

# Living Spirit

## *Reflection of a temple priest*

“We got out of that more easily than I thought we might. Passover is always an anxious time for us. All the people coming up for the festival at Jerusalem, remembering the Exodus from slavery in Egypt and God’s promise to His people of a kingdom of their own. What do they find when they get here? Roman soldiers everywhere! We’ve had rabble rousers before, but this Jesus seemed a bit different. Not what you’d expect from a revolutionary plotting to throw out the Romans. But He certainly got lots of people worked up, ready to follow Him as the Messiah, Who would establish a new Jewish kingdom. As if the Romans would allow that. Very dangerous! But it’s finished, He’s dead now. There is gossip around that His tomb is empty and He isn’t dead. It’s just talk, things will soon settle down.”

The first couple of chapters of Acts records something of why it became a beginning rather than an end. The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and all they baptised. They came together to form a community, sharing all they had, “breaking bread” together daily and praying. Their experience of the Holy Spirit empowered and energised them in the service of God. More and more joined the community because its faith shone out. Soon, communities of followers of Jesus formed in towns outside Jerusalem, as their faith made those with whom they came into contact wanted a share in the joy and love of Christian fellowship.

Persecution and the martyrs provided witness to the power of the Spirit. Many withdrew from Society to solitary retreats or monastic communities in order to lead a purely spiritual life in prayer and meditation. The importance of the Spirit of the Christian God in the culture of the centuries following the death of Jesus can scarcely be exaggerated.

Today, there is less interest in things spiritual. Churches in this country have responded by putting more effort into improving the life experience of people in practical ways, doing good works in line with Jesus’ teaching to love our neighbours. We, in Christ Church, have done and are doing a lot in this respect and Andy Hall’s (our minister’s) departure has added to the burden of keeping the church running.

We must be aware of the risk that we become so busy with buildings and the community outreach that we put insufficient time and energy into cultivating a close loving fellowship in the company of the Holy Spirit. We can feel most keenly the power of the Holy Spirit moving in this place when we spend quiet time together opening our minds and hearts to each other and to God.

**Robert Lock**