

Reformation
& Revival



A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

Volume 3, Number 2 • Spring 1994

author has gone too far when he writes: "It ought to go without saying that what is usually termed the charismatic movement embodies the concerns and experiences of those who, for the most part, belong to Christ." Yet it is because of this perspective that this book would be a good one to give to someone willing to examine his experience by the Word of God.

On the other hand, this reviewer wonders whether the author's style of writing will find a ready audience outside the community of professional theologians and those with formal theological training. Several portions of the book are written in such a way that the untrained layperson will get lost. Greek words are not transliterated, technical terms (like eschatological, subeschatological, post-Kantian ontology and epistemology) are used without any clear definition given, and concepts are communicated which would be very complex for the untrained mind. These observations would not be made as a criticism except for the fact that the author specifically stated: "The audience I have had in mind while writing is the wider Christian community of all interested and serious students of Scripture, not only (and not especially) professional theologians and those with formal theological training" (p. 10).

Although the Scripture index is helpful, one looks in vain for a similar topical index or a bibliography. The latter would be especially helpful to point readers to other material on the same subject.

The main issues of contention are dealt with in chapters 4 and 5, where Dr. Gaffin demonstrates that both prophecy and tongues are revelatory gifts, temporarily given to the church during its foundational, apostolic era, which are inseparably connected with the ministry of the apostles. Since the apostles have been permanently withdrawn from the church, so have these temporary, revelatory gifts. This position, of course, is not new, but the manner and method

used to demonstrate this conclusion are worth the price of the book.

This issue continues to divide Christ's church. Sadly, too often carnality, not spirituality, marks the conflict. How tragic! Thank God for authors such as Dr. Gaffin who are men of scholarship and biblical integrity manifesting the fruit of the Spirit while examining the gifts of the Spirit. May that spirit be imitated by all who call themselves friends of Jesus Christ.

Michael Gaydosh
Amityville, New York

Keep In Step with the Spirit

J. I. Packer
Fleming H. Revell, 1984.
301 pages, paper, \$9.95.

While there is no need to treat any author as sacrosanct it is to be reckoned that Dr. Packer, author of so many excellent books, always brings to the study of any subject a clear, mature and well reasoned presentation that today seems so sadly lacking, especially when the subject is pneumatology. In this volume, Packer, taking little if anything for granted, leads us skillfully over the rocky terrain of an often misunderstood and misapplied biblical doctrine. We have often come to expect much from this world-class theologian, and expectations do not fail us in the present case. The spirit of this book is irenic in a sea of heated debate, and pastoral where much wisdom is called for in this present hour. It is a potent corrective to many of the excesses currently found in both the charismatic and broadly evangelical communities.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Packer begins chapter 1, appropriately titled "Getting the Spirit Into Fo-

cus," by helping clear up many lopsided misconceptions about the role of the Spirit in the life of the contemporary church in areas of power for living, performance of ministry, purity of motives, and presentation of reality for decision. He points out, for instance, that evangelical stress on "supernatural sanctity through the Spirit as something real and necessary has been and always will be timely teaching" (p. 24). Nevertheless, this is not the be-all and end-all of the Spirit's ministry in the life of the believer. A very careful and kind critique of the Keswick and "Victorious Life" movements is offered. In like manner those points remaining are more than adequately dealt with, showing the need to have a more biblically and well-rounded understanding of the Spirit's ministry if one is to enjoy basic spiritual health. Packer then brings into sharp focus what he believes to be "the essence, heart, and core of the Spirit's work" (p. 47), namely, that of "presence." He says, "By this I mean that the Spirit makes known the personal presence in and with the Christian and the church of the risen, reigning Saviour, the Jesus of history, who is the Christ of faith" (p. 47). This presence is not the omnipresence of traditional theology, but rather, "What Bible writers meant when they spoke of God being present with His people, namely, God acting in particular situations to bless faithful folk and thus make them know His love and help and draw forth their worship" (p. 48). The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit is to impart such knowledge so that three things continue to happen: personal fellowship with Jesus, personal transformation of character into Jesus' likeness, and the Spirit-given certainty of being loved, redeemed, and adopted through Christ into the Father's family. "By these phenomena of experience, Spirit-given knowledge of Christ's presence ... shows itself" (p. 49).

In chapter 2 Packer details the history of the presence and place of the Holy Spirit's ministry. The presence re-

ferred to here by Dr. Packer is a manifest awareness of three things: that the Christ of Holy Writ is here, that He is active, and, that He is glorious. In short, all that Jesus was and is, all that He did and does, is mediated now to believers by and through the presence of the Spirit.

Chapter 3, titled "Mapping the Spirit's Path: The Way of Obedience," is perhaps the most practically helpful section of the entire book. In it the reader is offered much in the way of good, solid counsel as to what it means to be "led by the Spirit." Certainly not to be ignored is the discussion and accurate description of the evangelical misapprehension of this very point. Here, as in so much of his work, Packer's love of the Puritans, their pathos and desire to make theology practical, come through for those familiar with his previous and subsequent writings.

Of particular interest are chapters 4-6, in which a very kind, but nonetheless honest, assessment is made of various expressions of the higher life, victorious life and Pentecostal/charismatic experience, both positive and negative. Great care is given here to appreciate those areas where these expressions have brought to the church fresh awareness of the need to recognize that theology must live, while also pointing out those dangerous pitfalls of excess and over emphasis. In other words, the danger of attempting to dichotomize heart and head.

Chapter 7 provides a brief analysis of the need for revival, a subject obviously dear to Packer's own heart. It is gratifying to discover that Packer recognizes the struggle that exists for the church to reach a ground of peaceful coexistence, without compromise, with brethren who are often confused theologically, but who display real love for Christ and the Word of God. This approach will put off some but will provide healing in the church for others.

