

Theological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement – Part 1

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I

My subject is a complex and still developing phenomenon which over the past twenty years has significantly touched the entire world church, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and non-episcopal Protestant, at all levels of life and personnel and across a wide theological spectrum.¹ Sometimes it is called Neo-Pentecostalism because, like the older Pentecostalism which ‘spread like wildfire over the whole world’² at the start of this century, it affirms Spirit-baptism as a distinct post-conversion, post-water-baptism experience, universally needed and universally available to those who seek it. The movement has grown, however, independently of the Pentecostal denominations, whose suspicions of its non-separatist inclusiveness have been—and in some quarters remain—deep, and its own preferred name for itself today is ‘charismatic renewal’.³ For it sees itself as a revitalizing re-entry into a long-lost world of gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit, a re-entry which immeasurably deepens individual spiritual lives, and through which all Christendom may in due course find quickening. Charismatic folk everywhere stand on tiptoe, as it were, in excited expectation of great things in store for the church as the movement increasingly takes hold.

Already its spokesmen claim for it major ecumenical significance. ‘This movement is the most unifying in Christendom today’, writes Michael Harper; ‘only in this movement are all streams uniting, and all ministries being accepted and practised.’⁴ The claim is true: apart from Lanka and North India, all the main union schemes of the sixties (Anglican-Methodist in England, Anglican-United Church in Canada, the multilateral Nigerian and New Zealand plans, and the huge Consultation on Church Union [COCU] in the USA) effectively collapsed, and it is a common complaint that ecumenical energy of the conventional sort is waning; but trans-denominational charismatic fellowship, with its international leadership and attendant linking organizations,⁵ goes from strength to strength. Ecumenically, its technique is distinctive; it seeks first and foremost to realise oneness in Christ experientially, in celebration and ministry, confident that theological convergence will follow. ‘This open stance’, writes Richard Quebedeaux, ‘whereby the Holy Spirit is seen to lead people to theological truth *following* (rather than prerequisite to) a common experience, is clearly ascendant throughout Neo-Pentecostalism; it is one reason why [in it] evangelicals, liberals and Roman Catholics have been joined together (spiritually, at least) for the first time.’⁶ Though in each ‘main-line’ denomination charismatics are a relatively small minority, the movement’s cumulative impact is considerable, and is likely to be greater rather than less as the future unfolds.

Writing in 1953, before the current charismatic renewal began, Lesslie Newbigin typecast the Protestant and Catholic views of the church as ‘the congregation of the faithful’ and ‘the body of Christ’ respectively, and went on to describe the Christianity of the Pentecostal churches as an authentic third stream of Christian awareness, embodying a view of the church as ‘the community of the Holy Spirit’. This, he said, is now needed to fertilize and irrigate the other two views. He put his point as a question: ‘May it not be that the great churches of the

Catholic and Protestant traditions will have to be humble enough to receive [a new understanding of the Holy Spirit] in fellowship with their brethren in the various groups of the Pentecostal type with whom at present they have scarcely any fellowship at all?⁷ Newbiggin's question still looms, and with an extended application, as we survey the pervasive phenomenon of charismatic renewal a quarter of a century later.

II

What are the distinctive contentions of this trans-denominational, cross-traditional movement?

The first thing to say is that, in relation to the creeds and confessions of their own churches, charismatics usually have nothing distinctive to say at all. They appear as theological primitives, recalling their churches not only to apostolic Christian experience but also to the 'old paths' of supernaturalist belief. They are 'sound' (though perhaps superficial) on the Trinity,⁸ the incarnation, the objective significance of the atonement and the divine authority of the Bible,⁹ and they see Christianity conventionally in terms of the three traditional Rs—Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration. But theological reflection does not turn them on; they know that this is not what their movement is really about. Their biblical exposition is simple to the point of naivety, and few of them seem to know or care that in their own ranks different theologies of charismatic experience are promoted. In their own denominations, their concern is not so much to rethink inherited traditions, doctrinal and devotional, as to reanimate them: so Roman Catholics pray the Mass, invoke the Virgin (whom they view as a pioneer charismatic), and run through the rosary with renewed ardour, while Anglicans rejoice to find that Cranmer's liturgy is now marvellously alive for them. ('Every word of it glows', a middle-aged woman said to me.) Generally speaking, and ignoring the centrifugal lunatic fringe which every lively movement in this fallen world produces sooner or later, charismatics are loyal denominationalists who, taking as their starting-point what their church professes, devote their thoughts, prayers and efforts to revitalizing its practice. And it is in connection with the revitalizing of practice through the renewing of experience that the charismatic distinctives are voiced. They are five in number, and though each of the five is affirmed with a wide variety of emphasis, sophistication and flexibility, and fitted into various theological schemes according to who is speaking, they stand together as in broad terms the ideological masthead of charismatic renewal all the world over. They are as follows:

