its ranks. Space will not permit us to discuss the

ecstatic utterances and other matters which do not belong to the heart of the Pentecost experience, but we shall centre on a few character-building aspects of the truth. (See "The Call of the Christian," by Whittier, and the articles by Hadfield and Scott in "The Spirit," edited by Streeter.)

(1) **Pentecost means a new era of the Spirit.**—A new spiritual energy entered into human history, an energy which has not been exhausted by the wear of the centuries, but is ever renewed as from some invisible source. The Spirit, who had always been at work in the world, now came in such larger measure, wider scope and deeper intimacy, that it was a new experience for humanity, and men spoke as if the Spirit had not come before. (John 7: 39.) Hitherto His presence had been recognised in special people on special occasions, a passing inspiration for select leaders. Henceforth the experience was designed for all believers, in all places, on all occasions, without distinction of age, sex or rank, an endowment, permanent and universal. (Acts 2: 17, 18, 39.) In all essentials Pentecost was a "specimen day" as well as the beginning of a new era. Each new group received an inflow of spiritual energies similar to that given at Pentecost, and so it was meant to continue for all time. (8: 17; 11: 15; 13: 52; 19: 6.)

(2) **The Leadership of the Spirit.**—In Acts, which might well be called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit," we see the director of the campaign exercising a remarkable leadership, both in thought and action. A small group of Jewish disciples with the somewhat limited outlook of Jerusalem broadens out, in ever-widening circles of vision and venture, into a far-flung International Brotherhood, with a world message and a world programme. Stephen, a man of singular spiritual insight, saw in the new religion the inevitable end of the old ceremonial and nationalism. The Spirit

pushes Peter into the wider work, and by giving Gentile believers the baptism of fire, supplies an unanswerable argument for the all-inclusive policy. (1: 8; 10: 19; 11: 17, 18; 15: 28.) The Spirit, a Pillar of Fire by night, reveals new meaning in old Scriptures, finds and equips leaders for larger enterprises. (9: 17; 13: 2-4; 20: 28.) This guidance comes not by mere impulse, but through the working of the mind. The leaders meet together to "consider" the issue and reach a conclusion by means of group thinking over Scripture and the facts of experience. (15: 6, 19, 25, 28.) [8: 29-35; 10: 44-48; 16: 6, 7 may be consulted if time permits.] That leadership is still an ever springing fountain of ideas. "Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things." (8: 29-35.)

(3) **Power.**—There welled up within them a "power" which enhanced all their own natural gifts and gave them undreamt of capacities for character and influence. (1: 8; 4: 33; 6: 8.) No opposition could daunt their radiant personalities. They were adequate for any situation and for every task. If we compare Peter and his comrades before and after Pentecost, we shall see better how astonishing the transformation was. (Mark 14: 71; Acts 2: 14; 4: 13, 31.) Their achievements exceeded their personality, because their personality was energised and heightened by a divine dynamic.

"Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow."

(4) **Evangelism.**—The first effect of Pentecost was an outburst of impassioned witnessing to the Risen Christ. They followed lost men with the compassion of the Good Shepherd, and the persistency of the Hound of Heaven. What they

had received was so amazing that they must share it with all men. Every disciple is an evangelist. With such directness did they summon men to decision that thousands responded in hostile Jerusalem, gay Antioch, superstitious Ephesus and haughty Rome. (3: 19; 4: 4, 20; 11: 20, 21; 17: 4; 19: 8.) Always the evangelistic heart and the tongue of fire are the immediate signs of Pentecost. Within thirty years after the Moravians had received their Pentecost at Herrnhut; they had carried the message of redemption to nearly every country in Europe and to many heathen races in four other continents. (Greenfield, pages 13-17.) Only as high tides of spiritual life flow into the Church will it be eager and able to present Christ so as to secure awakenings, and fulfil its stupendous missionary programme. (See "God in the Slums," by Redwood, and "Children of the Second Birth," by Shoemaker.)

(5) **Fellowship.**—"Together" is the keyword of Acts. The disciples became "the fellowship," "something approximating to a corporate personality" (Anderson Scott), a multitude "with one heart and one soul," one family in which differences of sex, taste, social standing and education were all submerged by the inrush of the Spirit. The "one loaf" at their fellowship meal was the symbol of their unity. To break bread together was at once a symbol of fellowship and a pledge of loyal friendship. The Greek word, *koinonia*, translated either communion or fellowship, means "sharing together." The disciples "shared together" in study, in prayer, in witnessing to the outsiders, in happy social intercourse, in generous hospitality and mutual help. (2: 42-46; 4: 32; 11: 29; 12: 12; 14: 1; 20: 7; 20: 36-38; 21: 5.) Hearts are like pieces of iron, they weld into a unity only when red hot. Where the fire of the Spirit is, there is fellowship. Suspicion, criticism and the desire to dominate, die away. "The recovery of Christendom," wrote Spencer and

Hewish, "will come not by the formation of a new party, but by the miracle of fellowship." The Holy Spirit makes that "miracle" possible, and the "Society of Jesus" becomes the "Society of Friends."

(6) **The Upward Look.**—Men illuminated by the Spirit not only look back to Jesus, the Teacher in Galilee, but they look **up** to Him as the Lord in glory. That vision of Jesus filled them with a **gladness** that persisted in all circumstances, with a **courage** and a **confidence** that nothing could break, with a wonderful sense of triumph and exaltation. (5: 31; 7: 55; 13: 52; 16: 25.) A Spirit-controlled Church is always a Christ-centred Church. The Spirit enables men with fresh, unclouded vision to see Jesus as the Divine, Living Saviour,

"risen afar

At God's right hand to welcome them."