The appendix includes a helpful discussion of Romans 7 and the "wretched man." The book includes chapter note

references, and an extensive Scripture and topical index.

I first read this book when it was released ten years ago, and recently in rereading it found it just as relevant as then. It is judicious, wise and sober, breathing an evangelical spirit throughout. Still an excellent read!

Michael L. Shrum
Lebanon, Tennessee

The Mystery of the Holy Spirit

R. C. Sproul
Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990.
191 pages, cloth, \$12.99.

In another well-written, theologically sound, and worship-evoking book (cf. *The Holiness of God*, 1985; *Chosen By God*, 1986), R. C. Sproul presents biblical teaching concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit. With an abundance of memorable illustrations, precise definitions and relevant personal anecdotes, Sproul systematically discipled his reader on a broad range of biblical texts (117 Old and New Testament references), relevant points from church history (the major church councils and two dozen references to Calvin and Luther), and recent theological challenges (including a page on the so-called lordship salvation issue and a chapter covering neo-Pentecostalism).

Sproul organizes his material into ten very manageable chapters, which makes this book an appealing project for all levels of laymen, not to mention the busy pastor.

In the first four chapters Sproul leads his reader into the mystery of the Trinity, beginning with "Who Is the Holy Spirit?" and "The Holy Spirit Is God." Chapter 3 answers two common objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, giving Sproul the opportunity to employ his keen apologetic and communication skills. For instance, as he ends a section on

the Arian controversy (p. 44), he describes the resulting *Gloria Patri* as "a trinitarian fight song." Chapter 4, on "Essence and Person: Probing the Mystery of the Trinity," is the second longest chapter in the book and, perhaps, the most cumbersome as he discusses in sequence several important terms (contradiction, paradox, mystery, *ousia*, *logos*, essence, existence, subsistence, and person/*persona*) in English, Greek, Hebrew and Latin. Before he moves on, he encourages his reader:

Most believers would be happy to leave theological talk to the professional theologians and get on with living the Christian life. But centuries of theologizing have made it clear that the Christian life is not lived rightly without the right beliefs as the foundation. Not every Christian needs to be a seminary-trained theological scholar, but every Christian does need to understand the nature of the God we worship. (We are supposed to love God with all our *mind*.) Sometimes the understanding is easy, as when the sinner, seeing his need and seeing God's mercy, says with total sincerity, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." But at times more headwork is required. And in the midst of many conflicting opinions and statements about God and the Holy Spirit, headwork is essential (p.73).

Chapter 5, "The Holy Spirit in Creation," presents the Holy Spirit as the Orderer of creation (Genesis 1), the Illuminator of the darkness (John 1), and as the Power Source of all life (Acts 17). Although the application of John 1:4-5 to the Holy Spirit on page 88 is confusing, the chapter as a whole is clear and helpful.

The last five chapters of the book are all strong and engaging. Chapter 6, "The New Genesis," addresses the role of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, with an extensive unfolding of John 3 and Ephesians 2. Sproul's solid grasp of Reformed theology and the wonderful doctrines of grace, which permeate the entire book, shine brightly in this

chapter. Chapter 7, "Safe and Sound By the Holy Spirit," is a refreshing presentation of the work of sanctification, a view which is sorely needed in American churches today!

How does Sproul address the charismatic issues? In chapter 8, titled "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit," he explains his intentions:

It is not within the scope of this book to chronicle the history of the Charismatic movement or to evaluate in detail all the dimensions of Charismatic theology.... My focal point in this chapter will be on one central doctrine that is at the core of Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal theology: the baptism of the Holy Spirit (pp. 135-36).

In this, the longest chapter of the book, Sproul provides some information on the holiness movement and Pentecostalism before systematically covering the content and significance of the material in the book of Acts. "My complaint against the Neo-Pentecostal theology," he writes, "is that it tends to have too low a view of Pentecost" (p.145). He also contrasts the distribution of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments. With fresh vigor and a firm exegetical footing Sproul presents the historical, orthodox view on the baptism of the Spirit.

In light of the Old Testament principle of limited distribution of the Holy Spirit, the Day of Pentecost points to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit not on some of God's people but on *all* of God's people.... This is a key point that is obscured by the Neo-Pentecostal theology. Neo-Pentecostalism grants that the distribution of the Holy Spirit is available for all of God's people but not necessarily gained by all of God's people (p.149).

In God's plan of redemption the Holy Spirit has gifted every believer for ministry. The whole church has been empowered from on high. There are not two levels of believers — gifted

and nongifted, baptized in the Spirit and not baptized in the Spirit (p. 157).

Chapter 9 on "The Fruit of the Holy Spirit" was personally the most beneficial. Sproul takes the time to list and define the seventeen works of the flesh (Galatians 5), as well as eight of the nine fruits of the Spirit (the last, self-control, "flows from the other virtues" (p. 175). But then Sproul challenges the prevailing trends and points to the church's current, almost exclusive, emphasis on spiritual *gifts* to the neglect of the *fruit* of the Spirit.

It is no accident that the fruit of the Spirit is not elevated in our ranks as the highest test of righteousness. There abides so much flesh in us that we prefer another standard. The fruit test is too high; we cannot attain it. So within our Christian subcultures we prefer to elevate some lesser test by which we can measure ourselves with more success. We can compete with greater facility if we mix some flesh together with Spirit.

How hard it is for us to be measured by our love! And please don't evaluate me by the standard of gentleness. I'm far too impatient to deserve patience as my standard of growth. It is easier for me to preach than to forbear. It is easier for me to write a book about about peace than to practice peace (pp. 165-66).

