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THE HOLY SPIRIT.¹

BY THE REV. J. PAUL S. R. GIBSON, M.A., F.I.A., Principal
of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

I ACCEPTED the task of writing a paper on the Holy Spirit through no sense of mastery in the difficult subject, but because as a seeker after light I ventured to suggest this theme to the D Society for consideration. A feeling of awe prompted me to do so, for though the country is largely undiscovered, yet from the vantage-ground of the lower peaks of experience one has had glimpses of the beauty, grandeur, and vastness of the land to be possessed. A spirit of adventure was upon me and this has grown as the weeks have gone by. Like Joshua and Caleb of old we have together spied out the land and it remains for us to appreciate the fruits that have been brought home. Certain facts have emerged from our collaboration. On the subject of the Spirit there is no clear-cut metaphysic, no distinct philosophy. We need not be surprised for we are dealing with God Himself in His Person of the Holy Spirit. The incomprehensible is not to be fitted into any human mould nor rounded off by any formula of men's wisdom. Unanimity could only mean failure to grasp the unsearchable depths of our problem. It would spell failure, not success. Yet a baffled mind does not close the door to certain knowledge, even though we may only see through a glass darkly.

For we have found in the varied experiences of widely separated classes of men an agreement that the things of God can be truly apprehended though not comprehended nor explained. Christ our Master was vividly conscious of the Spirit in His own life. He has been called the temporal and spatial product of the Spirit, these words implying the utter dependence of our Lord on the unseen working of God's Spirit within Him. And He knew the Spirit was to be the invisible Guide of those He left to complete His work.

Our studies have also shown us that, in all ages, mystics and poets have lived deeply conscious of the reality and power of the unseen things which are eternal. Scientists, no less, as they have probed the undiscovered and ever-unfolding mysteries of nature, have declared their conviction of a guiding principle in all things; they have become conscious of a trend in the development of this world of ours which defies analysis or final definition in known terms.

Even theologians engaged in rearranging the dry if not dead bones of what were once the living experiences of men have felt the breath of God brooding over their museum specimens and at times have even become aware of a wind which blew where it listed.

¹ A paper read before the D Society, Cambridge.

In all these, in the words of Edmond Holmes, there has been a mystery of self-awareness and a revelation of self to self, an elusive vision, but of intrinsic reality, a light self-kindled and self-sustained. In the mystery of Love's mutuality, of the revelation of love to love, the self-existent is for a moment self-revealed.

In such a definition of Spirit, self-existent, self-revealed, and shared self to self, there are certain implications.

A closed logical system can know nothing of it. The conclusions of all logical thought are contained in the premises. If we ever wish to experience that which is beyond ourselves there must be the readiness to postulate the possibility of such existence and such experiences. Our minds, limited as they are by the bounds of our earthly tabernacle, or if you will the walls of our three dimensional existence, will always be able to interpret every experience in terms of its own limited life. In so doing it may be content and self-satisfied, but it is not thereby any the more certain of having grasped all there is to know. Like Nelson it has shut its eye and served its own purpose and not dealt with the problem, but ignored it.

To sense the beyond in our environment, as Dr. Oman so insistently reminds us, an interest though not a bias is needed which alone renders us capable of the experiences we would know and understand.

And such venture of faith finds its own verification. As it throws itself in trust on an unknown beyond it finds a new depth of meaning in the occurrences of daily life—it actually experiences the postulated thing, and discovers not only a peace in a life removed from this existence but a new congruity in the whole of this world of being, a new power to deal with its problems, a new weapon for forging fresh instruments which in a unique way gauge the eternal values of beauty, truth and goodness.

The validity of the life in the Spirit is its congruity within the life of the flesh.

This new life is intimately associated with a three-fold conception of God which has gradually become the heritage of the Christian.

The Jewish race in course of time reached a belief in a transcendent Creator God. He was apart, unrevealed, invisible; to see Him was to die.