How did these character-transforming experiences come? They came to each new group through faith in Jesus. Faith meant the unreserved acceptance of the gift of God, and that involved both a break with the sinful past and with all attempts at self-salvation. Men believed Jesus was on the throne. They yielded absolutely to His sway. They prayed. The Spirit descended. Trust and obey is the only way into fulness of power. (4: 31; 5: 32; 16: 30, 31.)

Practical

Acts 1: 8 is still our programme—power—witness—in widening circles—beginning at home. The tongue of fire is the emblem of our function. Every recruit must become a recruiting sergeant. Even in prison and in the court-room, Paul made a bold bid for conversions. (16: 30-32; 26: 27-29.) Our task also is to bring all men to a personal surrender to the Living Christ. (26: 17,

18.) That can be done best when one person in friendly conversation presents Jesus to another. (8: 31, 35.)

The human heart craves for love. Let us offer men a fellowship, warm enough and wide enough to welcome all types of people. Zinzendorf said: "I know of no true Christianity without fellowship." We must re-explore the resources of the Spirit in creating human fellowship, beginning in our own home and congregation. (Read "Power from on High," by Greenfield.)

Assignments

1. What were the essentials and the non-essentials of what happened on the Day of Pentecost? Are all the essentials still available?
2. Where did the work of the Spirit in the early Church differ from all that went before?
3. Can you find any proofs that the Spirit gave leadership and guidance to the Church in those days? How was the guidance given?
4. Why did the early Church multiply so rapidly? Support your answer from Acts.
5. Which results of the Spirit's presence in those days seem to you most impressive? Which feature of His work then is most needed to-day? What can we do to fan the ancient fires?

Study 5.—THE SPIRIT IN THE EARLY EPISTLES OF PAUL

Gal. 5: 16-26; 1 Cor. 2: 4, 5; Rom. 8: 12-17.

The dominant note of the New Testament is the sense of limitless human possibilities in the transforming power of the Spirit of Christ.—Dr. Barry.

An overwhelming sense of sonship, together with an overwhelming sense of brotherhood, which the Spirit creates within the fellowship—in these two experiences we have the heart of Christianity.—Prof. Anderson Scott.

For our present purpose we shall treat Gal.; 1 and 2 Thess.; 1 and 2 Cor. and Romans as the earlier Epistles of Paul. These six pamphlets, the latest of which was written not much more than twenty-five years after the death of Jesus, are exceedingly important because they bring us into direct touch with the beliefs and experiences of the age that knew Jesus at first hand. What do they teach about the Spirit?

(1) The Spirit makes the believer **an effective worker for the Gospel**. The Thessalonians were transformed because the Message came, not in words only, but also with the power and the conviction of the Spirit. (1 Thess. 1: 5; 2 Cor. 3: 3, 6.) The teacher may make an oration attractive by means of plausible human arguments, or he may proclaim the good news of Christ and the Cross depending upon "the convincing power of the Spirit" to achieve supernatural results. (1 Cor. 2: 4, 5.) Dr. R. G. Balfour said of Ross of the Cowcaddens, after he had received this divine endowment: "That baptism had indeed wrought a wonderful change on him. . . . It had clothed his utterances with a power that made them go

home even to seared consciences and hardened hearts." That is the secret of the true evangelist.

The Spirit, moreover, equips men for any task in the Kingdom of God, bestowing upon them the necessary "gifts" for their own work. (1 Cor. 12: 4-11.) We must not forget that the most searching test of the divine indwelling is not "gift" but "grace," the ability to live among trying people a life of glad kindness and unvarying courtesy. (1 Cor. 12: 31.)

(2) The bestowal of the Spirit **proves that the Gospel of Faith is the genuine message of heaven.** The richest experiences of the Spirit come not through following some ritual or some system of good deeds, but through believing the Gospel message and accepting Christ as the One Saviour from sin. (Gal. 3: 2, 5, 14, Moffatt.) Paul, Luther, Wesley, Chalmers, may toil after peace for years, but the inner glory comes only when they cease from their own efforts at self-redemption, and receive salvation as the free and marvelous gift of God. So also striking results come when they present to others Jesus as a Divine Saviour. No widespread and deep revivals have ever come in any other way. Celestial fire visibly approves the evangelical message.

(3) The Spirit not only gives certainty regarding the Gospel as God's way of saving men, but He imparts an **inward assurance** of one's own reception into the redeemed family of God. (Gal. 4: 6, 7; Rom. 8: 15, 16.) Wesley says of that epoch-making night in London: "An assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins." The legal attitude of anxious service is swept away by the sense of joyous sonship in which we glory in God as our Father, and our hearts are filled with the "new song."

[Only the mathematical mind can soar to the heights of mathematics. Only the musical can enter into the world of music. Only the mind

illuminated by the Spirit can enter into the deep things of God. Through constant devotion to the unseen and purity of mind we become very sure of God and His salvation. Thus there is opened up to us by this "Inner Light" a new world which no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard. (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10, 12, 14; 1 John 2: 20.) Paul and millions more have known the "glory of the lighted mind" (2 Cor. 4: 6), so beautifully described by Masefield in his "Everlasting Mercy."]

