

## ‘I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT’

That’s what we say in our Creed, and we’re taking it seriously in our summer series this year. Our text is Simon Ponsonby’s *God Inside Out*, which takes us on a journey through Scripture, history, and practice as we engage with God the Holy Spirit.

‘...it presents a dynamic picture of the One who is God with us, working in and through us, shaping us into the character of Christ and equipping us for the adventure of serving others.’  
(*God Inside Out*, back cover).

The subtitle of Simon’s book is ‘*An In-depth Study of the Holy Spirit*.’ It is certainly in-depth, and will require time & effort. For some, that won’t be a problem, while for others it will be hard work. My advice is to (a) persevere at a steady pace, and (b) talk about it with others. The great thing about doing this as a church, especially in home groups, is that we can help each other.

Each page of this companion contains an extensive quotation and lists the subheadings of the chapter we’re using that week. This summary will remind you of what you’ve read. Under the ‘Meditate’ heading are some relevant Scriptures, and ‘Reflect’ offers some basic questions to provoke discussion. Don’t forget to look out for the weekly (cream) sheet, which will offer more material for meditation and reflection.

*God Inside Out* is likely to challenge *all of us* in different ways – not only in the way we think about God, but in the way we practice our daily Christianity. This is about learning to love God the Holy Spirit with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our strength. Let’s rise to that challenge together, as a community of Christ’s disciples, growing together in knowledge, wisdom, and faith...

*James Pettit.*

# God inside out

A Companion to Simon Ponsonby’s  
*God Inside Out*  
An In-depth Study of the Holy Spirit

Malmesbury Abbey  
Summer 2008

## THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD (Chapter 15, July 27<sup>th</sup>)

“Holy Scripture claims to be inspired by God. Jesus believed this, the Apostles believed this, the early Church Fathers believed this, and we therefore should believe it. God has signally spoken through his prophets and pre-eminently through his son Jesus Christ. The authors and scribal editors of Scripture may or may not always have recognised they were working on and writing sacred God-inspired texts, but the Church recognises this. For nearly two millennia, God’s Spirit who breathed this word continues to illuminate and activate this word to the hearts and minds of those who hear and read it. It is the fixed, normative, unchanging, unchallenged word of God.” (page 297)

- Introduction – The Continuously Articulate Spirit (281–283)
- Scripture is the Word of God by the Spirit of God (283–286)
  - *All Scripture*
  - *God-Breathed*
- From Inspired Old Testament Scriptures to New Testament (286–289)
- Word is Spirit or Word and Spirit (289–290)
- Reformation – Biblical, Radical, Spiritual (290–296)
  - *The Spirit outside the Word*
  - *The Spirit inside the Word*
  - *The Spirit alongside the Word*
- Conclusion (296–298)

### MEDITATE

Psalm 19; 2 Timothy 3:12–16

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘The Puritans found the middle-way, the *Spirit alongside the word*, truly holding word and Spirit together, recognising that the Spirit wrote Scripture, inspired its presentation and reading, and applied it personally to the individual. But they also understood that the Spirit’s word was heard outside but alongside Scripture...’ (297).

## THE SPIRIT AND WORLD MISSION (Chapter 17, Pentecost, May 11<sup>th</sup>)

“The Spirit’s whole role is missionary. God inside out to bring those outside in. The sent-out Spirit sends out the Church to gather in the wretched, poor, blind, thirsty, hungry, naked and lost – that they might be beautified and glorified in the renewing holy love of God revealed on Golgotha’s bloody mount.” (page 331)

- Introduction – The Missionary God (317–318)
- A Great Commission, a Great Companion (318–321)
- Acts 1:8 – Advance Aflame (322–325)
  - *Jerusalem*
  - *Judea*
  - *Samaria*
  - *The Gentiles*
  - *To the Uttermost Ends*
- An Unfinished Task (325–326)
- What God has Joined Let No Man Put Asunder (326–328)
- The Sent Spirit Sending the Church (328–330)
- Conclusion – Don’t Internalise the Externalising Evangelising Spirit (330–332)

### MEDITATE

Acts 2:1–21; John 7:37–39

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘The mission of the Church is to partner with the missionary Spirit in conveying his divine offer of transformation – God outside to bring the world inside.’ (331).

