

# Simon Ponsonby : *God Inside Out – an in-depth study of the Holy Spirit*

---

Kingsway Publications 2007

Notes Alison Morgan December 2007

Good, clear, readable, well-researched summary of the work of the Holy Spirit.

## 1. *The divinity and personality of the Spirit*

Spirit tends to come third in theology, but first in experience. Gregory of Nazianzus called him *Theos agraptos* – the God whom nobody writes about. He's been called the Cinderella, the orphan of theology, the stealth weapon of the Church. Before his death, Barth hoped that someone would develop a theology of the Spirit, which he envisaged only as Moses looked on the Promised Land. But to understand the Spirit we must engage our minds.

- Third person of Trinity
- Divine
- Has personality

## 2. *Types and titles for the Spirit*

Calvin – 'until our minds become intent on the Spirit, Christ.. lies idle because we coldly contemplate him as outside ourselves.. But he unites himself to us by the Spirit alone'.

The Spirit is God at work. In the OT he came upon men primarily to equip them for service.

Titles for the Spirit:

- Wind
- Holy – the most repeated verse in scripture is 'be holy, for I am holy' – Lev 11.44, 1 Peter 1.16.
- Gift
- Paraclete
- Love – the first fruit of his indwelling is love (Gal 5.22)
- Spirit of ... glory, truth, life, grace, wisdom, knowledge, fear of the Lord

Metaphors for the Spirit:

- Hand or finger
- Dove
- Fire – Kierkegaard: 'Christianity is incendiarism. Christianity is fire-setting. A Christian is a person set on fire'
- River of living water
- Oil
- Seal, deposit

## 3. *The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ*

The Spirit in the life of Christ – conception, baptism, temptation, ministry.

Luke 4.18-21 details the purposes of the Spirit in and through Jesus:

- 'upon me' – anointing
- To preach the good news – 'bring gospel', 'beggar'
- To send (apostello) to announce liberty (freedom, release) to captives (prisoners carried away)
- Recovery of sight (physical, spiritual, mental)
- To set free (send away; the broken in pieces)
- Announce the year of the Lord's favour (means receive)

Spirit was given to Jesus without measure (John 3.34) but to us by measure (Eph 4.7). In Jesus the whole range of the Spirit's gifting resided, but for us it is divided up among his whole body, the church.

## 4. *The Spirit in historical development*

**Post-apostolic era: Spirit as inspirer of scripture**

Montanism – longing for restoration of Spirit; emphasis on eschatology, asceticism, ethics

Irenaeus – the Spirit works in the Church

Tertullian - Trinity

Origen – idem

By early C3rd liturgies invoked the HS; but the Church moved from a dynamic experience of the Spirit where everyone was listening and led by him to a stripped-down version where one or two Spirit-filled men performed one or two Spirit-filled functions.

### **The Creed-making church**

Arius – got Trinity on theological agenda by asserting the 3 persons were totally different

Athanasius and the Macedonians – full divinity of the Spirit

Cappadocians, C4 – Nicene creed expanded to emphasize full deity of Spirit

Augustine – Spirit as divine personal love gift

Medieval church – relative disinterest in experiential aspect of the Christian life. E-W division over filioque controversy – whether the Spirit derives from Father, in same way as Son, or from Father and Son together.

Scholasticism – Peter Lombard equated grace with Spirit

Mysticism – reaction to scholasticism: Wm of Thierry, Richard Rolle, Bernard of Clairvaux.

### **Reformation church**

Luther rejected medieval view that the Spirit was automatically present in sacraments or councils or received traditions, or given in return for good works.

Calvin – Spirit is God in action (not love)

Westminster Confession – states that Spirit bears witness, by and with the Word, in our hearts

Quakerism

### **Enlightenment Church**

Wesley

Hegel – all reality is the manifestation of the one universal Spirit (geist)

Liberalism – reduced the work of the Spirit in an individual to a cipher for morality. Schleiermacher.

### **Modern Church**

Edward Irving

Plymouth Brethren – Spirit led meetings

Pentecostalism

We need a theology of the Spirit which holds both high doctrine and personal experience in creative tension.

## *5. The Spirit and Creation*

Pantheism; paganism; gnosticism; deism; panentheism are the various ways of thinking about the role of the Spirit in creation. SP proposes panmetatheism – God not subsumed within creation, yet more than just its architect.

Church Fathers identify the Spirit as Creator (Ambrose, Augustine, Aquinas) p89.

- The role of the Spirit in Genesis 1-2. Adam is brought to life by God's breath (neshama; not the same as ruach – neshama used only for God and man).
- Job 33.4
- Psalm 104.24-30 – Weiser said 'when God holds his breath then what is alive becomes dust', p93. Ambrose: 'if it were possible to remove the Spirit from creation, all begins would become confused and the life in them would appear to have no law, no structure, no ordered purpose whatsoever. Without the Spirit, the entire creation would be unable to continue in being'.
- Acts 17.27-28

## *6. The Spirit of justice and compassion*

The 'evangelical' gospel focuses on confronting sin in the life of the individual; the 'social' gospel on confronting it in the structures of human society. It's the same Spirit who seeks to reconcile humanity with God in both areas: through word, wonders and works. The Spirit led ministry of Christ was to the whole of man not just the soul – he fed the hungry (Mt 15.32f), challenged unjust structures (Matt 21.12f, moneychangers), said salvation was evidenced by ending the misuse of power for financial gain (Lk 19 Zacchaeus). He identified salvation with clothing the poor, feeding the hungry etc (Matt 25).