1) A decisive enriching of personal Christian experience

It is claimed that usually, if not invariably, a momentous divine work takes place in each Christian's experience some time after he has begun actively to respond to God. This work differs in idea from both conversion as understood by evangelical Protestants, and baptismal incorporation into Christ as traditionally understood by Catholic sacramentalists, Roman, Orthodox and Anglican. Usually (so the claim runs) this blessing needs to be sought from God specifically, and perhaps at length (though this belief characterizes the old Pentecostalism rather than the new, which more often stresses the immediate availability of the Spirit's fulness). The name usually given to it, commonly though not invariably on the basis that the New Testament phraseology echoed does in fact refer to this second work of grace, is baptism in, or with, or by, the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ Spirit-baptism is ordinarily expounded as a vast intensifying of the Christian's consciousness of four things: 1) the sovereign love to him of the God who through redemption and adoption has become his heavenly Father, and

his own consequent privilege as an heir of glory, and in a real sense already a possessor and inhabitant of heaven; 2) the closeness and adequacy of Jesus Christ the Lord as his living, loving Saviour, Master and Friend; 3) the indwelling, enabling and supportive power of the Holy Spirit in all dimensions and depths of his personal life; 4) the reality of the demonic (personal evil), and of spiritual conflict with 'the world-rulers of this darkness' (Eph. 6:12) as a basic element in Christian life and service.

This account is strikingly parallel to the experience of the Spirit's sealing described by the seventeenth-century Puritan Thomas Goodwin;¹¹ to the experience of 'perfect love', or 'entire sanctification' (= 'scriptural holiness' and 'Christian perfection') taught by John Wesley in the eighteenth century and by Wesleyan conservatives from that day to this;¹² to the experience of 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' as an enduing of the Christian with power for service, which such nineteenth-century American teachers as Charles G. Finney, Asa Mahan, A. B. Simpson, D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey described;¹³ and to the so-called 'Keswick experience' of being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' through consecration and faith for victory over all known sin, as described in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by such Americans as W. E. Boardman and Hannah Whitall Smith and such Englishmen as the Anglican Evan Hopkins and the Baptist F. B. Meyer.¹⁴ It has much in common, too, with spiritual intimacies recorded by exponents of the Christian mystical tradition, Catholic and Protestant, as well as by such reticent and ordinarily unmystical people as the Anglican Bishop Moorhouse of Melbourne and Manchester, who in a testimony written for posthumous publication spoke of the night when, in the year before his ordination, after anxious prayer for closer communion with God, he 'awoke filled with the most marvellous happiness, in such a state of exultation that I felt as though a barrier had fallen, as though a door had suddenly been opened, and a flood of golden light poured in upon me, transfiguring me completely. I have never felt anything in the least like it . . .'¹⁵ What these similarities may mean we shall consider later; for the moment, we simply note that they are there.

2) Speaking in tongues

Glossolalia (uttering sounds unintelligible to oneself)¹⁶ is claimed to be the usual accompaniment and sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ It is seen as a God-given capacity for prayer and praise; valuable because, as experience shows, it enables worshippers to sustain and indeed heighten moods of adoration, penitence, petition and intercession in a way they could not do otherwise. The gift is regarded as mainly, though not entirely, for private devotional use. Subjectively, it is a matter of letting one's vocal chords run free as one lifts one's heart to God, and, as with learning to swim, confidence in entrusting oneself to the medium (the water in the one case, babbling utterance in the other) has much to do with one's measure of success and enjoyment. Glossolalia is not, as is often thought (and as the NEB mistranslations in 1 Corinthians 14 suggest¹⁸), an ecstatic thing: 'Christian speaking in tongues is done as objectively as any other speaking, while the person is in full possession and control of his wits and volition, and in no strange state of mind whatever'¹⁹ and, once the novelty has worn off, 'at times the glossolalic feels a singular *lack* of emotion while speaking in tongues.'²⁰ Usually, though not invariably, glossolalia persists in the experience of those who have once begun it, as a mode of prayer which seems real and right for them, into which they can slip at will; and though they allow it to be a lesser gift, according to Paul's estimate in 1 Corinthians 14:1-19,²¹ yet they prize it because of the devotional help it brings them. Whether one's first entry into it was spontaneous and involuntary, or by learning a vocal technique for it (both happen), does not affect its devotional value once one can manage it.