## THE DIVINITY AND PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT (Chapter 1, Trinity Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>)

“But he is not a force or energy to be manipulated for my own ends, but Lord in his sovereign freedom, to be ‘worshipped and glorified’. As a person, he is a ‘being in relation; with me, a being/person wired for relationship. The Holy Spirit is not an *It*, not a *What*, but a *Thou*, a *He*, a *Who*. No oblong blur, but God, outgoing, outreaching, outstretching to me in love. The Spirit is not a vague, distant, abstract, incommunicable force-field, but Divine Lord and personal Lover.” (page 27)

- Introduction (13–17)
- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person Within the One God (17–26)
  - *The Holy Spirit’s Divinity*
    - *Genesis 1:1-2; Luke 1:35; Acts 5:3f; 2 Corinthians 3:3*
    - *The Holy Spirit’s divine attributes*
    - *The Holy Spirit’s divine actions*
    - *The Holy Spirit’s divine associations*
  - *The Holy Spirit’s Personality*
    - *Holy Number-crunching*
    - *Who’s who?*
    - *Qualities of ‘personhood’ exhibited by the Spirit*
- Conclusion (26–27)

### MEDITATE

2 Corinthians 13:11–14; Matthew 28:16–20

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘The Spirit is eternal, personal, powerful God. What difference does, should that make to my worship, work, and my walk with him?’ (26).

## THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES GIFTS (Chapter 14, July 20<sup>th</sup>)

“We live in extraordinary days. We have discovered that God has not changed – even as he promised – that he is with us, empowering and equipping the Church, revealing his nature and will through his gifts. That which many longed for – seeing with the eye on history and the eye of faith – God has renewed in our experience. In the twentieth century, we have seen their prayers and those of millions of others dramatically answered.” (page 280)

- Introduction – A Gifted Church in the Power of the Spirit (255–256)
- The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit in the Church (257–266)
  - *Word of wisdom*
  - *Word of knowledge*
  - *Faith*
  - *Miracles and healing*
  - *Prophecy*
  - *Tongues (glossolalia)*
  - *Interpretation of tongues*
  - *Discernment of spirits*
- The Question of Continuity of the Charisms (266–277)
- Recognising and Releasing the Gifts (277–279)
- Conclusion (280)

### MEDITATE

1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 27–31; John 4:13–19

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘The gifts that flow from the Father’s gracious love must be used as a means to express the Father’s grace and love. If the Church seeks to exercise charisms [gifts] without the character of charis [grace], damage may result.’ (279).

## BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Ch.13, July 13<sup>th</sup>)

“HIS is the *regeneration* of the believer by the Spirit, the *incorporation* of that individual into the Body of Christ the Church where he or she grows and serves through the *impartation* of gifts by the residing Spirit. *This is God’s doing*. The Spirit-filled life is the sustaining, strengthening and outworking of that initial BIS.

*This is our doing*, through prayer, study, fellowship, the laying on of hands, disciplines of fasting, giving, the sacraments and service.” (page 254)

- Introduction (229)
- Eureka (230–253)
  - *Baptism in the Spirit in the New Testament*
  - *Acts 8 and 19 – converted but not baptised in the Spirit?*
  - *Baptised in the Spirit – a rose by any other name?*
  - *1 Corinthians 12:13*
  - *Three steps to heaven*
  - *What stage are you at?*
  - *Right and wrong at the same time?*
  - *If in doubt, think Latin!*
- Conclusion (253–254)

### MEDITATE

Acts 11:4–18; John 1:29–34

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘The Spirit-filled life may come like a flood in a crisis moment, though more usually it is gradual and incremental. We may sense the Spirit as a gentle dove or a purging fire...’ (254).