The challenges raised by chapter 9 are matched with implicit encouragement in chapter 10 where Sproul presents the Holy Spirit as "The Other Comforter." The name Paraclete is defined and applied to the Spirit's work in the Christian's life.

Unfortunately, the book has no index or bibliography to aid the reader. There is a plethora of material in this volume for the pastor preaching or teaching on the Holy Spirit, as well as a fairly comprehensive course on the doctrine for those needing an introduction or further study. Do not

mistake this small book as merely a primer or popular treatment, for it regularly breaks through introductory level material into refreshing depths of insight and forms of expression helpful to all who seek to know the mystery of the Holy Spirit. I highly commend it to all.

David J. Bissett
Rockland, Massachusetts

The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

John R. W. Stott
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (1976).
119 pages, paper, \$4.95.

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen a recovery of, and a renewed interest in, the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, with specific reference to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Renewal movements emphasizing signs and wonders, glossolalia, and divine healing have emerged both within and without evangelical Protestantism. While much good has been done through this renewal of interest in the Holy Spirit's work of regenerating, reviving and equipping the saints for ministry, questions still remain about the theological perspective underlying the charismatic movement and its understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. Inevitably, that which we believe about God will affect the way in which we live; misunderstanding about the person and work of the Holy Spirit may result in spiritual immaturity, imbalance, or, worse yet, deformity. It is with these matters in mind, that John Stott has provided us with the present volume. Originally delivered as a series of messages, the material has been adapted to book form which is broken into four sections dealing with the promise, fullness, fruit and gifts of the Spirit. Introductory in nature, the book is a careful and competent treatment of passages

relevant to the Spirit's ministry in both the Old and New Testaments. Stott brings the unusual perspective of pastor, scholar and evangelist to his task, and the reader is thus treated to a rich feast of responsible exegesis and application to the life of the Christian.

Especially helpful is Stott's sensitivity to the particulars of the period of time in which we live. The church and the world often parallel one another in ambition and interest; thoughtful consideration of why we believe and behave the way we do has been replaced by a mindless indulgence more concerned with pampering one's emotions than educating one's mind. Like the world, many in the church seem more interested in what gifts and goods they get from God, than what they should give back in self-denying, self-sacrificing service. Ours is a culture marked by pluralism in creed and permissiveness in practice; in the church, the objectivity of truth has been replaced by subjectivism; the supremacy of Christ for a misguided, self-focused, anemic variety of Christianity that has more interest in gifts than grace, self than the Savior.

Knowing the need for a deeper work of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing spiritual life of the believer, Stott sounds a needed note when he urges his readers not to rest content with mere experiences (whether Spirit given or man-made) as if they were an end in themselves, but rather to go on growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Maturity in thought, love for the Lord, growth in grace—these things are to be the focus of the believer's daily walk rather than the misguided pursuit of gifts, of emotional events in exchange for careful, reasoned, Spirit-directed study of the Scriptures. In saying this, Stott is not disparaging the emotional life of the Christian; if anything, most of us need more and not less emotional, heart-felt love for the Lord. His concern, rather, is with a sound, biblically-based theological framework for our understanding of the Spirit's work in

both the child of God and the church as a whole. Foundational to this understanding is awareness of the progressive, unfolding character of divine revelation over the centuries as it finds fulfillment in Christ and the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit today.

Thus, in approaching our study of the Spirit's work, we must take great care in our study of Scripture to make sure we interpret each verse in its historical context lest we misread some meaning into or out of the passage which is not warranted. Put simply, our understanding of the ministry of the Spirit in the purpose of God for His people must be found in the didactic rather than the descriptive parts of Scripture; i.e., the teaching sections (those which deal with doctrine and the content of the Christian faith objectively considered) are the ones we use to interpret the narrative sections (those which deal with history, events, experiences of the people of God). As a basic principle of Bible interpretation, this provides the reader an objective referent whereby he will be able to examine the events and experiences, gifts and grace, of the Spirit's work in the believer. It guards against random proof-texting that isolates a text from its context or from the overall teaching of Scripture on a particular topic. This interpretive principle sensitizes the student of Scripture to the historical development and progressive disclosure of God's self-authenticating revelation over the centuries that has come to us "in many portions and in many ways." Exposition of the Word of God, not subjective experiences in the child of God, is to be the standard for evaluating contemporary claims to prophetic, revelatory endowment, a separate baptism in the Spirit from an initial work of regeneration by the Spirit, or any other claims of Spirit-led teaching or activity that find little or questionable anchorage in Scripture.

For readers familiar with the oft-extravagant claims and questionable theological premises that characterize much,

but not all, of leaders and laity in what, for better or worse, has been termed the "charismatic movement," Stott's book is a helpful corrective for the Christian who is seeking to live a Christ-centered life in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. Stott reminds us that the Christian life *is* life in the Holy Spirit; from the beginning moment of our conversion when we were regenerated into the timeless future of eternity, every believer is in common possession of the Spirit of God, equally given to all who receive eternal life and enjoy the adoption as sons. In this respect, the New Testament "baptism" of the Spirit is simply the fulfillment of the Old Testament expectation of the "promise" of the Spirit, a promise of blessing which would be distinctive in focus in procuring the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of righteousness, while in extent it would be a universal blessing rooted in the finished work of Christ extended to all believers in all places, Jew and Gentile alike. In the person of Christ, we have the inauguration of the Messianic Age with the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, successively witnessed to in the forgiveness of sins and inclusion of Jews, proselytes, and Gentiles in the church of Jesus Christ. To be "baptized by or with the Spirit" is to be born again. Properly speaking, of the seven usages of some form of to "be baptized with the Spirit" mentioned in the New Testament, all have direct reference to the forgiveness of a sinner's sinfulness and the new life-relationship they now enjoy with a holy God as new creatures in Christ. Indeed, New Testament teaching on, and exhortation to, the living of the Christian life is rooted in what we have been given and now are in Christ. Not once, Stott insists, are we told to seek an additional "baptism with the Spirit" as a second, distinct, developmental stage of the Christian life. In Christ, the promises are yea and amen; to teach, as some do, that without this extra we will always be less than God intended, is to slight the finished work of Christ.