3) Spiritual gifts

Understanding gifts as capacities to express and communicate the knowledge and power of Christ for the edifying of the church (which certainly seems to be Paul's concept of a *charisma*),²² charismatics usually claim that all the 'sign-gifts' (so-called) of the New Testament period—not only tongues, but also gifts of interpretation, miracles, healing powers, and the receiving of direct communications from God through visions, dreams and inward impressions for relaying as prophecy—are now once more being given, after centuries of almost total abeyance. That the more ordinary gifts of teaching, rule, management, giving and supporting (cf. Rom. 12:4 ff: 1 Cor. 12:28-30) have been constantly bestowed down the Christian centuries, and are being given still, is not denied. Nonetheless, the renewal of 'sign-gifts' is seen as, so to speak, icing on the church's cake, showing that at this point unbelief and apathy—the result of mistakenly assuming that these gifts were permanently withdrawn when the apostolic age closed—have now given place to eager and expectant faith which God honours according to the dominical formula 'according to your faith be it done to you' (Matt. 9:29). Persons baptized in the Holy Spirit, it is urged, ordinarily receive several gifts, and no Christian is entirely gift-less. Therefore, every-member ministry, achieved by discerning and harnessing each Christian's gifts, should become standard practice throughout the body of Christ on earth, and congregational behaviour-patterns must be sufficiently decentralized, flexible and leisurely to permit and not inhibit this. All gifts are for building up the body and must be regulated in exercise for the furthering of that purpose, according to Paul's 'body-model' of diverse functions expressing mutual care (see 1 Cor. 12:4-26).²³ In the first days of the charismatic renewal, there was some reason to fear that interest was limited to forming clusters of quickened individuals apart from the churches in the manner of the now-deceased Oxford Group; but charismatic leaders and their followers have during the past decade made it abundantly clear that the revitalizing of the church as such is central in their prayers and purposes, and unity in the Spirit, not division, is their goal. If there are cantankerous and disruptive charismatics, it is enough to say that this is despite the teaching they are given, not because of it, and to point out that in any case the charismatic community has no monopoly of this particular character type.

4) Worship in the Spirit

Worshipping God should be a personal realizing of fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Spirit, and thereby a realizing of spiritual community with the rest of God's assembled family. As Jesus Christ must be central in all worship as the Mediator and Redeemer, who with the Father and the Spirit is loved and adored, so worshippers must constantly seek to grasp and explore their God-given identity in the family where they are all God's children and Jesus Christ is their elder brother. So when the congregation meets, the liturgical structure of worship must be loose enough to allow for spontaneous contributions, and sufficiently relaxed, informal and slow-moving to let all bask in the sense of togetherness with God and each other. Different charismatic communities work for this in different ways, but the goal is common; and in general it is true that both in its pace and in its way of highlighting points by repetition, slightly varied but not much, charismatic worship is to, say, historic Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgical forms as Bruckner is to Haydn or the later Wagner to Mozart. Perhaps it would not be wholly misleading to call charismatic worship romantic, concentrating on the expression of responsive attitudes and feelings, whereas the older liturgical style is classical, exalting God and uplifting worshippers by its majestic excellence of form.²⁴ At all events, charismatic worship aims above all to achieve genuine openness to God at the deepest level of our personal being, so that each worshipper will move beyond the mere churning over of notions to find God himself, and to celebrate and enjoy the realities of life in him. For this, so charismatics insist, time is needed and time must be taken. And it is, I think, not peculiar to me to find that a two- or three- hour session of worship in

the charismatic style, so far from leaving one exhausted, can be deeply cleansing and invigorating at the motivational and emotional level.

5) God's strategy of renewal

Charismatics as a body are sure that, however much or little there may have been of charismatic manifestations and ministry between the first and twentieth centuries, charismatic renewal is certainly central at present in God's purpose of revitalizing his church. Those who identify with the movement thus feel themselves not merely free but obliged to think and talk big, sometimes in ways that strike other Christians as naive, concerning the significance of this particular way of knowing God of which they find themselves trustees. The form of this conviction, that charismatic renewal is the key to the church's health today, varies from spokesman to spokesman, but on the conviction itself there is substantial agreement.