(4) The influence of the Spirit of God is the **secret of victory** over the invasions and uprisings of evil. Paul puts this truth in several ways. Sin is regarded as a "law," an authority or power, dragging us down with the regularity of a law of gravitation. That law is counteracted by the law of the life-giving Spirit Who liberates us from the downward "pull" just as the power of my will can prevent the book in my hand from falling. (Rom. 8: 2.) By living and moving under the influence of this great Counter-agent, we may "put to death" evil impulses and habits and ever tread the upward way. (Rom. 8: 13, 14.)

There is a tug-of-war between the lower and higher natures, but we may so live in the atmosphere of the Spirit and so open our being to His reinforcements that we shall not do the things that unaided human nature would do. (Gal. 5: 16.) The New Testament promises us a life of victory in our present circumstances. Rom. 7: 23-25 shows the deadlock brought about by the inner moral antagonism, but Rom. 8: 2, 4, 6, 37 show the victory of the life integrated and energised by God. Rom. 7: 14-25, where the Spirit is not mentioned, must not be read apart from Rom. 8: 1-39, where the cry of defeat and despair becomes a Song of Triumph.

(5) The moulding and uplifting energy of the Spirit is the **source of that character-building** in which the architect and builder is God. (2 Cor.

3: 18.) The Christian character is not a collection of good "deeds," but a "set," a mighty trend, a "harvest," a "fruit," springing spontaneously from an inner life. To yield regularly to the Divine is to sow seed unto the Spirit and the inevitable result is a spirit harvest. (Gal: 6: 8; 5: 19-23.)

The Holy Spirit enables restless men to achieve the difficult task of **waiting** for that which is out of sight. (Gal. 5: 5; Rom. 8: 24.) He fosters in man the **spiritual mind**, the high way of looking at all things, the **joy** that is fed from secret springs, the overflowing **hope**, whose expectation is based upon the unseen resources of God, a hope which enables men to face the future and its unknown situations in complete confidence in the presence and power of the Great Companion. (Rom. 8: 5; 14: 17; 15: 13, 29; 1 Thess. 1: 6; 2 Cor. 3: 4, 5.) The Spirit is the source and agent of their "sanctification," that positive and healthy hallowing of the whole of life and its social relationships. (2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 2.)

(6) The Spirit is the **support of corporate Christian living**. The crown of Christian character is corporate Christian living. The Spirit creates the "overwhelming sense of brotherhood," and inspires community life. The Spirit floods the heart with the love of God and the capacity to cherish active goodwill towards other types and groups, to "love" those whom we do not "like." (Rom. 5: 5. Compare Matt. 5: 44-48.) The "love of the Spirit," the love inspired by the Spirit, raises believers above ordinary sectional loyalties and binds them in a higher allegiance, in a fellowship inspired by the Spirit. This is the remedy for the frictions and divisions of imperfectly spiritualised people. (1 Cor. 3: 3; 2 Cor. 13: 11, 14.) Our English words, "communion" and "fellowship," represent the same word in the Greek, and the "communion of the Holy Spirit" in the Benediction probably means not fellowship with

the Spirit, but the fellowship inspired by the Spirit, that exalted harmony and warm community life which is the true goal of our religion. Only the tidal waves of the Spirit can raise us stubborn men and women to those heights of self-ignoring corporate thought and action.

(7) The Holy Spirit makes **human nature the temple of God**. God dwells not in temples made with hands, but in the body of the individual believer which therefore must not be defiled by impurity. (1 Cor. 6: 18, 19.) God dwells also in the Christian community (1 Cor. 3: 16), which must not be marred by dissension, nor by any compromise with other gods. All strife and sex sins must be shunned as unthinkable sacrilege against the very sanctuary of God. (2 Cor. 6: 14-7: 1.) The sanctity of the body and of the Fellowship as shrines of Deity must be jealously guarded.

Practical

(a) "The fruit of the Spirit is . . ." In an age that valued tongues and raptures, Paul puts the stress upon the **ethical**, upon modesty, kindness and self control. Examine the nine qualities in Gal. 5: 22, 23, and decide which is most lacking in your life.

(b) It is not enough to be a Christian in a general way. Let the **details** of every day conduct be governed by the Spirit. Since we draw the breath of eternal life from Him, let us also **walk, "proceed step by step,"** in home and market, in dependence upon His power and in obedience to His promptings. (Gal. 5: 25.)

(c) **Spend time realising** that God dwells in us until that sense of His presence redeems us from all that is base or trivial. The temple of old was set apart for God, for ever hallowed by His presence, filled with His worship and service, a place into which no unworthy thing should ever come

with its desecrating touch. Now "man the living temple is," forever set aside from all lower ways of living. Let the mind dwell upon this fact: "I am the Temple of God, God dwells in me," until new reverence rises up within us. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him."

Assignments

1. What is the difference between the "gifts" and the "graces" of the Spirit? What did Paul mean in 1 Cor. 2: 4, 5?
2. Trace in these Epistles the "overwhelming sense of sonship." Is that assurance as great among Christians to-day? Why, or why not?
3. Is practical victory over moral evil possible for the Christian? If so, how?
4. What influence does the Spirit have (a) in building character, and (b) in promoting finer social life? (Illustrate from the Bible and the Hymn Book.)
5. What is the idea in the line: "For man the living temple is?"
6. What thought in this study have you found most helpful?

Study 6.—THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE PRISON EPISTLES

Eph. 1: 13, 14; 3: 14-21; 4: 3-12; 5: 18-21.

