

Preface

This book arises from an invitation from a British degree-awarding open-learning Faculty (the Open Theological College, Cheltenham) to write a half-module for its third-year BA course on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. It was already essentially something I had embarked on teaching at London Bible College. The contents of this work, however, are not 'the half-module' itself. They merely provide an indication of many of the subjects to be covered, and constitute *one* of the basic resources for such a course. There are inevitably other more important works to react with, and other exciting questions to face. As it stands, this book is more of a Level 2 text, and so the kind of work that is readily accessible to busy pastors, church leaders, and other more general readers. Most of the chapters are a slightly revised version of lectures to BA students at LBC. Having said that, I should add that its often compressed style owes much to the fact that it was intended to be expanded in those lectures. I have left many portions in their 'compressed' form in order to limit the length of the book.

This work, as I have already indicated, has something of a 'history'. As a busy lecturer, I have inevitably compiled it partly out of publications which I have already made available in other forms. Chapters 2, 4 and 5 depend quite heavily on my article on 'Holy Spirit' in the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (this article itself owed much to lectures delivered to Aberdeen students in 1987). Chapter 3 is a slightly shortened version of an essay in *The Book of Acts and Its Theology* (eds. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson), which is volume 6 in the *Acts In Its First-Century Setting* series. More significantly, perhaps, Chapters 12–20 are a revised version of a long article first published as 'Spiritual Gifts Then and Now' in *Vox Evangelica* 15 (1985), 7–64. This article was an edited version of papers presented at three seminars of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians in Altenkirchen, 1984. The mood there was predominantly (often sharply) 'cessationist', and this may explain the sustained, if usually implicit, critique of such a position in my 'response'. However, as a member of the Evangelical Alliance's Committee on Unity

and Truth (ACUTE), I would wish to support any attempt to find unity between the Pentecostal/Charismatic and the more traditional forms of Evangelicalism. In that respect, Part 2 of this work is intended to be bridge-building, not polemical; many of its assertions should be heard as tentative questions rather than as dogmatic statements.

The purpose of this book is to explore the significance of the gift of the Spirit in the New Testament. It consists of two parts. Part 1 begins with a brief examination of OT and intertestamental views of the Spirit. In this initial chapter I argue that at the turn of the eras the Spirit was largely understood as the 'Spirit of prophecy' enabling revelation, wisdom and inspired speech. But while Schweizer, Menzies and others have concluded that the Spirit was thus merely an empowering for certain types of service, and not soteriologically necessary, I argue that even in Judaism these gifts of the 'Spirit of prophecy' could be anticipated not as empowering alone, but also as the very 'life' of the restored community, and the power of its holiness. Chapters 2–8 suggest that Luke, John and Paul have developed this understanding and see the one gift of the Spirit to believers as a Christianized version of the 'Spirit of prophecy'. Precisely as the 'Spirit of prophecy', the Spirit *simultaneously* provides the 'life' of the saved community and its empowering for service and mission. Chapters 9–11 then explore the significance of the NT witness as we move towards a contemporary and systematic *theology* of the gift of the Spirit. In Chapter 10 it is argued that the classical Pentecostal two-stage view of Spirit-reception needs to be replaced by a more broadly charismatic one-stage conversion-initiation paradigm. In Chapter 11 we examine the extent to which the New Testament witness prepares the ground for later trinitarian understanding of the Spirit. In speaking of 'the New Testament witness', however, one important qualification must be made: limitations of space have required me to restrict the enquiry to the three major witnesses to New Testament pneumatology (Luke-Acts, John and Paul).

Part 2 begins with an examination of three prototypical 'gifts of the Spirit' (prophecy, tongues and healing) and the nature and purpose of these and other spiritual gifts in the New Testament Church (Chs. 12–15). I then discuss the cessationist claim (stemming largely from Warfield) that these gifts were given primarily as divine attestation to Jesus and the apostles as bearers of divine revelation, to provide the revelation necessary for the writing of the New Testament books, and to guide the church until the canon was completed. The corollary drawn by Edgar, Farnell, Gaffin, Masters and others, is that the New Testament writers anticipated that, with

the death of the apostles and their co-workers, such spiritual gifts would cease. This view is investigated in Chapter 16. Nearly all NT scholars would dismiss such a view as a curiosity, but the cessationist view at least raises, in an interesting form, the question of the real nature and purpose of such spiritual gifts (even if its 'answer' is entirely unacceptable to serious NT scholarship and to that of Early Church history). Subsequent chapters inquire into the nature and significance of the prophecy, healing and tongues speech claimed in the Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal movements and their relation to the NT gifts denoted by the same terminology. The book ends by asking to what extent the phenomena in question are unique to such movements, and whether there is any theological or empirical reason to suppose that some post-conversion crisis experience is actually *needed* in order to receive such gifts.

Two further points concerning the scope of this work perhaps invite further comment. First, I am conscious of the extent to which the discussion in the pages which follow is mainly (though by no means exclusively) with evangelical and other relatively 'conservative' writers (whether Pentecostal, Charismatic or from more traditional Evangelicalism). This is not out of any hesitation to listen to theology from other quarters, but perhaps reflects a greater interest in pneumatology in those circles than elsewhere. Had the course been on christology or ecclesiology there would undoubtedly have been a much wider range of dialogue partners.

Second, I am aware that it is not entirely usual for a New Testament course to cross the disciplinary borders and to ask questions about the appropriation of the New Testament witness today. I am aware of some of the vigorous debates on this issue, and side with those who believe New Testament scholarship and systematic theology should learn from each other. Those being trained at London Bible College will be expected in their ministries to be able to fuse the horizons of New Testament studies and contemporary theology. This being so, it seems not unreasonable that some New Testament courses should at least take a first step towards systematic theology. If anything, my regret is that limitations of space have prevented me from a much fuller discussion of the relevant issues.