Such are the characteristic charismatic certainties. Genetically, they all find their origin in the Pentecostal wave that broke over world Protestantism in the first years of this century.²⁵ Doctrinally, apart from the claim that Spirit-baptism is instantly available (which older Pentecostals did not say), and the fashionable emphasis on 'body-life' as mutual ministry, most charismatics have simply taken over, at least in broad outline, the older Pentecostal theology, which was a relatively traditional evangelical pietism of Wesleyan descent, laying its own stress on Spirit-baptism as a post-conversion necessity, on tongues and (a matter I have not stressed) on healing.²⁶ In their spirituality, the charismatics' goal of realizing the life of God in the Christian soul emotionally, existentially and evidentially, as well as cerebrally, also corresponds to that of the older Pentecostalism.

Sociologically and psychologically, interesting questions arise about the observable correlations between inward and outward stress (pains, pressures, personal crises) on the one hand, and the embracing of charismatic spirituality on the other.²⁷ Pastorally, there is much to be said about the strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the charismatic way in practice. These are proper fields of enquiry, which are increasingly being explored today. But theological reflection is our present business, and to this we now proceed.

III

First, we must note that the charismatic movement is theologically diverse. Says Quebedeaux, rightly, as we have begun to see:

Protestants and Catholics, conservatives and liberals, do not automatically discard their own theological and ecclesiastical differences when they come together in the movement. Nor do the movement's leaders themselves agree on the precise definition of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Protestant Neo-Pentecostals, for instance, often view the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a 'second work of grace' after conversion . . . Roman Catholics . . . look at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as an interior experience (usually with outward manifestations) of the Spirit's filling and transforming power in the life of a believer who has received the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of water baptism. The exact nature of the *charismata* (such as tongue speaking and divine healing) and their operation as outlined in 1 Cor. 12-14 are also debated . . .²⁸

Broadly speaking, the position is this. Most Protestants theologize charismatic experience in terms of *restoration*, claiming that in response to faith God is reproducing today all that he did at Pentecost and later in Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus (Acts 2, 8, 10, 19), and also in Corinth (1 Cor. 12-14)—or, at least, all that he did in giving gifts at Corinth.²⁹ Roman

Catholics usually theologize charismatic experience in terms of *realization* of what was latent before, namely the indwelling of God's Spirit to further man's recovery of God and of wholeness in him by whatever means help each individual. Protestants tend to read all the details of New Testament charismatic experience as paradigms and, in effect, promises of what God *will* do for all who ask, while Catholics read them rather as demonstrating what God *can* do as spiritual need requires. The two notions are not, of course, exclusive: the restoration is attributed partly, at least, to a realization of the indwelling Spirit's power, and the realization is seen as resulting in a restoration of lost dimensions of Christian experience. The two approaches, however, lead to different attitudes towards charismatic phenomena and lack of them. For most Protestants, and some Catholics, it becomes virtually mandatory to insist that all New Testament manifestations of the Spirit are available and intended for all churches everywhere; and Christians and churches which fail to seek, and therefore to find them are thereby shown to be at least in this respect second-rate. Roman Catholics, however, need not say more than that current charismatic phenomena are analogous to those mentioned in the New Testament, and that God now gives them in freedom when and as he sees that they will be beneficial.

Let me say at once that this latter position seems to me sounder, partly because current charismatic phenomena do not fully correspond to those of 1 Corinthians 12-14, and partly because the assumption that what God did in first-century Jerusalem and Corinth he will want to reproduce everywhere in every age is more than I can defend. But the only point I am making at present is that there is more than one charismatic theology, and our reflections must take account of that fact.

How, theologically, should we evaluate the charismatic movement? It claims to be a manifestation of spiritual renewal, but some, convinced that the 'sign-gifts' were for the apostolic age only³⁰ and/or discerning no biblical basis for the norm of two-stage entry into full Christian experience³¹, have been inclined to dismiss it as eccentric, neurotic or even demonic. Scripture, however, yields principles for judging whether professedly Christian movements are God-inspired or not; principles about God's work, will and ways which the apostles are seen applying in letters like Galatians, Colossians, 2 Peter and 1 John to various supposedly super-spiritual versions of the faith. Two basic tests emerge: one credal, one moral.

The credal test may be formulated from two passages, 1 John 4:2-3 and 1 Corinthians 12:3. The first passage says that any spirit—that is, evidently, anyone claiming to be Spirit-inspired—who fails to confess the incarnation is not of God. The thrust of this fully appears only as we recall that for John the incarnation of God's Son led on to his sacrificial death for our sins (1:1-2:2, 3:16, 4:8-10), and denial of the former entailed denial of the latter too. The second passage affirms that the Spirit of God leads no one to say 'cursed (*anathema*) be Jesus', but leads men rather to call him Lord (*kyrios*), which otherwise they could never sincerely do (see 1 Cor. 2:14). This accords with the pervasive New Testament witness that the Holy Spirit in his character as the Spirit of Christ fulfils what we may call a floodlight ministry of enabling sinful men to discern Christ's glory, and to trust and love him accordingly. So the credal test, for charismatics as for all other professed Christians, is the degree of honour paid by confession, attitude and action to the Son whom God the Father has made Lord.