The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social, no holiness but social holiness.—John Wesley.

It is the teaching of the New Testament that there is nothing essential in the spiritual splendour of the days of early Christianity that may not return, and that is not meant to return. If the Christian Church to-day is not living on the ancient levels, it is not because God's gift of life has been withdrawn; it is because men will not appropriate and use the gift. The fountains of life in God have been opened once for all. . . . Some day men will find them again, and human history will rise to a new plane.—D. S. Cairns.

In the Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians—Paul rises to his most sublime conception of the one World Fellowship in which all local groups are fused, a Universal Church whose unity flows from its intimate union with Christ as His Bride and His Body. (Eph. 5: 25; Col. 1: 18.) So also Paul now lays greater stress upon the Spirit, not merely as resident in the believer or the local congregation, but as permeating and energising the Catholic Church. It is through the Church that the Spirit gives the highest illumination. (Eph. 3: 5, 10.) The Christian enlightenment of the Beloved Community is a safer guide than the ardent utterances of an individual. The Spirit is the source and support of the common life which animates and unites the whole Church.

(1) The Holy Spirit is a seal. (Eph. 1: 13; 4: 30; 2 Cor. 1: 22.) The "seal" was placed upon property which the owner valued to mark it as his

own. The Spirit welling up in the human heart is a proof of the genuineness of their faith, a mark of the divine ownership; a hallowing reminder that we are a "people for His own possession." (Tit. 2: 14 R.V.)

(2) The Spirit is an **earnest**, an **instalment** and **guarantee** of the whole. (Eph. 1: 14. Compare 2 Cor. 1: 22; 5: 5.) The presence of the Spirit in our lives is a foretaste and pledge of future glory; a piece of Heaven given beforehand as a prediction of the great consummation. The Greek word is used of the bridegroom's betrothal gifts to the bride. The Spirit is Christ's betrothal gift to His Bride. The transformation and joy we now experience are samples and guarantees of the richer inheritance we shall yet receive. The similar idea was expressed elsewhere by saying that the Spirit was "the first fruits" of an unspeakable "harvest" of perfection which shall be ours in the day of final and full redemption. This high expectation, this forward look, enables us to keep marching on, however rough the road may be. (Rom. 8: 23-25.)

(3) The Spirit is the **guide** and **inspiration** of **Christian worship**. We come to the Father, through the Son, by the inspiration of the Spirit. The true disciple worships through the Spirit of God, glories in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in outward ceremonies. (Eph. 2: 18; Phil. 3: 3.) To worship God is much more than going through attitudes or rituals with voice or body,

"In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace except the heart!"

Worship is heart realisation of God and the **going-out of ourselves to God** in adoration, gratitude, and self-surrender. It is an act and attitude of our whole inner being—a flight of the soul which we cannot achieve part from the mighty aid of the Spirit. The Spirit teaches us what heart-

worship is, makes the presence of God real to us, and uplifts our spirits so that we may rise to God in vivid wonder, love, and praise. We must be "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day if we are to have real intercourse with the unseen. (Rev. 1: 10.)

[(4) The Spirit is the source of **illumination**, revealing the long-concealed and all-embracing destiny of the Church. (Eph. 1: 17, 18; 3: 5, 6; Col. 1: 26, 27.) His light must be prayed for so that again and again, like a fresh sunrise, it may make visible divine possibilities lying ahead.

(5) The Spirit is the source of **ministerial gifts**. (Eph. 4: 8-12; compare 1 Cor. 12: 4, 8.) These special endowments were given to some in order that through these leaders God's people as a whole might be equipped for their service in "the building-up of Christ's Body" by the winning of new members and the development and cohesion of the whole Body. Who can doubt that Moody and Catherine Booth received the "gift" of an "evangelist," and Smellie and Murray the "gift" of a "teacher," or Speer and Mott the "gift" of "leadership"? We should all, for the sake of a needy world, covet the "gifts" as well as the "graces" of the Spirit.]

(6) The Spirit is the **secret of solidarity**. (Compare Jude 19.) It is easy to develop a religious "superiority complex," which betrays itself in impatient criticism, in proud individualism, in segregation into small congenial groups out of touch with the larger Church. The Spirit inspires "love in the Spirit" (Col. 1: 8), and fosters that all-embracing unity called the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil. 2: 1-3.) The members on their part must be diligent in all modesty and toleration to maintain this harmony in the uniting bond of peace, remembering that they are one Body, forever united to the One God Who dwells in all. (Eph. 4: 2-6.)

7. The Spirit is the **soul's dynamic**. Progress in material things comes through discovering and linking ourselves to forces outside ourselves, such as steam, electricity, dynamite, by which we achieve the humanly impossible. Progress in the spiritual realm comes through linking ourselves to the great spiritual forces above us. Again and again we find Paul using the Greek word for power, "dunamis" (Eph. 1: 19; 3: 7, 16, 20; Phil. 3: 10; Col. 1: 11, 29, etc.) He heaps up words like Alps piled upon Alps to express the transcendent greatness of the power energising within them ("the surpassing greatness of His power"; "a power which operates with the strength of His might"; "the divine energy which is a power within me"; compare Moffatt). The Ascended Christ, like some lake in the high mountains, is a reservoir of fathomless power, from which "supplies" are conveyed to us by the Spirit. By drawing from these "riches in glory" (Phil. 4: 19; 1: 19, 20), we are empowered for the endurance of trial, for active service, for "all things." (Col. 1: 11, 29; Phil. 4: 13.) What God did for these converts from heathenism with their evil heredity and vile environment, He can surely do for us if we would dare to trust Him and yield ourselves unreservedly to His indwelling energy. Let us learn that there are energies which we do not use, but which possess and use us in ways beyond our comprehension.