Although the gift of the Spirit is initiatory and a one-time event, the Christian life is marked by the spiritual growth and increasing experience of the life of God in the soul of regenerate man. Growth is a part of the normal Christian life. To be baptized with the Spirit is to receive the gift of the Spirit (the common heritage of all God's children). This fullness of the Spirit is conditional, however; and this fullness is something which can be repeated, maintained, lost or recovered. This fullness of the Spirit will vary from Christian to Christian. Fullness is God's intention for His child; failure to walk in the Spirit will result in the diminishment of the fullness of the Spirit. Stott excels in drawing out the implications of the fullness of the Spirit for the believer by emphasizing an important point often neglected in popular teaching: namely, the marks of the Spirit's fullness are moral—not miraculous; the maturing of spiritual fruit, not simply the multiplication of gifts. Spiritual qualities and activities, not supernatural phenomena, are to be the focus of the Christian's pursuits.

Is spiritual deception possible? Can Satan counterfeit supernatural phenomena? Can experience be misleading? "Yes," answers Stott, and it is for this reason we must be cautious and prudent to make sure that the fruit of our "spiritual experiences" leads in the direction of character formation in the image of Christ. Growth in Christlikeness is God's goal for the Christian: with God in enjoying His love, joy, and peace; with others in our expression of patience, kindness, and goodness toward them; and with ourselves in exhibiting consistent faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in how we live and behave.

The baptism of the Spirit not only includes grace for living as the gift of the Spirit creates the church's unity; it also results in the giving of gifts for the diverse ministries of the church, something which Stott summarizes as "a capacity which qualifies a person for ministry." At least twenty

such gifts are listed in the New Testament alone. While there may be some overlap between natural talents and spiritual gifts in that new spiritual motivations may lead to new use of personality temperament, talents, or material resources for the glory of God, not all are rooted in our personality from birth or in our use of what we have acquired of this world's goods. While some are of an ordinary nature (gifts of serving, etc.), others clearly are of an extraordinary nature (apostles and prophets). Of these latter, Stott convincingly argues that as they were of a foundational nature to the creation of the New Testament church in commission and use of revelatory gifts, they have since ceased operation in the ongoing work of the church, and such claims to hold these offices are bogus. Generally speaking, spiritual gifts come from grace, are given to each Christian, and are to be used for edification of others. Interestingly, this dispels the popular teaching of using private prayer language for one's own enrichment; gifts are given for the welfare of the body. Self-focused use is really misuse of God's intended purpose (see Stott's careful discussion on pp. 111ff.). In this vein, tongues are understood by Stott not as supernatural gibberish, but as known languages, supernaturally imparted and interpreted in user-friendly way for the building up of the body, as those languages are signs of the presence and power of God as well as means by which the Word of Life is proclaimed.

With his usual theological acumen, Stott has given us yet another carefully worded, concisely argued, biblical study on the baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit. As a contemporary author, Stott has few peers who can summarize so much so accurately and in so little space, only 119 pages in all. One might wish that he had expanded his discussion here and there at a few points, however. A more thorough elaboration of his remark on page 51 (similar comments appear on page 43) that "our water-baptism has signified

and sealed our Spirit-baptism” would have been helpful for both Baptists and paedobaptists alike. This reviewer, like Stott himself, is paedobaptist by conviction. Whether or not Stott’s confessional commitments lead him to a sacerdotalist view on the meaning of baptism is unclear from a statement like this. But since he had said no more on this, neither can we speculate beyond his words.

So far as the matter of “sign gifts” is concerned, Stott seems to allow opportunity for today’s believers to experience “visions and revelations of the Lord” (p. 70), i.e., deeper experiences of the work of the Spirit in the lives of believers. This, too, is an area of dispute among Bible-believing Christians. Are those experiences to be considered revelatory without being canonical? Are they a separate source of authority for the believer in addition to the written Word of God? Wishing to safeguard the ongoing work of the Spirit in illuminating the written Word and invigorating the life of faith in the true child of God, and knowing that there is a fair amount of historical precedent for things of this nature happening in Christians of noble profession over the years, more comment on the internal work of the Holy Spirit would have helped clarify what is a common experience for many Christians.

Apart from these few minor criticisms, we heartily commend Stott’s little book as a fine introduction, or stimulating refresher, to this subject. While not encyclopedic in its treatment nor historical in its analysis of the ways Christians have understood this subject through the centuries, and keeping in mind its restricted scope and goals, it excels in its overall purpose.

James M. Garretson
Columbia, Tennessee

Advice for Seekers

C. H. Spurgeon

Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, reprint 1993.

85 pages, paper, \$3.95.

Advice for Seekers by C. H. Spurgeon is a short but to-the-point book urging seekers to believe in Christ. The author does not waste words, and encourages the unbeliever to trust Christ immediately. He then proceeds to dismantle one by one the obstacles to belief that are in a seeker’s mind.

One chapter covers the idea that man thinks his works can win heaven. Spurgeon says we insult the wisdom and love of God with that thought, because if one gave all that he had to God it would be rejected! He advises an unbeliever to simply open his Bible for “It is the pilgrim’s guide.... This is one message of the gospel, ‘Believe and live.’ Trust in Him and you shall be saved.”