The moral test is given by statements such as those of John, that he who truly knows and loves God will show it by keeping his commandments, avoiding all sin and loving his brethren in Christ (cf. 1 John 2:4, 3:9 ff, 17, 24, 4:7-13, 20 f, 5:1-3).

When we apply these tests to the charismatic movement it becomes plain that God is in it. For, whatever threats and perhaps instances of occult and counterfeit spirituality we may think we detect round its periphery (and what movement of revival has ever lacked these things round its periphery?), its main effect everywhere is to promote robust Trinitarian faith, personal fellowship with the divine Saviour and Lord whom we meet in the New Testament, repentance, obedience, and love to fellow-Christians, expressed in ministry of all sorts towards them; plus a zeal for evangelistic outreach which puts the staid sort of churchmen to shame.

This suggests our next question. What particular features of the charismatic movement call for unambiguous approval when biblically assessed? A dozen suggest themselves at once.

- 1) Its stress on personal fellowship with, and devotion to, the living Christ.
- 2) Its stress on the need to be filled with the Spirit, and to be living a life which one way or another displays the Spirit's power.
- 3) Its recognition of, and provision for, the necessary emotional dimension—necessary because we are human beings—in apprehending and responding to the love of God in Christ.
- 4) Its stress on the need to cultivate an open, ardent, constant, whole-hearted habit of prayer (which, as we saw, is where glossolalia comes in).
- 5) Its stress on the need to cherish and express Christian joy in both speech and song.
- 6) Its insistence that each Christian be thoroughly involved in the church's worship; not necessarily by speaking in the assembly (though that kind of participation, when orderly and well done, must surely be approved), but primarily by opening one's heart to God in worship and seeking to realize for oneself the divine realities about which the church sings, prays and learns from Scripture.
- 7) Its concern that all Christians be actively involved in ministry; finding and using their gifts, whatever these prove to be, for others' welfare.
- 8) Its missionary zeal and concern to share Christ.
- 9) Its awareness of the potential of groups. Hummel, with his eyes on the USA, writes of 'the hundreds of interdenominational fellowship meetings in homes throughout the country. They convene weekly for worship and praise, Bible study, mutual encouragement and exercise of gifts as the Holy Spirit manifests them. These groups supplement the regular services of churches in which the members are usually active.'³² The same is true in England and elsewhere. In a remarkable way the charismatic movement has discovered, or rediscovered, the value of small groups for prayer and ministry.
- 10) Its stress on the need for church structures to be flexible enough to allow all gifts within a congregation to be fully used.

11) Its experiments in community living; in particular, the establishing of extended families composed of nuclear families who unite to fulfil ministries of shelter and support which no nuclear family on its own could manage.

12) Its cultivation of childlike openness, spontaneity, warmth, and expectancy in relationships with both God and men.

Now a balancing question. What charismatic characteristics might impede that corporate maturity in Christ at which New Testament teaching aims? Ten defects of charismatic qualities—defects sometimes observed, at least on the movement's fringes, and always threatening—call for mention here.

1) *Elitism* In any movement in which significant-seeming things go on, the sense of being a spiritual aristocracy, the feeling that 'we are the people who really count', always threatens at gut-level, and verbal disclaimers of this syndrome do not always suffice to keep it at bay. Here elitist tendencies are reinforced by the restorationist theology which sees charismatic experience as the New Testament norm for all time and is inevitably judgemental towards non-charismatic Christianity. When you have gone out on a limb, as many have, in order to seek and find something which you now think everyone should be seeking, though many are not, it is hard not to feel superior.

2) *Sectarianism* The absorbing intensity of charismatic fellowship, countrywide and worldwide, can produce a damaging insularity whereby charismatics limit themselves to reading charismatic books, hearing charismatic speakers, fellowshipping with other charismatics and backing charismatic causes; and this is the thin end of the sectarian wedge in practice, however firm one's profession of aiming at catholic unity.