(8) **Filled with the Spirit.** The believer is to be the permanent habitation of God, and the fragrance is to fill every recess of the inner temple. (Eph. 2: 22; Phil. 1: 11; Col. 2: 10.) We read of Barnabas that he was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." That was his habitual, every-day experience. That habitual overflowing amplitude is now urged as a command for all in every sphere of life. (Eph. 5: 18.) Christ's way of life is far from being prosaic and chill. The believer seeks not the false elevation and riotous song of the

wine cup, but the divine exhilaration which finds expression in poetry and music, in mutual subjection and beautiful home life. (Eph. 5: 18-25.) See Greenfield, chapters 5 and 6.

Eccentricity, self-will, and isolation from the Christian solidarity are not caused by the Sacred Fire, but by the sparks of human excitement. The signs of a Spirit-filled life are threefold—power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Tim. 1: 7.) That experience is not for the recluse, but a practical equipment for the man in the market, the woman in the kitchen, the youth in the social circle. To be filled with the Spirit is not a privilege for the few, but a necessity for all who desire the fullest self-realisation and service.

Practical

Notice the stress laid upon "**faith.**" (Eph. 3: 17; 1: 19.) God is accessible and available. Let the mind dwell upon the fact that the Spirit is within us. Open, therefore, every avenue of our being to Him, so that He may "fill" us with His presence and power. Trust the indwelling God. Like Paul, take up the conquering attitude towards life. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4: 13.)

Read:

"The Spirit-Filled Life," by MacNeil.

Assignments

1. What aspects of the Christian life receive special emphasis in Ephesians?
2. What is meant by calling the Spirit (a) a "seal," and (b) an "earnest"?
3. Why is real worship a difficult achievement? How does the Spirit help?
4. How does the Spirit help solidarity? How may we spoil the unity?
5. What is taught in the "prison Epistles" about spiritual power? Was it meant to be a habitual experience, or an impetus for special occasions?
6. What is the biggest thing you have learned in this study? How can we now enter into a deeper spiritual experience?

Study 7.—THE SPIRIT IN THE REMAINDER OF THE N.T.

(Limitations of space make it necessary that this should be merely an outline. Some of the passages are treated in the next study or elsewhere.)

Titles.—"Spirit of grace," Heb. 10: 29; "Spirit of glory," 1 Pet. 4: 14. **Emblem.**—Prophet, priest, and king were consecrated to office by being anointed with oil. Jesus was "the Christ," the "Anointed." (Luke 4: 18; Acts 10: 38.) The Spirit was the "Anointing" for the disciples (1 John 2: 20.)

Spirit and Jesus.—All the Spirit's work is **Christ-centred.** The God-sent preacher may be known by his fidelity to "Jesus as Lord," by his holding fast "the testimony of Jesus." The content of the message was the test of the Spirit's inspiration. The earthly life of Jesus was real. Genuine utterances of the Spirit are marked by loyalty to Jesus. By this criterion we can "try" all teachers. Rev. 19: 10; 1: 9; 1 John 4: 2. Compare 1 Cor. 12: 3.

The Bible.—Inspires, and speaks through, the Scriptures 2 Pet. 1: 21; 1 Pet. 1: 11; Heb. 3: 7.

The Spirit's Work.—Gives "gifts" (1 Tim. 4: 14; Heb. 2: 4); aids the evangelist in presenting the Gospel (1 Pet. 1: 12); renews the inner life (Tit. 3: 5); the source of spiritual health and dedication (1 Pet. 1: 2); the source of illumination (1 John 2: 20, 27); the guarantee of the divine union (1 John 3: 24; 4: 13); the witness (1 John 5: 7); people that cause separations are destitute of the Spirit (Jude 19); inspires prayer (Jude 20); notice the threefold nature of God—Father, Son, Spirit (Jude 20, 21); three results of the Spirit's presence (1 Tim. 1: 7); speaks to the Churches (Rev. 2: 7).

The exalted Redeemer's perfect power ("seven horns") and perfect insight ("seven eyes") are exercised in all places through the plenitude and perfection of the Spirit ("seven Spirits"). (Rev. 5: 6.) The Spirit reinforces the call of the Church to Christ to come. Finally, let all drink freely of that stream which is the Spirit. (Rev. 22: 17; cf. 21: 6; 22: 1.)

Discuss: (1) The titles and emblems of the Spirit in these books, and their significance. (2) His work in the Church. (3) His relation to Christ. (4) The tests of a genuine spiritual inspiration. (5) His work in the believer.

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Study 8.—THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER

Zech. 12: 10; Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6; Eph. 6: 17; 1 Thess. 1: 6; 2: 13.

It is a standing proof of the reality of the miracle of Pentecost that the first age of the Church should have produced a series of writings which, in the elevation of their spiritual tone and the fruitfulness of their teaching, remain absolutely alone.—H. B. Swete.

We acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word.—Westminster Confession of Faith.

Bible Study and Prayer are at once our main points of contact with God and the chief agencies for our personal development and usefulness. By these means the heart-fires are kept burning. (Jer. 15: 16; Luke 24: 32.) How, then, can we, through the Spirit, make our times of Bible study and prayer more vivid and refreshing?