In another chapter Spurgeon compares the approachability of Jesus as compared to other important leaders of His day. One was unable to approach a king in Jesus’ time without fearing for his life. Even today, the world’s leaders surround themselves with bodyguards, making them invulnerable to the common man. However, the author makes it clear that anyone, regardless of status or sinfulness, can approach Jesus. Spurgeon presses the point that Christ is the only way for seekers to be saved. He points out that if one is not finding Christ, then perhaps he is looking in the wrong places. He deals briefly with areas such as trusting in creeds, seeking in the wrong spirit, and being a victim of a false doctrine.

“Hindrances to Coming to the Light” is a chapter that backs a seeker’s excuses further into a corner. Topics such as harboring sin, the need to forgive, being involved in shady dealings, and having a proud spirit are included in

this chapter.

In each chapter Spurgeon impresses the reader with the urgency of trusting Christ immediately. One can imagine a seeker saying to Spurgeon, "But, but, but . . ." and Spurgeon replying, "Oh, why are you waiting? Mischief will befall you. The sun is going down; hurry, traveler, in case you are overtaken with everlasting night."

This book is very easy to read and could easily be read in one sitting. It can be given to an unsaved friend or family member. It can be beneficial for one's personal devotions or for a family worship time. I highly recommend this book to both believers and unbelievers alike.

Stacy Armstrong
Carol Stream, Illinois

The Soul's Quest for God

R. C. Sproul
Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers (1992).
254 pages, cloth, \$12.99.

This book has nothing to do with helping the unregenerate "find" God. Rather, it is a discipleship manual for the elect who wish to grow in their sanctification. Thus, R.C. Sproul concludes his work with words that should have appeared at the beginning, "To seek God is the business of the Christian. The quest begins at conversion; it doesn't end there" (p. 205).

With that as his theme, the Orlando-based theologian and teacher unrolls an eleven-chapter map toward holiness that begins with "Restless Hearts" (chapter 1) and arrives at "The Soul's Final Destination" (chapter 11). What lie in between are nine biblically grounded and theologically orthodox chapters that point the reader toward a deeper knowledge of the God by whom he was saved (p. 63).

Sproul makes it clear at the outset of his work that this journey is not a simple one.

There are no quick and easy paths to spiritual maturity. The soul that seeks a deeper level of maturity must be prepared for a long, arduous task. If we are to seek the Kingdom of God, we must abandon any formulae that promise instant spiritual gratification (p. 7).

Dispensing with any illusions that this work is a simple "how-to," Sproul points to the mind as the trailhead in the believer's quest — "Christianity engages the mind" (p. 3) and "serves as a feeding trough for the soul" (p. 5). Thus in a somewhat unpredictable, yet always forward-moving, style Dr. Sproul takes his readers down well-known but little-traveled roads of doctrinal importance, filling the mind and nourishing the soul along the way.

The chapter titled "The Witness of the Holy Spirit" contains a compelling case for the sufficiency of the Scriptures. Sproul points out that, even though one may objectively prove the Bible's authority, the witness of the Holy Spirit is the only thing that can make him surrender to its power.

A well-crafted response to the classic question, "Is the Old Testament relevant," is set forth in the chapter, "Loving the Law of God." Beginning with a cogent overview of Psalm 119 and then highlighting Calvin's threefold function of the law, Sproul makes it eminently clear that the first thirty-nine books of the canon are for us today. Concluding the chapter with Deuteronomy 32:46-47 was the perfect touch.

Having established the importance of God's Word and His Spirit as guides in a believer's quest for God, Sproul holds up the example of three biblical characters who followed that guidance. The first is Mary.

Sproul devotes much of this section on Jesus' mother to working through evangelical misunderstandings and Catholic controversies concerning the nature of her identity and

the subsequent importance of it. In the end, he presents a woman who, to both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, "... is a worthy model of devotion, as seen in her humility, obedience, spirit of worship, pensive reflection on the deep things of God, perseverance in faith, and in personal affliction. These are the marks of a Christian" (p.129).

Set up against Mary's great privilege of bearing the Christ is the grave predicament of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Sproul notes that these three men acknowledged God's option to intervene on their behalf, "yet at the same time...recognized that they had no option" (p. 131). Their confidence in God's providence illustrates that whether it leads one toward life or death, it is always to be obeyed. Sproul then devotes an entire chapter to his third model.

Joseph is a shining example of purity in an area with which there has always been trouble in Christian history — sexual behavior (p. 137). Sproul observes that Joseph's purity was undergirded by a sensitive conscience, the key to which is the internal reinforcement of God's Word.

As the book winds down, Sproul answers questions regarding the nature of the soul. The humanist views of Descartes and Kant are addressed as well as theological struggles concerning the soul's two-part or three-part make-up (pp.158-71). In the end Sproul states that no matter what one thinks of the soul, Jesus declares that a single one is worth more than the whole world. Having thus articulated the value of the soul, Sproul gives the next chapter over to the feeding of it.

In a day of microwaveable, soul-warming techniques, Sproul brings the reader back to the age-old staples set forth in God's Word. A diet of the Scriptures, worship, prayer and fellowship is recommended, as well as Sproul's personal endorsement of the sacraments, liturgy, music and architecture.

The Soul's Quest ends with a picture of the believer's blessed life. "It includes a holistic satisfaction that touches the soul, the mind, the will, indeed the entire inner person" (p.231). This blessedness is not self-generated but "something God does *for us, to us and in us*" (italics the author's) and promotes within one's soul a greater ability to perceive the *visio Dei*, the beatific vision of God (pp. 231-32). Thus, Sproul concludes, "In the enjoyment of the beatific vision the soul finally reaches the goal of its supreme quest" (p. 250).