Even here, however, were partial links: His angels came as messengers and told of His Will. At times He spoke in direct question, command or reproof. At first only to chosen leaders and to the prophets. Then later in a more general sense to all who realized within themselves the Wisdom of God. A link there was between the Transcendent God and His people, but the link was not universal, nor was it permanent. There were times when there was no open vision, but it was felt to be necessary, for where there is no vision the people perish. A Transcendent God and a partial link were felt to be inadequate and the mind of seers looked forward to the time of full revelation. This came in Christ when the transcendent became immanent, for a time, in a particular

spot. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. Such a spatial temporal link, however complete, must needs be broken and with the words "Into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit" it was snapped and could remain but as a glorious memory of grace and truth. But a promise had been given and in due course was fulfilled. The perpetual and complete link between Transcendence and Man was given in the permanent immanence of the Holy Spirit first of all apprehended at Pentecost. The unknown God had become known in Christ, Him whom men ignorantly worshipped had been revealed and now though unseen the Spirit could be understood. The messengers, the angels, the utterances of God, even the wisdom implanted in man, could now be comprehended, for the historic Manifestation was there as the test. The intermittent promptings of an unknown Power had become the constant self-revelation of the known God. How different from the unrevealed Logos. This was but the unknown effluence from an incomprehensible. It might give matter for consideration to the mind of man. It was no living and incarnate person in touch with the personality of man in all his fullness.

The Holy Spirit was the Spirit of God for ever immanently related to the Spirit of Man, the permanent and comprehensible and living link binding man with his Creator in mutual love and understanding. This to me is the fundamental meaning of the Holy Spirit. But we may look at the question from the more human side.

The history of the development of the race is the history of the emergence of the individual. As Dr. Whitehead reminds us, one of the characteristics of religion is solitariness, and only when man can realize that, in the last resort, he stands alone face to face with his God does he rise into definite individuality. Professor Burkitt reminded some of us the other day how a real stage of advance was reached when in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes the Jews opened the long roll of individual martyrs for a cause which they made their own on individual conviction. There was a true development from clan to individual life, and individuals, like the stars, differed from one another in glory.

It was only when Christ appeared that the perfect individual was revealed. Not only was He the answer to man's question What is God? but also to man's search after the perfect Man. In Him we find not merely the perfection of that we normally appreciate, but an irresistible challenge to accept what we had not previously imagined. He is a new life and in Him we find a new life for ourselves, a new depth and breadth for our individualities. And yet Christ stands alone. Despite His telling us of the corporate nature of His relation to the Father and of the corporate unity of Himself and His followers, this idea was but dimly realized. To the disciples He was more the unique, outstanding Personality than the Head of His Body, the Church. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is the birth of a new Corporate Personality, one for which the full development in body, mind and soul of each

unit is essential; but one in which such a single, developed, isolated fragment, however perfect in itself, is realized to be but partial, immature and imperfect. At Pentecost the units without losing their own differentiations realized themselves as a whole body. We have no analogy in the realm of nature, for this is the new creation of the Holy Spirit of God. To this day little has been done to enter into the heritage. Men and Churches still cling to their unsundered differentiations and see in them God's perfection, refusing to see the vision of the new Corporate Personality of developed but surrendered differentiations, in which the whole lives and develops by the free-willed self-sacrifice, for the common purpose of fully developed personalities. The vision is hard to see, but it is the truth behind the thought of the Church as the Body of Christ, and of the Three in One of the Trinitarian God.

Something of the same kind *has* taken place in nature. The individual cells have had to sacrifice their individualities as they have blended, divided or co-operated to build up the forms of life that we see around us and that we *are* ourselves. We look upon ourselves as individuals, but we are an aggregate of what in a lesser degree had individuality. This might have been challenged only a few years ago, but to-day men of repute speak to us of the indeterminate nature of the actions of protons and electrons.

The full Corporate Personality of the life of the Spirit may be beyond our comprehension, but its counterpart is seen in ourselves and its prototype was witnessed at Pentecost and the banner of its procession as it advances to realization through the ages is the Body of Christ given for man, but now glorified and victorious.

Our chief difficulty of realization is that, as in all spiritual experiences, there is a far easier mechanistic solution that offers its substitute and more immediately apprehendable values.

Nature has discovered the blind-alley lines of advance that have given us the mechanized, non-individualized but corporately effective companies of ants and termites, bees and wasps. Had no more adventurous attempt been made along the lines of individualization we should not have found the line of unbroken development that has produced man. The temptation to drop back into mechanization did not cease with the emergence of man. It is ever present with us. It takes many forms from the gregariousness of the clan to the mass psychology of the multitude. It is to be seen also in the rise of bureaucratic empires and of personality-destroying commercial combinations. Politically it appears in the despotisms of dictators and the crushing constructions of Soviets. Ecclesiastically we are not free of the same temptation and a similar fall. Every form of Church life that sets rules above personal trust, order and administration above faith, and that undertakes to do the thinking and willing and feeling of its people under its charge, binding them by vows of obedience rather than drawing them by the cords of Love, all such have taken the less for the greater, the quick return for the true gain, and sacrificed the pentecostal revela-

tion of a new corporate personality for the man-made substitute of a Robot.