The Spirit-filled early church loved its neighbour body and soul. It has often done so since – eg Wesley, who even in his 80s walked the streets collecting alms for the poor, and inspired the Clapham sect who campaigned against slavery, drunkenness, bawling, immorality, animal sports, working conditions. Salvation Army C19th worked with the poor. But C19th liberal theology secularised the Spirit – culture, nature, politics, institutions were seen as the work of the Spirit; the differential between world and Spirit was lost and liberal theologians supported the German military machine in both wars. Evangelicals have reacted by retreating into a gospel of personal salvation; we have a great theology of the word but a poor one of the world. Pentecostal and charismatic movements began as personal piety but are now moving outwards.

### 7. *The Spirit who constrains and convicts*

RC theologian Gaybba defines the Spirit as love; when love is evident, there is the Spirit. But what looks like love may have other motivations. The doctrine of grace is important here. Calvin (Reformed doctrine) distinguished between common grace (at work in world) and saving grace (in individuals). Prevenient grace (Armenian doctrine) works in individuals to help them respond to Christ – as in Richardson's account of the ways different peoples are prepared for the gospel in different ways by their history.

Most theologians hold that the Spirit reveals himself in many ways to people, not just through scripture and kerygma – through culture, creation, conscience:

- John 16.3, convicting the world
- Mark 3.29, blaspheming against the HS – rejecting his work and witness means rejecting salvation
- Acts 7.51f – Stephen accuses Pharisees of resisting the Spirit
- Romans 2.14f – Gentiles have the law written on their hearts

### 8. *The Spirit of regeneration*

Regeneration – the work of the Spirit in making us new, 'the greatest miracle that any person can ever experience, for while one remains the same person, he is born anew in the whole of his being' – Rodman Williams.

Phrase regeneration or new birth is rare in NT (*paliggenesias*; Matt 19.28, Titus 3.5). But its semantic equivalents are common, eg Jn 3.1-8, 1 Peter 1.3. In Gk it conveyed cosmic renewal, in Hellenistic Judaism it referred to return/restoration after exile. It was foretold in the OT – eg Ezekiel 11.19, 36.27, 37. Jesus talked about it in Jn 3. Rebirth is not something we do but something done to us.

Word renewal, *anakainoseos*, is paired with regeneration in Titus – perhaps regeneration points to the end of the old life, renewal to the formation of the new.

Our spirits are regenerated, and we may see signs of the regeneration of our bodies too – but this will be partial and prophetic.

### 9. *The Spirit and sanctification*

Sanctification = sanctus + facere; it translates the OT word qadosh, to cut – separation unto God. It's a present experience and a future hope.

Key texts:

- Romans 6.1-14 – waging war on the mind
- Hebrews 12 – fixing our eyes on Christ
- Galatians 5 – walking in the Spirit

### 10. *The Spirit and sonship*

Canadian statistics showing most disturbed children and criminal adults come from fatherless homes. Yet we have a fatherless generation – 1.8m one-parent families in UK in 2004. God is father to the fatherless. Few other religions call God Father.

Abba – comes 3 times, Mk 14.38, Romans 8.15, Gal 4.6; expresses the core of Jesus' religious life.

In the ancient Roman world adoption was common among the ruling classes, usually to ensure an appropriate successor where the natural heir was not promising.

Just as Christian men must come to terms with being described as the bride of Christ, Christian women must learn to be adopted sons. They remain women, but take the honour of first-born son. Paul uses the term 5x: Rom 8.15, 23 and 9.4; Gal 4.5, Eph 1.5).

## *11. The Spirit who satisfies*

The Spirit was a living experience in the church long before he was an article in the creed. The experiential is as important as the credal. Love, joy and peace are the first fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5.

Romans 5.5 says God's love has been poured into our hearts through the HS which has been given to us.

Augustine spoke of Pentecost as a baptism of love. Aquinas said 'man cannot live without joy; therefore when he is deprived of true spiritual joys it is necessary that he become addicted to carnal pleasures', 196.

## *12. The Spirit of Power*

William Seymour: 'the Pentecostal power, when you sum it all up, is just more of God's love. If it does not bring more love, it is simply counterfeit'. Charles Spurgeon had foretold a future pouring out of the Spirit in 1855.

Movements of the Spirit have often lost their way, misunderstanding the reason for the outpouring of the Spirit – which is not for the satisfaction of believers but to empower them to bring the gospel to the lost. John 7, Acts 2 – about going OUT.

The Spirit is equated with power in the OT and in the life of Jesus, and then in Acts and Paul, eg 1 Thess 1.5-6.