A.—**The Holy Spirit and the Bible.** The Scriptures came from the heart and brain of man like any other book, and are, therefore, marked by the human characteristics and limitations and varying degrees of insight of the writers. Nevertheless, the Bible is unique among books. In it God is revealed more adequately and more impressively than anywhere else. It stands alone as **the “word of God.”** **The Spirit speaks in the Scriptures.** Man spoke as they were moved by the Breath of God. (2 Pet. 1: 21; Matt. 22: 43; Acts 28: 25.) Rare moments come when the winds of Heaven sweep through chosen souls, producing music beyond all human imagining. In moments of this kind, such books as Psalms, Isaiah, John, Romans, Colossians were produced. Our full assurance of their divine authority springs from the Spirit bearing witness within our minds to the Spirit speaking in the Word. The wonder of the Bible is that it never grows old. It speaks life-changing words to men to-day just as it did to Jeremiah or Augustine. It is an unfailing fountain of inspiration. (John 6: 63.)

The unique value of the Bible has been stated thus by Prof. Robertson Smith, the pioneer British Biblical critic: “Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming Love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Christ Jesus, and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation; and this record I know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak such words to my soul.”

It is the Spirit that enables us to recognise the divine message contained in the Bible, and to enter into its deepest meanings. Certainly the Bible, like any other book, must be studied with intelligent methods, with a knowledge of Oriental modes of speech, and with that alert imagination which rebuilds ancient cities, peoples deserted streets, and listens to voices that have been silent

for centuries. If Luke required patient research in composing his gospel, we must use patient research in understanding it. (Luke 1: 3.) But this well is deep, and mere book-learning has nothing wherewith to draw from it. The words of Scripture are charged with a wealth of new meaning, which only the illuminated heart can appreciate. The reader must be in touch with the author of the book. The “deep things of God” are revealed only to the spiritual mind—the man with the “blessed gift of inner sight.” To others they are “foolishness.” Did not even Chalmers in his days of modernatism regard evangelical faith as a sure sign of mental imbecility? (1 Cor. 2: 9-15.) The student must be inspired as well as the Scriptures. (Compare pages 26, 27.) When the Spirit in the Book meets the Spirit in the believer, then there is light. Reliance upon the Spirit without the written word leads to fanaticism. Reliance upon the written word without the Spirit ends in formalism.

How to Study.—(1) Before we read we should pray for illumination. (Ps. 119: 18.) (2) During reading we should think about the meaning of the portion and its application to ourselves. Rainy wrote to his son: “If you had only three minutes for Bible reading, I would give one to reading and two to thinking about it in God’s presence.” (3) After reading, linger in silence before its life-giving pages, waiting for a message to leap up into your heart. Soak it into the life by turning its principles and promises into prayers. Let us realise that **God is speaking to us now** through those books, and let us receive the message “as the word of God.” (1 Thess. 2: 13.) One of the most urgent needs of our generation is the prayerful pondering of the Spirit-breathed message in humble dependence upon the teaching of the Spirit. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; Acts 17: 11.) We must lay **hold of the Sword of the Spirit** in private if we are to prevail in public. (Eph. 6: 17; Heb.

4: 12.) Our Lord was saturated in the Scriptures, and here was one secret of His mastery over life.

B.—The Spirit and Prayer. The life of prayer is not a luxury to be enjoyed by rare saints, but a necessity for ordinary folk.

The Spirit is received by means of prayer. It was while Jesus and His disciples were praying that the high tides came flooding into them. (Luke 3: 21, 22; 11: 13; Acts 4: 31.) It was while they were praying that the Spirit called Peter and Paul to wider missionary enterprises. (Acts 11: 5, 12; 13: 2.) It was through the channel of prayer that the Spirit came to the Moravians, to the Wesleys, to Moody, to thousands more. (See Greenfield.)

But it is equally true that the highest prayer must be sustained by the energy of the Spirit. (Eph. 6: 18; Jude 20.) We must pray in the Spirit as well as preach in the Spirit. **The Spirit supplies the motive, the mood, and the matter for prayer.** There is room in the art of prayer for attention to system, for the formation of prayer-habits, the setting aside of regular times for prayer, the thoughtful selection of topics for prayer, and the use of the Bible and prayer books to stimulate and guide the God-ward movements of our souls.

But there is also need for the spontaneous up-rush of the inner fountains stirred by God. Prayer requires at least three things: (1) A large conception of the Father and His world purposes of blessing—a conception that will prompt and direct prayer; (2) a vision of human need; and (3) the ability to concentrate the mind upon God, even as we focus the eye upon a picture until its impact is made upon us. The spirit supplies the realisation of the love of God and of the real needs of men. In His strength and atmosphere we continue in prayer and faint not. Suddenly

sometimes we have been moved to pray for some absent person, and have discovered afterwards that they were at that moment facing some crisis, and had received help without knowing how or why. Such is the strange telepathy of the Spirit. (Rom. 8: 26, 27.) In 1883, Rationalism had blighted the Doshisha Christian College in Japan. Dr. Davis asked American students to unite in prayer for them on the Day of Prayer for Colleges. On that very night, without any direct human influence, the Japanese students fell into conversation about personal religion, and a fruitful revival began before they slept.