We may look at the question from still another point of view. The Old Testament ever looked forward. At first to something on this earth, a perpetuated seed of Abraham or a triumphant rule of the Davidic line. Even apocalyptic thought saw the heavens expressed on earth or the earth destroyed to make place for a new earth. The aspirations of the prophets and seers were fulfilled in Christ, largely in an unexpected way, but one at least in Isaiah liii. had correctly read the inner mind of God and adumbrated His purposes correctly. Christ again looked forward, but He did not rely on the intervention of His Father, though He knew this was possible were it claimed—for were not twelve legions of angels at His disposal—He relied on the certainty of the consummation of that which He did in accordance with the Father's will. Death stared Him in the face, but He never saw death alone, but death coupled with its necessary consequent—the resurrection. Glory was certain though hidden within a veil. And the glory was actually contained within the gradually unfolding events. Life might be an oyster, but within its tough shells lay a pearl. What Christ thus won for Himself in His life in the Spirit must become the experience of all. Such an attitude is not learned by reading in books. The mystery of suffering as enunciated by a Buddha may be left to the mental processes, and this explains why the great character on his leaving the world exclaimed, "Look not to me for help, but seek ye refuge in the law and the order." But Christ's experience could only be conveyed by personal contact. He knew that having emptied Himself He must go from His disciples in the flesh, but His going is to be a coming, His leaving a return, His absence a new Presence. The Holy Spirit by His unseen personal contact ever turns the eyes of men forward not as an escape from the things of earth but in order that men regarding them, not as destiny, but as challenge may use them as malleable potentiality and gather from them, as they develop, the glory that in veiled form lies latent within them from the beginning.

Hence the work of the Spirit is described as leading into all truth; greater things are to be done. Power is to be experienced. Such power comes from the inexhaustible and high-stored reservoirs of God. Thence flows a stream immeasurable in quantity and strength, not only continuous voltage but full force of amperage. The past and present are never to be merely rebelled against or repressed, nor only accepted. They demand facing here and now, but in an attitude of love, joy, peace, which are alone possible if they are viewed as doorways leading out into light. Darkness may lurk within the portal, but the light of God's open country lies beyond.

The Holy Spirit is repeatedly called the Comforter. This is because the passage from attachment to the accustomed human Person of Christ to the unaccustomed unseen Person of the Holy Spirit must needs be a hard one. Only with reluctance do we

forgo the limited and the particular in order to enter into possession of the infinite and universal. The old has the fascination of the known; the new has all the strangeness of the unknown. The Holy Spirit therefore is first of all Comforter, as man perforce had to make the transition, but He is none the less the Truth, for the new is as true as the old—in fact, the new is the old in its universalized form, for the new brings to their remembrance the things of Christ, takes of His and declares them and in all things glorifies the Christ.

We are led to think next of the authority of the Holy Spirit. He represents the only true and final authority man should ask for. The desire for a static authority of written work or established church cannot be satisfied. Hedge the past as you will, circumstances arise that Joseph knew not! and in the end a false authority supported by casuistry and subterfuge must fall clattering to the ground. Any final authority, so Dr. Oman reminds us, must be progressive and dynamic. It must convince by giving the certainty of conviction required for immediate action without satisfying the desire for a complete answer. Such was Christ's authority. He went forward in utter confidence, though even He knew not the day nor the hour. The Holy Spirit brings this authority into our lives.

To sum up this section of the paper I see the work of the Holy Spirit in these three main aspects. He turns our eyes from ourselves to God and reveals Himself as the Eternal living link between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Man. It matters little whether we are fragments of a whole or sacramental symbols of totality. In either case, alone, we have no meaning, alone we die. The Spirit of Man needs the vitalization that can only come from the sap within the Vine. The Holy Spirit is the Living Link.

Again, He turns our eyes away from our limited isolated selves to the wonders of an undiscovered corporate personality expressed here on earth.

Thirdly, He turns us from a past and present which so readily become our terms of reference on to the things which God hath purposed for us and which lie latent or embedded in the raw material coming to our hands in the constantly changing environment of our lives.

He is thus in a word the Link connecting man with God, man with man, and man with the Time Process.

