



Preface to the Second Edition



It is now eleven years since Prebendary Peter Johnston invited me to address the Islington Conference on the work of the Holy Spirit, and my talk was afterward expanded and published under the title *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*.

Since then the movement that is called by some “neo-pentecostal,” but by most “charismatic,” has continued to spread. It is now an almost worldwide phenomenon, with highly respected church people among its leaders. One cannot evaluate the contemporary church scene without taking it into account.

There can be no question that God has used this movement to bring blessing to large numbers of people. Many

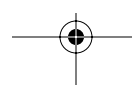




Christians testify to having experienced new liberty and love, an inward release from the bondage of inhibitions, an overflowing joy and peace in believing, a stronger sense of the reality of God, a warmth of Christian fellowship unknown before, and a fresh zeal for evangelism. The movement constitutes a healthy challenge to all mediocre Christian living and all stuffy church life.

At the same time careful assessments are being made from varying points of view. Charismatic leaders are often the first to admit that there have been some causes for disquiet and that the task of serious theological debate has only just begun. One of the difficulties in the continuing discussion is that the charismatic movement is not an organized church or society with official doctrinal formularies. The Pentecostal churches, which have come into being since the turn of the century, do have published confessions of faith to which their pastors must adhere. But the charismatic movement is still very fluid, and its leaders and members are not all in *full* theological accord with one another. Some, it seems, hold a *full* "pentecostal" position, virtually indistinguishable from that of Pentecostal churches. Others claim to have had what they are happy to call a "pentecostal" experience, but do not formulate it in terms of classical "pentecostal theology." Yet others are in a state of flux in their own understanding, and are still seeking the right way to express their experience theologically.

Such flexibility is very welcome, partly because it is a to-



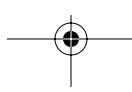


ken of their openness, and partly because it should stop anyone neatly polarizing the situation into “charismatics” and “noncharismatics,” since an increasing number of people appear to have a foot in both camps. Although welcome, this fluidity also makes the task of assessment more difficult, since it is not always clear to whom or about whom one is talking. I would like to apologize in advance if some self-confessed “charismatic” Christians who read these pages do not recognize themselves in what I write! I can only plead that I have tried to be objective and honest, to use information culled from actual people and published literature, and not to draw any caricatures.

Let me now explain why I have rewritten and expanded the booklet published in 1964. What are the reasons for a second edition?

First, on rereading what I wrote eleven years ago, some parts struck me as obscure and others as weak, while the whole seemed incomplete. So I have tried to clarify what was obscure and to strengthen what was weak. In particular, I have divided the original material into two separate chapters, which are now respectively titled “The Promise of the Spirit” and “The Fullness of the Spirit.” I have also expanded it, emphasizing common ground and indicating areas of continuing disagreement. I have then added new material in two further chapters titled “The Fruit of the Spirit” and “The Gifts of the Spirit.”

My second reason is more personal. During recent years I





have regularly received letters from people who say they have heard that, since writing *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, I have changed my views. This is not so. The revised edition gives me the chance to correct this false rumor.

Third, there is the need for all of us, whatever our precise stance on this issue may be, to remain in fruitful fellowship and dialogue with one another. None of us finds this easy. It takes considerable maturity to make and to maintain cordial personal relationships with people with whom one does not see eye to eye. At a recent conference I felt it right to confess my own immaturity both in having been too negative toward the charismatic movement and in having been too reluctant to meet its leaders and talk with them. I went on to suggest three areas that I felt might well be an agreed basis for further discussion. It may be helpful if I mention these here.

The first is *the objectivity of truth*. We live in very subjective days in which existentialism distinguishes sharply between “authentic” and “unauthentic” living, and uses purely subjective criteria by which to assess what is “authentic,” namely whether it seems authentic to me at the moment. But Christians, especially evangelical Christians, are convinced that God has spoken historically and objectively, that his Word culminated in Christ and in the apostolic witness to Christ, and that Scripture is precisely God’s Word written for our learning. All our traditions, all our opinions and all our experiences must therefore be submitted to the independent and objective test of biblical truth.





Second, *the centrality of Christ*. In theory at least, all of us agree also on this. Our eyes have been opened to see the truth as it is in Jesus and our lips to confess that he is Lord. We have no difficulty in subscribing to the great affirmations of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians that Jesus Christ is head of the universe and of the church; that God's purpose is "that in everything he might be pre-eminent" (1:11-18); that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (2:9); and that we ourselves "have come to fullness of life" in him (2:10).

It is not enough, however, to pay lip service to these statements about the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ; all of us have to go further and work out their implications. Some Christians give the impression that they hold a kind of "Jesus-plus" doctrine, namely, "You have come to Jesus, which is fine; but now you need something extra to complete your initiation." Others lay such emphasis on the sufficiency of Christ that they seem to have a static concept of the Christian life that allows no room either for growth into maturity or for deeper, fuller experiences of Christ.

Third, we should be able to agree on *the diversity of life*. That is to say, the living God of nature and of Scripture is a God of rich and colorful diversity. He has made every human being, every blade of grass, every snowflake different. I confess, therefore, that the longer I live the more hostile I become to all stereotypes. Yet some of us seem very anxious to force each other through our particular hoops and cast each





other in our particular molds. Is this not always regrettable? My own belief, as I try to elaborate in the later pages of this book, is that there is a wide variety of spiritual experiences and a wide variety of spiritual gifts. If we will but renounce the desire to imprison each other in strait jackets, we will find a new freedom and a new fellowship in the God of abundant diversity.

Finally, I should like to emphasize that my purpose in this book is not polemical, for I am a man of peace, not war. If sometimes I have been negative, it is only in order to clarify the corresponding positive truth. I have also posed some questions, which seem to need to be asked and answered. But I have no desire to hurt or embarrass anybody. My main concern is to try to expound certain important passages of Scripture. And my objective in this is that all of us may grasp more clearly both the greatness of our inheritance in Christ in order to enter into it more fully, and also the greatness of our responsibility to manifest all the fruits of the Spirit in our lives and to exercise those gifts of the Spirit, which in his gracious sovereignty he has bestowed upon us.



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