How to Pray.—There needs to be preparation for prayer as well as for preaching. Before we speak to God, let us pause in silence to realise His presence and to allow the Creative Spirit to work in us the vision and soul-energy that is necessary. "Shorter prayers, if it must be so," said Rainy, "but let us think a little before we begin." Often it is most helpful to base our prayer upon some definite portion of Scripture.

Difficulties in the prayer life arise from (a) regarding prayer as merely petition for personal benefits, (b) inertia in giving ourselves to intercession, (c) feebleness of purpose in continuing in prayer, (d) lack of wide and high interests. Reliance upon the Spirit in prayer would overcome all these difficulties. He moves the soul within to hunger after God above us. He reveals for whom and for what we should pray. How often before hours of temptation or opportunity the Inner Voice calls us to be furnished for the crisis! He carries us out of ourselves in self-forgetting intercession for the needs of others and the progress of the Gospel. Thus prayer becomes not a routine or a cry in the hour of need, but the habit of intercourse with heaven, sharing with God in His plans for the world. Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's willingness. "Prayer," said Tennyson,

"is like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels, when the sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide." The Spirit from within enables us to open the sluice gates.

Read:

"The Meaning of Prayer," by Fosdick; and "Intercessors the Primary Need," by Mott.

Practical Thoughts:

How closely the Scriptures and prayer and the Spirit's work are inter-related! They cannot be separated without real loss.

Jesus lived by the Spirit. He also lived by the Scriptures. They were His daily food, His road-map by which He walked, His weapon with which He fought. (Luke 4: 4; 10: 26.) By prayer He regularly sought refreshment at the Fountain-head. (Mark 1: 35; 6: 46.) Without such times of re-charging, our spiritual resources become exhausted, our minds critical, our service stale and mechanical. "Christ-like praying in secret," says Murray, "will be the secret of Christ-like living in public."

Assignments

1. Do Bible study and prayer become unnecessary after we have become more spiritual? If not, why are they always necessary?
2. What is the relationship between Bible study and the Holy Spirit? How can we make our Bible study more helpful?
3. Why does prayer bring the Spirit into our lives?
4. What are some of our chief difficulties in prayer? How does the Spirit help us in each of these? In what other ways does the Spirit aid us in prayer?
5. What can we do in future to make our Bible study and prayer larger channels for the Divine? Are we going to spend more time alone with God?

Study 9.—THE SPIRIT AND OURSELVES

1 Thess. 5: 20-24; Tit. 3: 5, 6; Acts 19: 2; Eph. 3: 16; Acts 5: 32; Gal. 3: 14; Mark 11: 24.

If we are weak as a Church in the face of opposing forces, it is not for one moment because of the strength of these forces, but because we fail to lay hold upon the limitless resources of God which are absolutely available to us. The Church can only be revived through the lives of its individual members, and it is only as we individually allow the Holy Spirit to direct and control our lives that the Church to which we belong will feel the uplift of His presence.—Frank H. L. Paton.

These Studies lay upon us a solemn responsibility. We are responsible to God not for what we, ourselves, can be or do, but for what we could be and do if filled with the Spirit. Men like Buchman and Shoemaker show how much may be achieved in modern society if the life is fully yielded to God. Let us earnestly discover what attitude to the Spirit will make our lives rich with that blessing which He is willing to pour on us "abundantly." (Tit. 3: 6.)

(I.) Avoid Sins against the Spirit.

(1) **Blasphemy.** (Mark 3: 22, 28-30.) Jesus wrought deeds of kindness on afflicted folk. The Scribes, with inveterate prejudice and hate, ascribed His success not to the good Spirit, but to the help of the Devil. To refuse to see goodness in deeds of mercy and to commit malignant slander with wilful blindness—that is the sin against the Holy Spirit. To call light darkness is to murder one's own powers of moral discrimination and to place oneself in most deadly danger. Slander is the special sin of Satan. (Job 1: 9.) Even

"saints" must be on their guard against the callous imputing of wrong motives to people whose theology or methods they dislike.

(2) **Spiritual posing and deception.** (Acts 5: 3, 4.) There was no compulsion to give money to the Church, but to pretend to dedicate the whole of a sum to the Church and to keep back part of it was to lie to that Spirit Who dwelt in the Fellowship.

(3) **Resisting.** (Acts 7; 51; Heb. 10; 29.) The Spirit offers fresh light to men and urges them to enter upon the new way of living. To resist is sin. Paul for a time was guilty of "kicking at the goad." (Acts 26: 14, 19.) Are we guilty of passive resistance to the urge of the Spirit?

(4) **Grieving.** (Eph. 4: 30.) The Spirit is a Person Who may be pained by our conduct. The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of purity and peace, Who is grieved by any unwholesome or unkind feelings or attitudes. The ethical demands of the Spirit-filled life are very searching. (Eph. 4: 29-32.)

(5) **Quenching.** The Spirit is a Fire, and the burning words from Him through His "prophets" may be "despised" and quenched by us, as men put out a fire by pouring cold water or heaping dead ashes upon it. Frances Willard tells how she once received a special spiritual uplift, but the discouraging advice of an older Christian checked her glowing testimony, and robbed her of the richness of that experience. It is a terrible sin to kill enthusiasm in any soul, and it may be done with quite good intentions. (1 Thess. 5: 19, 20; Num. 11: 26-29.)

(II.) Do our Duty to the Spirit.