## THE SPIRIT AND CREATION (Chapter 5, May 25<sup>th</sup>)

“The Holy Spirit’s sphere of activity is not confined to the church or the history of salvation but reaches as far and as wide as creation itself...No period of time was ever or will ever be without the active presence of the Spirit. The Spirit is at work apart from the Bible and within the Bible; the Spirit was at work before Christ, in the time of Christ and after Christ – though of course never without reference to Him.” (page 99)

- Introduction (85–88)
  - *Pantheism; Paganism; Gnosticism; Deism; Panentheism*
- Lord, the Giver of Life (88–96)
  - *Genesis 1:1–2; Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:24–30; Acts 17:27–28*
- Summary (96–98)
  - *Scripture is clear that the Holy Spirit is intimately involved with creation.*
  - *Scripture is unclear on the exact manner in which the Spirit sustains and infuses creation with life.*
  - *Scripture is clear that the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer is a radical novum, without comparison to the Spirit’s role in creation.*
- Conclusion (98–100)

### MEDITATE

Psalm 104:24–35; Acts 17:24–28; John 1:1–3

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘Quantum mechanics, Newtonian physics, biology, chemistry – all these the Spirit of God creates, preserves and drives to their goal – ultimate intimate union between God and humankind.’ (96).

## THE SPIRIT OF REGENERATION (Chapter 8, June 1<sup>st</sup>)

“This doctrine of regeneration is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is the prime work of the Spirit – the core of pneumatology. God recreates me – no longer accursed under Adam, but adopted through Christ. No longer condemned but acquitted. No longer a sinner to the core but a saint. No longer dead but alive. No longer hell-bound but heaven-sent. How must we respond?” (page 153)

- Introduction (137–139)
- The Spirit of Regeneration (139–140)
- Regeneration in Biblical Presentation (140–145)
- Regeneration in Historical Debate (145–153)
  - *Regeneration is definitive*
  - *Regeneration is prospective*
  - *Regeneration is passive*
  - *Regeneration is superlative*
- Conclusion (153)

### MEDITATE

Titus 3:3–7; John 3:1-8

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘This doctrine is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is the prime work of the Spirit – the core of Pneumatology. God recreates me – no longer accursed under Adam, but adopted through Christ.’ (153).

## HINDRANCES TO THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE (from MORE Chapter 4, July 6<sup>th</sup>)

“Despite the invitation from God in his word and his constant wooing by the Spirit, despite the illustration throughout Scripture and church history of God responding to those who press in hard after him, why is it that so few actually do?

Many Christians seem blind to the promises and prayers in Scripture which indicate an ever increasing deepening in our experience of God, knowledge of God and power from God. Many have not, because they ask not, because they expect not, because they know not. Often our churchmanship conditions us and set parameters and limits on what is appropriate and what we may legitimately expect from God..” (page 78-79)

- Handbrakes on the Holy Spirit (78–90)
  1. An unexpectant heart
  2. An unyielded life
  3. An unconfessed sin
  4. An undiscerned enemy
  5. An unclaimed inheritance
  6. Unwanted gifts
  7. Unbelief because of unworthiness

### MEDITATE

Numbers 32:1–8, 14–22; Luke 3:21–22; 4:1–2.

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘Many have lived their Christian lives in such a small box that they do not know what God is giving and doing elsewhere and are too afraid to even look, lest they be led astray.’ (79).

## THE SPIRIT OF POWER (Chapter 12, June 29<sup>th</sup>)

“The Holy Spirit is God present with us. God is all-powerful, thus the Spirit is omnipotence omnipresent. This power is directed to the Church, to the saints, that they might live for him and he might live through them in the world, removing the ravages of sin and death. A powerful evil force is confronted by the power of divine love and trounced.” (page 225)

- Introduction – Engulfed in Love, Empowered in Service! (208–209)
- The Holy Spirit is God Omnipotently Omnipresent (210–211)
- The Power of the Spirit (211–224)
  - *The power of the Spirit in the Old Testament*
  - *The power of the Spirit in the life of Jesus*
  - *The power of the Spirit in the Apostolic mission*
  - *The power of the Spirit in discipleship*
  - *The power of the Spirit in the Church*
- Conclusion (225)