3) *Emotionalism* Only a fine line divides healthy emotion from un-healthy emotionalism, and any appealing to or playing on emotion crosses that line every time. Though the white-collar charismatic movement of today is (for cultural rather than theological reasons, it seems) generally calmer than original blue-collar Pentecostalism ever was, its preoccupation with expressing feelings of joy and love makes it vulnerable here. Its warmth and liveliness attract highly emotional and disturbed people to its ranks, and many others find in its ritual emotionalism some relief from strains and pressures in other areas of their lives (marriage, work, finance, etc.). But such sharing in group emotion is a self-indulgent escapist 'trip' which must debilitate in the long run. Generally, the movement seems to teeter on the edge of emotional self-indulgence in a decidedly dangerous way.

4) *Anti-intellectualism* Charismatic preoccupation with experience observably inhibits the long, hard theological and ethical reflection for which the New Testament letters so plainly call. The result often is naivety and imbalance in handling the biblical revelation; some themes—gifts and ministry in the body of Christ, for instance—being run to death while others, such as eschatology, get neglected. Looking for a prophecy (supposedly, a direct word from God) when difficult issues arise, rather than embracing the hard grind of prayerful study and analysis, is a tendency that sometimes obtrudes; so at other times does a doctrinaire insistence that for Spirit-filled, Bible-reading Christians all problems of faith and conduct will prove to be simple. The charismatic movement has been called 'an experience seeking a theology'; 'lacking' and 'needing' would fit, but whether 'seeking' is warranted is open to doubt, sometimes anyhow.

5) *Illuminism* Sincere but deluded claims to direct divine revelation have been made in the church since the days of the Colossian heretic(s) and the Gnosticizers whose defection called forth 1 John, and since Satan keeps pace with God they will no doubt recur till the Lord returns. At this point the charismatic movement, with its stress on the Spirit's personal leading, and the revival of revelations via prophecy, is clearly vulnerable. The person with unhealthy ambitions to be a religious leader, dominating a group by giving them the sense that he is closer to God than they are, can easily climb on the charismatic band wagon and find there good-hearted, emotionally dependent folk waiting to be impressed by him; so, too, the opinionated eccentric can easily invoke the Spirit's direction when he refuses to let his pastor stop him disrupting the congregation with his odd ideas. Living as it does on the edge of illuminism, the movement cannot but have problems here.

6) '*Charismania*' This is O'Connor's word for the habit of mind which measures spiritual health, growth and maturity by the number and impressiveness of people's gifts, and spiritual power by public charismatic manifestations.³³ The habit is bad, for the principle of judgement is false; and where it operates, real growth and maturity are likely to be retarded.

7) '*Super-supernaturalism*' This is my word for that way of affirming the supernatural which exaggerates its discontinuity with the natural. Reacting against 'flat-tyre' versions of Christianity which play down the supernatural and do not expect to see God at work, the super-supernaturalist constantly expects miracles of all sorts—striking demonstrations of God's presence and power—and he is happiest when he thinks he sees God acting contrary to the nature of things, so confounding common sense.³⁴ For God to proceed slowly and by natural means is to him a disappointment, almost a betrayal. But his undervaluing of the natural, regular and ordinary, shows him to be romantically immature, and weak in his grasp of the realities of creation and providence as basic to God's work of grace. Charismatic thinking tends to treat glossolalia, in which mind and tongue are deliberately and systematically dissociated, as the paradigm case of spiritual activity, and to expect all God's work in and around his children to involve similar discontinuity with the ordinary regularities of the created world. This makes for super-supernaturalism almost inevitably.

8) *Eudaemonism* I use this word for the belief that God means us to spend our time in this fallen world feeling well, and in a state of euphoria based on that fact. Charismatics might deprecate so stark a statement, but the regular and expected projection of euphoria from their platforms and pulpits, plus their standard theology of healing, show that the assumption is there, reflecting and intensifying the 'now-I-am-happy-all-the-day-and-you-can-be-so-too' ethos of so much evangelical evangelism since D. L. Moody. Charismatics, picking up the healing emphasis of original restorationist Pentecostalism—an emphasis already strong in 'holiness' circles in North America before Pentecostalism arrived—regularly assume that physical disorder and discomfort is not ordinarily God's beneficent will for his children.³⁵ On this basis, with paradigmatic appeal to the healings of Jesus and the apostles, plus the claim, founded on Isaiah 53:3-6 and 10 as interpreted in Matthew 8:16 f and 1 Peter 2:24, that there is healing in the atonement,³⁶ plus reference to Paul's phrase '*charismata* of healings' ('gifts of healings', AV; 'healers', RSV) in 1 Corinthians 12:28, they make supernatural divine healing (which includes, according to testimony, lengthening of legs, straightening of spines and, in South America, filling of teeth) a matter of constant expectation,³⁷ and look for healing gifts in their leaders almost as a matter of course. But the texts quoted will not bear the weight put upon them,³⁸ and New Testament references to sickness among Christian leaders that was not supernaturally healed³⁹ make it plain that good health at all times is not