The one who has heard Sproul in person will easily conjure up the sound of his voice as he works his way through this volume. The professor's gravelly and sometimes tension-filled strains are most readily perceived in such Sproulesque overstatements as this one, regarding the myth that the gospel negates the Old Testament law of God, "We say, 'to the gallows with Moses,' as if the mediator of the Old Covenant was more oppressive than the Egyptian pharaoh he battled against" (p.106).

At the other end of the scale, one can easily imagine Sproul's characteristically passionate and hoarsely whispered descriptions, such as this concluding paragraph on the beatific vision:

One taste of this felicity will erase all painful memories and heal each dreadful wound incurred in this vale of tears. No scar will remain. The pilgrim's progress will be complete. The body of death, the burden of sin, will vaporize the moment we behold his face (p. 250).

Sproul's academic bent is evident in the use of theological trade language which is both a blessing and drawback. It is a blessing because it lifts the modern evangelical to a level of knowledge and understanding that he may not have otherwise attained. It is a drawback due, in part, to that same fact—so few evangelicals have been tutored in their historical and theological underpinnings that they may not

readily comprehend some of the unexplained terminology or concepts. For this reason a group study of the book should be led by one who has already read and understands it, and/or is acquainted with its new/old (you choose) vocabulary.

For personal study, Sproul's work could be described in the way J.I. Packer once characterized his own *Knowing God*, i.e., "chewy." This is not a book to be taken down in one gulp, but rather a meal to be savored, bite by bite, and followed with leisurely and soulful digestion.

Sproul once said that everyone should have at least one friend from history. True to his word, the leader of Ligonier Ministries introduces readers to not just one, but several of his own friends from antiquity to help illuminate the book's theme. The dedication reads, "For Aurelius, Thomas, Martin, Jean and Jonathan—who understand the soul's quest" (p. 36).

The hardest thing about this volume is the periodic difficulty with which it reads, making me wonder if it came from an audio tape. I can't imagine, unless they are part of a spoken transcript, that these three sentences—"No unbeliever seeks after God," "No pagan ever seeks God," and "Fallen humans are not by nature seekers after God" (p. 204)—escaped an editor's red pencil, since they fall within a few lines of each other. A lack of structural uniformity and style variation between chapters adds to my suspicion.

In the end, I found this book had led and fed me well in my soul's quest for God.

Randy Gruendyke
Wheaton, Illinois

The New Charismatics

Michael G. Moriarity

Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company (1992).

384 pages, paper, \$17.99.

This book sounds a warning of "dangerous new trends" in the charismatic movement. The author says, "Most non-Charismatic Christians know very little about what is going on inside the Charismatic arena." He shows that Oral and Richard Roberts, Jim and Tammy Bakker, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin and others, in spite of their sincerity, have been teaching false and dangerous doctrine for years. The author is noncharismatic but a graduate of Christ for the Nations Institute, Dallas, Texas, a charismatic school.

Moriarity tempers his judgments with words of approval for the Assemblies of God in general and individual leaders in particular who call others to anchor their experiences in biblical truth.

One would only hope that more [charismatic] leaders with a humble spirit ... would surface.... One ... would not see this as likely, however. There is a growing antagonism in charismatic ranks toward those who publicly (or privately) disagree with their teaching" (p. xvi).

This book is outlined in two parts. The first section (chapters 1-5) gives a historic sketch and running analysis of the Pentecostal/neo-Pentecostal/charismatic/new charismatic movement, examining the leading figures from Azusa Street in the early 1900s to the present. The rest of the book is a critique of Dominionism, Name It and Claim It, Health, Wealth and Prosperity, Direct Revelation and Power Evangelism.

The defining event of the Pentecostal movement in the United States was The Azusa Street revival meetings, 1906-

13. People prayed, spoke in tongues, shouted, danced, wept and fell into trances as crowds gathered night after night to receive the baptism of the Spirit. Virtually every Pentecostal group in America traces its roots directly or indirectly to Azusa Street.

Moriarity shows that the majority of the ministers in those early days in American Pentecostalism were out of the Wesleyan Holiness tradition. Men like Parham, Seymour and others already taught a second work of grace for power in sanctification and service. They had only to make the short step to tongues as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Thus, traditional American Pentecostalism is Wesleyan-Arminian-Holiness-Healing with the addition of glossolalia as a proof of the baptism of the Spirit. The old Methodists had their distinctives, namely, Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King. Aimee Semple McPherson used the same points in what she called The Foursquare Gospel, changing point number two from Sanctifier to Holy Spirit Baptizer.

This book traces for us how the teachings of the movement evolved and expanded, and how Independent Pentecostal preachers such as William Branham (1940s) and A. A. Allen (1950s) and others went off into fanatical exaggerations and generated a cult-like mentality that pervades the movement to this day.

Branham's false teachings led to two cultic fringe groups being formed: the Latter Day Rain movement and the Manifest Sons of God. His fraudulent claims of miracles, false predictions, wild revelations and extreme doctrinal aberrations caused deep concern among mainline Pentecostal leaders. (Branham called the Trinity "That Babylonian Heresy," he claimed he was the angel of Revelation 3, and he taught that the Pentecostal elect in the last days would become (gods) "The very manifestation of the Word of God"). Responsible leaders were appalled as they saw the

message of the gospel and the person of Christ being laid aside while Branham took center stage, performed his "magic," and received the applause.

Today Kenneth Hagin claims that Branham was a great prophet. Hagin also claims to receive regular revelations and visions and no fewer than eight personal visits from Christ. One great danger to people under the influence of these men lies in the dominance they maintain over their flock. They program their followers to believe them. Not because of the authority of the Scripture, but because they have direct word from God, Moriarity says,

It should be no surprise why so many of the teachings [of the movement] are flawed. Pentecostal and charismatic leaders over the past ninety years have developed many of their... distinctives through visions, dreams and ecstatic experiences. Then they search the scripture to find a proof text to confirm their experience. This kind of practice and mindset puts the Bible subservient to a person's subjective experience.