In Ephesians 1 and 3 Paul prays for more power of the Spirit – it comes through discipleship.

Key survey of the work of the Spirit throughout history is Stanley Burgess.

## *13. Baptism in the Holy Spirit*

Charles Parham felt from the beginning that the purpose of BIS was 'power for service'.

*Baptizo* means dip, immerse, wash, plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm, soak. Jesus and Peter say baptism in the Spirit is analogous to John's baptism with water – that Jesus will immerse, plunge, drench etc believers into the Spirit of God.

Refs: Matt 3.11, Mk 1.8, Lk 3.16, Jn 1.33, Acts 1.5, Acts 11.16, 1 Cor 12.13 – none mentions tongues, charisms or power.

## *14. The Spirit who gives gifts*

The true Church is not constituted by externals such as buildings, or internals such as her liturgies and creeds; the true Church is the gathering by the Spirit of those who have tasted of the Spirit, p255-56.

Gifts and ministries of the Spirit – 4 listings (Rom 12, 1 Cor 12 2 lots, Eph 4). These offer 20 distinct gifts/ministries. Prophecy is the only constant.

Fee: 'only among intellectuals and in a scientific age is it thought to be too hard for God to heal the sick'.

### **Historical evidence for the continuity of the remarkable charisms**

List of witnesses:

C1 – Ignatius, Ep Barnabus, Didache, Hermas

C2-3 – Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian

C3 – Clement, Origen, Novatian, Hippolytus, Cyprian

C4 – Ambrose, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Antony, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Hilary of Poitiers, Augustine

C6 – Gregory the Great

MA – gift list focussed now on Isaiah 11.2; but numerous egs of miracles and prophecy

C12 – Bernard, Richard of St Victor, Hildegard

C13 – Bonaventure, Francis, Aquinas, Gertrude of Helfta

C14 – Brigitta of Sweden, Catherine of Siena

C16 – reformers rejected the miraculous as part of tainted Catholic Christianity; Luther said gifts had ceased but prayed for healing; Calvin believed prophecy=preaching; Ignatius of Loyola spoke in tongues

C17 – Scottish Puritans

C18 – Wesley

C19 – Spurgeon, Irvingites, Pentecostalism

Advice for using the gifts.

## *15. The Spirit and the Word*

AW Tozer: God is 'by His nature continuously articulate'. Scripture tells us he speaks through creation (Ps 19), conscience (Rom 2.14f), the kerygma (1 Pe 1.25), the charisms (1 Cor 12.4-11), and the canon (2 Tim 3.16). The Word is scribed by the Spirit.

The Canon included works deemed to be apostolic, Catholic (in wide use), historic and orthodox. By C9 there were at least 280 noncanonical books claiming to be by biblical writers! In 382 the Council of Carthage affirmed the current 27 books of the NT as canonical. The move to form a canon was motivated by an attempt to control the excesses of claimed inspirations by Gnostics, Montanists et al. The Reformation and printing encouraged the study of texts and sermons on texts, and these were opened to wider interpretation than that offered by received tradition. Luther said you must first hear the word, then the Spirit went to work in the hearts of those who had done so. So the Spirit, though the author of scripture, becomes subordinated to scripture.

## *16. The Spirit of worship and prayer*

The Spirit is a singing Spirit – revealing Christ, touching our hearts, opening our mouths in praise. The litmus test of any claim to revelation or encounter with the Spirit is whether I worship God more. Worship and praise are the hallmarks of every spiritual renewal.

Though the Spirit is God, co-equal with Father and Son, strangely he is never biblically the object of our worship. He enables us to adore God and exalt Christ, but never takes centre stage – he's production manager. 'A friend and seminary tutor in theology and worship told my enthralled students of an occurrence when, years earlier, he and his wife had been leading a worship time in a small church in the north of England. Suddenly the worship was interrupted with shouts of amazement and excitement by many. A man was shoved to the microphone and said he'd been healed – again shouts of delight and praise. When my friend asked him how he knew, he replied: 'I was born mute!'

## *17. The Spirit and world mission*

God is a missionary God. God sends his Son, the Father and Son send the Spirit, the Spirit sends the Church. IN C18th the Moravian church experienced the power of the Spirit falling on them in a meeting. Over the next 25 years they sent out over 200 missionaries... The 2 C18th awakenings in UK/US resulted in missionary fervour through Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards et al. The 2 waves of renewal in C19th resulted in a passion for mission. And that was before the Pentecostals. Through the re-establishment of a personal relationship with Jesus through the experience of the Spirit, we become aware of the power of the Spirit as the basis for proclaiming the gospel.

The Church has focussed on her officers and offices, orders and ordinations. But when it comes to mission, never has so much been left by so many to so few. Michael Green: 'the primary purpose the Spirit is given is for mission' – SP agrees, as long as we understand mission as more than just proclamation. The mission of the Church is to partner with the missionary Spirit in conveying his divine offer of transformation.

[www.alisonmorgan.co.uk](http://www.alisonmorgan.co.uk)

[www.resource-arm.net](http://www.resource-arm.net).