God's will for all believers. Also, the charismatic supposition loses sight of the good that can come in the form of wisdom, patience and acceptance of reality without bitterness when Christians are exposed to the discipline of pain and of remaining unhealed.⁴⁰ Moreover, the charismatic supposition creates appalling possibilities of distress when on the basis of it a person seeks healing, fails to find it, and then perhaps is told that the reason lies not in God's unwillingness or inability to heal, but in his own lack of faith.⁴¹ Without doubting that God can and sometimes does heal supernaturally today, and that healings of various kinds do in fact cluster round some people's ministries, I judge this expression of the eudaemonist streak in charismatic thought to be a major mistake, and one which makes against Christian maturity in a quite radical way.

9) *Demon-obsession* In recovering a sense of the supernaturalness of God, charismatics have grown vividly aware of the reality of supernatural personal evil, and there is no doubt that their development of 'deliverance' ministry and the impulse they have given to the renewal of exorcism⁴² have been salutary for many. But if all life is seen as a battle with demons in such a way that Satan and his hosts get blamed for bad health, bad thoughts and bad behaviour without reference to physical, psychological and relational factors in the situation, a very unhealthy demonic counterpart of super-supernaturalism is being developed. There is no doubt that this sometimes happens, and that it is a major obstacle to moral and spiritual maturity when it does.

10) *Conformism* Group pressure is tyrannical at the best of times, and never more so than when the group in question believes itself to be super-spiritual, and finds the evidence of its members' spirituality in their power to perform along approved lines. Inevitably, peer pressure to perform (hands raised, hands outstretched, glossolalia, prophecy) is strong in charismatic circles; inevitably, too, the moment one starts living to the group and its expectations rather than to the Lord one is enmeshed in a new legalistic bondage, whereby from yet another angle Christian maturity is threatened.

Yet, having said all this, it is well to remind ourselves that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. No type of Christian spirituality is free from dangers, weaknesses and threats to maturity arising from its very strengths, and it is not as if Christian maturity (which includes all-round liveliness of response to God, as well as sobriety of judgement) were overwhelmingly visible in non-charismatic circles today. In matters of this kind it is the easiest thing in the world to dilate on specks in my brother's eye and to ignore logs in my own; so we had better move quietly on.

Next, we ask: How far are the distinctives of 'charismatic experience' confined to professed charismatics? This seems an important question, for I suspect that something of an optical illusion tends to operate here, creating a quite mistaken sense that 'charismatic' spirituality is totally different from anything found outside 'charismatic' circles. Earlier I noted the similarity between testimonies to charismatic Spirit-baptism and other accounts of 'second blessings' given by other Christians of other times, and the list of parallels can be extended. One man voices the ardour of his praise or the agony of his prayer in glossolalia, another in his native tongue; but is the exercise of heart essentially different? Dr Baer affirms a 'fundamental functional similarity between speaking in tongues and two other widespread and generally accepted religious practices, namely, Quaker silent worship and the liturgical worship of the Catholic and Episcopal churches', in all three of which the analytical reason rests to allow deeper dimensions of the person to be touched by God.⁴³ Is this idea obviously wrong? Or take the Spirit-wrought awareness of how the God of the Bible sees us, and how

his word in Scripture applies to our life-situations: if one man objectifies it by calling it prophecy and announcing it in oracle-form, while another expresses it as his personal certainty of what God is saying to him and to others, does that argue any essential difference in the inward work of God in the heart in the two cases? Is it only charismatics who ever seek or find bodily healing through prayer, or who ever practice successful exorcism by prayer in Jesus' name? Is it only charismatics who minister in love to each other, however little others may have been instructed in the developed doctrine of spiritual gifts? I suggest that, in reality, charismatic and non-charismatic spiritualities differ more in vocabulary, self-image, groups associated with, and books and journals read, than in the actual ingredients of their communion with the Father and the Son through the Spirit. Charismatic experience is less distinctive than is sometimes made out.