In his chapter on "Will the Church Christianize the World," Moriarity deals with the rise of a new kind of charismatic postmillennialist, the theonomist, who teaches the reestablishment of Moses' law in society today.

Over the last decade a great portion of the church has undergone a major paradigm shift from preaching the gospel to taking dominion over secular institutions (p. 186).

But the new postmillennial charismatic believes the dominion will come in, driven by the engine of charismatic forces of signs and wonders. The Reformed-reconstructionists look at themselves as the brains and the charismatics as the feet of the dominion movement. Our author sees the reconstructionists "as a tiny cerebral band who desperately need faithful missionaries to promote their dominion philosophy before they become extinct" (p. 160).

Another new charismatic group, the Power Evangelism movement, teaches that God will bring about global revival by the restoration of apostolic signs and wonders: casting out demons, raising the dead, tongues, miracles, direct revelation, visions, etc. Many of us are sympathetic with their desire for church renewal and their burden for global evangelism. It is not exciting external phenomena we need, but an awakening from our sinful apathy. The church needs to repent and prayerfully ask our sovereign God for revival.

One gets the strong impression from reading Moriarity that because postmillennial charismatics promote latter-day revival, and Power Evangelism promotes global revival, therefore to pray and hope for a widespread revival before Christ comes is wrong.

This book is billed as a concerned voice warning of new trends in the charismatic movement. I believe the author has made a contribution. However a reading of Jonathan Edwards' *Surprising Conversions* and *Religious Affections* will give readers a better balance on the means to revival.

Blake Laslett
Globe, Arizona

The Holy Spirit

R. C. Sproul

Orlando, Florida: Ligonier Ministries, 1988.

Video Series, 6 lectures, \$89.00.

Ligonier Ministries, "the teaching fellowship of R. C. Sproul," has produced six thirty-minute lectures on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit on two VHS tapes. That these lectures are professionally recorded is evident from the well-designed studio setting, the use of at least three camera angles, and an excellent sound level throughout all six sessions. As TV generation believers make up an increasing percentage of

American congregations, having such quality, biblical teaching materials available on videotape are a welcome (and perhaps necessary) addition to our church libraries. In fact, I have used this series, and his more recent videotape series, *The Holiness of God*, in a multigenerational adult class with great success.

Although Dr. Sproul is one of the most engaging writers and dynamic teachers on the scene today, as viewing these lectures will reveal, let me say that "the book is better than the movie!" The lectures, which apparently preceded the publication of his book *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* (1990), do not provide as consistent a level of organization of the same material, and often wander outside the scope of their title. With two exceptions, lectures 4 and 5, little Scripture is formally expounded during the lectures.

The six lectures are titled: (1) "The Breath of Life," (2) "The Spirit in Creative Expression," (3) "Who Is the Comforter," (4) "Regeneration: A Sovereign Act," (5) "Is There a Second Baptism," and (6) "The Spirit's Work of Sanctification." Each lecture begins with a minute or two of introductory comments, and (usually) the reading of a passage of Scripture. Then speaking apparently without notes—and almost never from behind the podium—Sproul begins laying out foundational thoughts and concepts related to his topic. The first lecture is a fairly straightforward discussion of the Trinity. In the second lecture, however, the viewer is interestingly surprised by Sproul's presentation (for ten minutes) on the beauty of bringing harmony out of discord, and order out of chaos, while describing a modern jazz concert and an NFL football game! The last five minutes of this lecture, and most of the others, are filled with clear biblical statements and passionate application.

In the third lecture, Sproul untypically bogs down for several minutes describing the views of Friedrich Nietzsche and Soren Kirkegaard, but pulls the viewer back with a

contemporary reference to a James Cagney film. In the last half he discusses the concepts of fear and encouragement, and then explains the name *Paraclete*.

The fourth and fifth lectures are worth the price of the whole series. The fourth covers much the same biblical material as chapter 6 in his book, but goes further in marvelously highlighting the sovereignty of God. This session could be used with any believer to provide an exciting introduction to the reformed view of salvation. The fifth lecture ("Is There a Second Baptism?") is a helpful overview of the "four pentecosts" found in the book of Acts. This lecture best demonstrates Sproul's ability for well-organized teaching and biblical interpretation.

The sixth and last lecture contains one of the more memorable illustrations, and a good deal of challenging application for the viewer. Sproul's teaching on the "Spirit of Truth" and his declaration that "right thinking is essential to right living" were passionately delivered, and, in our church, used to draw out new commitments to dwelling in God's Word and keeping in step with the Spirit.

I heartily commend the videotaped lectures for use with a home Bible study group, or in an adult class at church. I would not use these lectures as introductory material on the Holy Spirit, or with new Christians, but as intermediate-level material. But please "read the book" first! Then enjoy this fresh, insightful and broad-ranging presentation on the Holy Spirit!

David J. Bissett
Rockland, Massachusetts

The Spirit of Promise

Donald Macleod

Houston: Christian Focus Publications (1988).

101 pages, paper, \$4.95.

"All believers experience Holy Spirit baptism," writes Donald Macleod (p. 3). The Spirit is promised to every believer at the moment of his conversion. Pentecost "baptism in the Spirit" has been the unconditional and universal "initiatory experience" of every Christian. Professor Macleod's assertion is based upon several things: the inseparable connection between faith and the promise of the Spirit (especially Gal. 3:14); the abundance of New Testament evidence bearing witness to the universality of the gift of the Spirit in the Christian dispensation; and the corresponding lack of scriptural evidence supporting two distinct experiences of receiving the Spirit on the one hand, and being baptized with Him on the other.