(1) **Listen to His Voice.** (Rev. 2: 7; 1 John 4: 1.) Men must tune in with Heaven. They must be silent enough and attentive enough to allow the message to reach us amid the rush and

deafening clamour of the world. We must regularly seek solitude of spirit, cease from all our praying or reading or serving, and make an opportunity for God to speak to us.

"Only unto God be thou silent, my soul,
For from Him cometh my hope." (Ps. 62: 5.)

Without this "waiting in silence" for God, we shall be overcome by the perils of superficiality and spiritual starvation. Without this listening to the Voice of God, we shall lack the conviction and the fragrance of the unseen world that make men fruitful.

(2) **Obey His leading** (Acts 5: 32), always remembering that His leading is in harmony with the common sense, modesty, and kindness of Jesus.

(3) **Stir up the Fire.** (2 Tim. 1: 6.) The Greek "stir into a flame" shows that the reference is to the "Fire in the Heart," which easily burns low. The Sacred Fire must be fed and kept at a white heat by self-examination and meditation upon the great realities. Time lost in making the heart-fires burn more brightly is time gained in added joy and effectiveness.

(III.) The Reception of the Spirit.

The Spirit in all His fulness is simply the complete salvation offered to us in the Gospel. Christianity means passing from strain and self-effort to being impelled by a divine power, passing from trying to trusting. A Tamil preacher expressed the change thus: "If you would change that I, I, I into Thou, Thou, Thou, and that try, try into trust, trust, trust, then you would get rest, rest, rest." The Spirit is the birthright of everyone who has come to accept Christ as Lord and Saviour. (Acts 2: 38, 39.) The Spirit dwells in every believer, God in His holy temple. But Scriptures such as Eph. 3: 16; 5: 18, and the story of God's people down the centuries, clearly show that deeper and richer experiences may come

to every disciple. The Divine Guest is **in** us, but He desires to **fill** us with His presence and power. A true Christian may be living a life that is weak and ineffective. (See "The Christ of Every Road," by Stanley Jones.) This powerless condition is due to one or more of three causes—**imperfect surrender, inadequate faith, broken communion.** How, then, can we enter upon the richer experience which is our birthright in Christ?

(1) **By self-surrender.** Definitely (and in writing if one so desires) yield the whole life and every disputed issue to the control of the Lord Jesus. When Christ is on the throne of the heart, the streams begin to flow. Make this surrender definite and final.

(2) **By prayer.** (Luke 11: 13; Acts 4: 31.) How often in biography we find that prayer, especially united prayer with "one accord" (Acts 1: 14; 2: 1; 4: 24), ushers in the new day! Sometimes, as in the case of Finney or Pilkington, one person has to lead the way alone. The late Dr. Griffith John of Hankow said: "For one whole week I gave myself to prayer for larger spiritual power. Then I called together the Chinese Christians and told them of my desire. We met for another week, then for the whole of the following Sabbath day. And then came down upon the Church such an endowment of Divine power that the signs thereof are abiding to this present day."

(3) **By faith.**—Faith is of two kinds—realising faith, which vividly sees the unseen and pictures the Spirit dwelling within us; and receiving faith, which appropriates the "abundance" of blessing that is for us. It is not enough to pray earnestly. We must reach the point when the soul **trusts God to do** there and then what He has promised. While on our knees, we believe that God has answered our prayers, and we thank Him for His wonderful gift. Then we rise up to **act as if**

we had received. The real test of our faith is to continue **acting as if** we had received quite apart from any special rush of feeling. Faith is to "receive and rest upon" Christ alone for full salvation apart from any special experiences of our own. We may feel no difference at first, but by degrees the difference will come. The Revised Version of Mark 11: 24 says: "Believe that ye **have received** them and ye shall have them." That is the secret of Jesus. Faith is the door into power. "According to your faith be it unto you."

The native Church in Uganda was lacking in spirituality. Pilkington felt like giving up mission work in despair. Then he concluded that his own life was lacking in power. "I had consecrated myself hundreds of times, but I had not accepted God's gift. I saw now," said this young Irishman at the Liverpool Student Conference of 1896, "that God commanded me to be filled with the Spirit. Then I read 'All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them,' and, claiming this promise, I received the Holy Spirit." Pilkington was able to lead his fellow-workers and then the native Christians into the same experience. Thus began the remarkable revival which multiplied the Church in Uganda in numbers and vastly increased its spiritual intensity.

Here, then, is a call for immediate **action on our part.** The deeper experience awaits our reception. The Hand is outstretched; we must lay hold. The Table is spread; we must eat. The Sun is shining around us; we must open the windows of the soul, and let the healing rays come in. We must rest ourselves upon the promise and purpose of Christ, and dare to believe that all-sufficient power now dwells within us. We must pass from seeking to receiving and resting. We must in the most practical way depend upon God in all the emergencies of life. (Rom. 15: 29.)

We may well close these brief Studies with some wise words from Principal Cairns:

“Around us there is a sea of power and love and strength and life. And the thing we need is to become so receptive that the sea can break in upon us. . . . Our victory depends upon our opening our natures in order that He may come in to flood us with His strength and life.”

Assignments

1. Which of the sins against the Spirit are we most likely to commit?
2. Which of our duties towards the Spirit are we most in danger of neglecting?
3. Do you agree with the statement of the Rev. F. H. L. Paton at the head of this study?
4. What is meant by passing from “seeking faith” to “receiving and resting faith”? Explain Mark 11: 24.
5. What must we do to receive now the fulness of the Spirit?
6. What is the greatest help you have received in these studies?

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