### MEDITATE

Zechariah 4:1–6; Romans 15:17–20; Luke 4:14–19

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
  2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
- Respond to the quotation: ‘God’s power is not abusive because it is the exercise of his love. It is a power to create, correct, renew. Love is always the presupposition of the exercise of divine power.’ (210).
    - *Spiritus sanctus sanctificat – the Holy Spirit sanctifies*
  - Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg? (165–172)
    - *‘From me comes your fruit’ (Hos. 14:8)*
    - 1. *Waging war*
    - 2. *Beholding Christ*
    - 3. *Walking in the Spirit*
    - Conclusion (172)

## THE SPIRIT AND SANCTIFICATION (Chapter 9, June 8<sup>th</sup>)

“Sanctification is holiness. It is an *accomplished state* through the blood of Jesus who has wiped away our sin and made us the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. It is a *present struggle*, as our new house-guest articulates his holy loving nature in us. It is a *future hope*, that one day at resurrection we will cast off this tainted mortal coil and put on the new pure resurrection body. In view of this, *entire sanctification* must be our passionate aim in this life, even if it may be unattainable.” (page 172)

- Introduction (154)
  - Sanctification – Towards a Definition (155–156)
  - The Church’s Meditation on Sanctification (156–162)
- Sanctification – a Biblical Presentation (162–165) MEDITATE**  
Romans 8:5–14; John 17:15–19

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘Sanctification affects *the whole our being* – body, soul, and spirit. It is a work in partnership with the Spirit of God and the action of the believer. It is aided by the disciplined life of prayer, worship, fasting, service, communion, study, and obedience to the word.’ (172).

## THE SPIRIT AND SONSHIP (Chapter 10, June 15<sup>th</sup>)

“God is Abba, our Father. I am his son, not his slave; I serve him freely and without fear – I relax in what my sonship means – security, identity, inheritance and freedom from anxiety and fear.

Being God’s own sons should cause us to wonder and worship with all our heart.

It should cause us to walk with our head held high that such dignity has been conferred upon us, sons who perpetuate God’s name and inherit his estate. It should compel our passionate witness to this broken, lost ‘fatherless generation’.”  
(page 187)

- Introduction (173–175)
- God – the Father to the Fatherless (175–176)
- Do we want a Father God? (176–179)
- Luke 15 – The Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Remarkable Father (179–180)
- God as Abba (181–187)
  - *Abba Father adopts*
  - *The Spirit of adoption*
- Conclusion (187–189)

### MEDITATE

Romans 8:14–17; Luke 15:11–31

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘This adoption as sons, like the Roman adoption, is an upwardly mobile move to a privileged position of dignity, authority, and responsibility – we become heirs of God with Christ.’ (186).

## THE SPIRIT WHO SATISFIES (Chapter 11, June 22<sup>nd</sup>)

“The world longs for love, peace, joy and deep satisfaction. These Christ promises and proffers through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is not only the authentic experience of the Church, but when experienced and evidenced, is deeply attractive to the world, which longs for it. It was the gospel message of sin forgiven, eternal salvation secured and dead souls brought to life with love, joy and peace, which marked the Spirit-filled early Church wooing the world to come to Christ over three centuries.” (page 206-207)

- Introduction (190–192)
- The Holy Spirit is Experienced as Love Unfathomable (193–196)
- The Holy Spirit is Experienced as Joy Unspeakable (196–199)
- The Holy Spirit is Experienced as Peace Unshakeable (199–202)
- The Holy Spirit is Experienced as a Stream Unstoppable (203–206)
- Conclusion (206–207)

### MEDITATE

Ephesians 3:14–19; John 4:7–14

### REFLECT

1. What, if anything, did you find exciting, or useful, or insightful in this chapter? Why?
2. What, if anything, did you find confusing, or troubling, or disagreeable in this chapter? Why?
3. Respond to the quotation: ‘A Spirit-filled Christian lives, paradoxically, between feeling deeply satisfied and yet at the same time dissatisfied and wanting more (Philippians 3:10–11).’ (205).