The author gathers strength for his definition of Spirit baptism from the post-Nicene Fathers' doctrine of the coinherence of the divine persons. He writes:

All Christians are united to Christ. To suggest that this can be so without a corresponding union with the Holy Spirit is to separate these two persons in a way that is quite inconsistent with historic trinitarian theology.... There can be no relation with the one Person that is not equally and symmetrically a relation with the others.... To be fully in the Son is to be fully in the Spirit.... To be in Christ means to have communion with Him and this in turn means that we share fully in all that He has. The most precious of His endowments, surely, is the full and overflowing indwelling of the Holy Spirit (pp. 6-7).

Next Macleod systematically dismembers the major ar-

guments which are thought to support the Pentecostal doctrine of Holy Spirit baptism. In particular he examines the defects of R.A. Torrey's seven-step, conditionalistic approach to receiving the Holy Spirit. Macleod charges that "Torrey's seven easy steps ... make holiness the condition of spirit baptism" (p. 37). In addition to his charge of conditionalism, Macleod claims that Torrey's approach (as well as Pentecostals in general) detracts from the sufficiency of faith as the believer's basis for inheriting all covenant blessings:

Pentecostal theology is conditionalist. If we wish to enjoy all the blessings of the covenant, faith alone is not enough. One must, in addition, renounce all sin, obey all God's commands, *really* thirst for the Spirit, *really* ask and *really* expect (p. 27).

Although the author believes that some of the charismata have ceased (such as the apostolate, and the gifts of prophecy and tongues), he is nonetheless eager to balance the doctrine of cessation by reminding (or perhaps informing) his readers that "the church today remains a thoroughly charismatic institution" (p. 29). By this he means that the twentieth-century church possesses a great variety of spiritual gifts, and that she is wholly dependent upon them for her effectiveness in such things as Christian ministry, worship, and the ever-complicated matter of divine guidance. For example the author insists that all preaching must be thoroughly charismatic and empowered by the Holy Spirit if it is to be successful:

Charismatic preaching depends on a man's being full of the Spirit.... He gives the message cogency, pricking the conscience, causing men to tremble, overriding their prejudices, winning the consent of their intellects and opening their hearts to Christ. In the absence of these factors, our oratory and passion, our logic and profundity, have no more hope of success than a farmer sowing seed on the

motorway (p. 45).

Peppered throughout the book are reminders that the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is of unparalleled importance. Macleod implies that the ministry and experience of the Spirit are equally necessary and urgent in the lives of believers today as they were in the lives of the apostles. He asserts that the Holy Spirit is intimately and actively involved in every Christian's life, not just a select few who have had a post-conversion "Holy Spirit baptism" experience. Among other things the author points out that the Spirit indwells all believers; illuminates their understanding of Scripture; convicts them of sin and leads them to mortify it; and provides an internal witness of their sonship. According to Macleod these are positive proofs of the reality of the Spirit's active ministry in every believer's life.

In his chapter 9 commentary titled "Go On Being Filled!" Professor Macleod explains that "being filled with the Spirit" does not refer to a "single, definitive experience" but instead to a "continuous duty." He asserts that "Being filled with the Spirit is related not to the realm of euphoric experience but to the ethical rigors of the Christian life" (p. 83). This, he insists, demands that believers respond actively to the command to be filled, rather than waiting passively for God to do something to them. The practical outworking of this is that Christians must pray and seek the Spirit's continual fullness by continual asking. "The only way they [believers] can ensure that they are always full is to be always asking" (p. 86).

The concluding chapter addresses the question of compatibility between Reformed and Pentecostal churches. The author's contention is that Pentecostalism violates two Reformation principles by virtue of addition. In the first place, Pentecostals violate the principle of *sola scriptura* by

adding post-apostolic revelation. Second, they violate the principle of *sola fide* by adding a post-conversion experience (Spirit baptism) which, they say, is prerequisite to the sealing and filling of the Holy Spirit. These two additions lead the author to conclude that Pentecostalism is just as incompatible with Reformed theology as Romanism. "Roman Catholicism argued that to be in Christ was not enough for justification: there had to be a *plus*. Pentecostalism argues that to be in Christ is not enough for Spirit baptism: there has to be a *plus*" (p. 101).

Although the author allows for no possible compatibility between the theologies of the Reformation and Pentecostalism, yet he is careful not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater." The author's opinion is that the more enlightened ought not to miss the opportunity of learning from a misguided and confused theology. In concluding his penetrating critique of Pentecostalism, Professor Macleod offers this suggestion to his readers: "...we could learn much from Pentecostals in terms of zeal, mobilization of the whole body of believers and longing for the Spirit's ministry" (p. 92). Furthermore the author cautions his readers against the common tendency to overreact to charismatic error and excess. He believes it would be tragic loss for the church to react in a way that would minimize the importance of the Spirit's gifts.

As an added feature, Professor Macleod devotes an entire chapter to courageously critique Dr. Lloyd-Jones' misguided exegesis of "the sealing of the Spirit" in Ephesians 1:13. He convincingly demonstrates that "faith comes before sealing but this does not necessitate any interval (of time) between them" (p 50). In this reviewer's judgment this chapter alone makes the book worth thrice its price.

In brief compass *The Spirit of Promise* provides its readers with a brilliant and charitable refutation of the Pentecostal error. Best of all it delivers just what its title proclaims:

the Spirit is the promised possession of every believer. *Sola fide! Solus Christus!*

Patrick Leahy
East Haven, Connecticut