How shall such a Spirit become known? How can we effect the transition from thinking Him to be nowhere to knowing Him to be now here? Dr. Nairne outlined the answer in his recent University Sermon. All is one though the unity is hidden. Take the rough ore of the day's events, mould it into such shape as the dictates of Beauty, Truth and Goodness demand, and the miracle will happen—the Spirit will emerge from where He has been all the time. If we do the deeds we shall know the doctrine. Surely this was the house of God and I knew it not. He became known to them in the breaking of the bread. The expectant outlook creates the seeing eye. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries.

To them there is but the symbol, for seeing they see not. The Spirit emerges not only in crises but in the common things of life until to the experienced eye there are no common things. What God hath cleansed we can no longer call common.

How then does the Holy Spirit operate? Is the Link from Heaven attached to one spot on earth so that those who would travel hence must seek this specialized and privileged point? This is the attitude of the Roman and other Churchmen who see in their Church the one orthodox Body Corporate on Earth of the living Christ. Orthodoxy depends on definition, and even majorities cannot ultimately count as authoritative. Not only Christ has stood alone and we believe proved to be right.

I cannot conceive the universal link between God and Man to have any but universal application. Monopolies sound of the earth earthy. They belong to that purely human tendency to shelter and preserve one's possessions from too free distribution. We know it as children, as authors, as gardeners as well as in religion. The free forgiveness of Christ the Church took over, making her conditions of which Christ said little. She has hedged her ministries till the order of which Christ knew nothing has actually ousted in importance the faith of which He said so much. Her sacraments have been so safeguarded by many that we wonder whether death and not life lurks concealed within the aumbry.

With the Holy Spirit the same process has been at work and the Grace of God is limited to the particular rites of this or that Church. But the Spirit cannot be chained. Ecclesiasts may dictate to Him His correct mode of operation, but He breaks through man's delimitations and on those without and on those within the Church is the perpetual dew of His blessing outpoured. He maketh His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust. What then does the Church stand for? She stands for the corporate experience of certain truths which can best be learned in her fellowship. None lie outside God's grace, yet those who would profit from the personal and collective mind of men who have made the Christ their special study will find within some company of faithful people an understanding hidden from the ordinary fellowships of the earthly minded. Thus the Church's rites of baptism, confirmation, ordination, consecration and Holy Communion become focal points for the dynamic symbolism of what is universally true for the heart in relationship with the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit or other Grace is not conveyed by these, but that the Holy Spirit is ever available now for man is in these rites symbolized in a manner patient of creative result.

In conclusion let me urge that no study of this subject should leave one a mere onlooker. Stained-glass windows must be seen from within the building. The Spirit can have but little meaning except to those to whom the fruits of the Spirit are a challenge to be accepted. The growth of the early Church is the note on which we will end, for it is there we see the working out of the reality of the Pentecostal experience. We see a handful of men and women

facing an empire and winning, attempting the impossible and succeeding. Their weapons were not merely the classically-interpreted virtues of Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, Justice, nor the theologically-interpreted ones of Faith, Hope, Love, but the newly discovered and living virtues of the Spirit, a fresh love and joy resulting in a hitherto unknown peace; long-suffering and kindness constituting a freshly conceived goodness; faithfulness and meekness newly defining the ancient quality of temperance.

All these welded together in the fire of enthusiastic conviction, based on a new and irrefutable experience, made them more than conquerors in their conflict with a tired and unanchored world.

Miss P. L. Garlick in *The Goodly Fellowship* (The Highway Press, 2s.) gives an account of the pioneers of the missionary work of the Church in several centuries since the Apostolic Age. The accounts are full of interest and will provide useful material for missionary speakers. Her effort to combine the Evangelical Movement with the Oxford Movement "as two supplementary movements of thought" does not seem to us altogether happy.

RENT HEAVENS. THE REVIVAL OF 1904. By R. B. Jones.
London: Stanley Martin & Co., Ltd. 1s.

Mr. R. B. Jones, Principal of the South Wales Bible Training Institute, Porth, tells in this volume the story of The Welsh Revival, of which Evan Roberts was the recognized leader and of which the late Mrs. Penn Lewis was the historian. The idea that the movement was largely an "orgy of emotion" is strenuously denied, and the author quotes the impressions of such well-known Churchmen as the late Rev. J. J. Luce, of Gloucester, and the Rev. Francis Paynter, of Guildford—who together visited the scenes of the activities of some notable Revivalists and have left us a sympathetic account of all they saw and heard. Others, too, write of the "hidden springs and prominent results" of this wonderful movement, fruits of which still remain.