(to be continued)

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Endnotes:

- 1) Best surveys: Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (SCM: London, and Augsburg: Minneapolis 1972), a magisterial profile of old and new Pentecostalism together, marred only by an obtuse anti-fundamentalism; Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (Doubleday: New York 1976), a well-informed descriptive report; Edward D. O'Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church* (Ave Maria Press: Notre Dame 1971); Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals* (Paulist Press: New York 1969); Michael P. Hamilton (ed.), *The Charismatic Movement* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1975), a balanced set of analytical studies, pro and con, with a gramophone record of glossolalia thrown in. Most useful bibliographies: on Pentecostal churches past and present, Hollenweger, op. cit., pp 523-57; on Pentecostal origins and history in N. America, Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1971), pp 225-39; on the charismatic movement among Protestants, Quebedeaux op. cit., pp 233-42; on the Catholic charismatic renewal, O'Connor ed., in D. O'Connor, *Perspectives on Charismatic Renewal* (University of Notre Dame Press: Notre Dame 1978), pp 145-84.
- 2) Hollenweger, op. cit., p 63.
- 3) 'At first, Neo-Pentecostals called their emerging movement a "Charismatic revival"—heralding the restoration of the *charismata* to the life of the contemporary church. Soon, however, the term "revival" was generally replaced with "renewal" to 1) dissociate the movement from revivalistic fundamentalism and 2) link it with the larger goal of not only reintroducing spiritual gifts to the historic denominations, but also of relating the *charismata* to spiritual and institutional Christian renewal more inclusively and comprehensively.' (Quebedeaux, op. cit., P 116)
- 4) M. Harper, *None can Guess* (Hodder and Stoughton: London, and Logos: Plainfield 1971), pp 149, 153. Harper provides an interesting up-to-date profile of the movement, as he sees it from inside, in *Three Sisters* (Tyndale House: Wheaton 1979).
- 5) Leaders and organizations are surveyed in Quebedeaux, op. cit., chs 3 and 4. Internationally prominent are Dennis Bennett (Anglican), under whom charismatic life first blossomed in California in 1960; Graham Pulkingham (Anglican), Herald Bredeson (Reformed Church), Howard Ervin (Baptist), Larry Christenson (Lutheran), all linked with the Californian

movement from the start; Michael Harper (Anglican: ‘editor and theoretician’, as Quebedeaux calls him), who founded the Fountain Trust in 1964 and the journal *Renewal* in 1966; David du Plessis (‘Mr Pentecost’), senior statesman among the Pentecostal churches; Ralph Wilkerson (Assemblies of God), founder, pastor and director of Melodyland Christian Centre, a combined church, seminary and conference headquarters opposite Disneyland in the Los Angeles conurbation; Léon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Malines-Brussels; Arnold Bittlinger (Lutheran), a pastor of the United Church of the Palatinate, West Germany; among many others. Backing organizations include the world-wide and very wealthy Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI), a laymen’s organization founded in 1953 by the American Pentecostal millionaire dairyman Demos Shakarian for world evangelization with Spirit-baptism and healing. Among successful ‘house journals’ for the movement have been *Trinity*, *Renewal*, *Full Gospel Business Men’s Voice* and *Logos Journal*. Widely-selling charismatic authors include Bennett, Harper, Christenson, Merlin Carothers, David Wilkerson, John L. Sherrill, and David Watson. Leading publishers of charismatic material include Hodder and Stoughton (London) and Logos International (Plainsfield, New Jersey).

- 6) op. cit., p 111.
- 7) L. Newbigin, *The Household of God* (SCM: London 1954), p 110.
- 8) Quebedeaux reports that ‘there are now even a few Unitarian-Universalist Charismatics’ (op. cit., p 127). This would seem to illustrate the assertion that the renewal experience does not ordinarily affect one’s commitment to the doctrines of one’s church; though it also prompts questions about the nature of the experience, at least in this particular case. Hollenweger (op. cit., pp 31 f, 71, 311 f) tells of the ‘Jesus only’ Pentecostal Churches which apparently hold a modalist doctrine of the Trinity, but this fruit of naive Bible-searching has no counterpart in the charismatic movement. For the history of Pentecostal unitarianism, see Synan, op. cit., pp 153-63.
- 9) Charismatic experience regularly intensifies the sense of the divine authority of Scripture (which is what a believer in the Reformed doctrine of the Spirit’s inner witness to Scripture [*testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti*] would expect where a genuine experience of the Spirit has taken place). Quebedeaux cites Jean Stone (lay leader in California, 1960-66), as saying: ‘The Lord appears to be making a lot of Episcopalian Fundamentalists in these end time days!’ (1962, op. cit., p 149; cf. Hollenweger, op. cit., p 5).
- 10) Historically, the first evangelicals to speak of baptism(s) of the Spirit for the increase of love, zeal and power for life and service were Wesley’s designated successor, John Fletcher of Madeley (*Works*, New York 1851, II.356, 632-69, IV.230-32), and his wife Mary (see G. H. Williams and Edith Waldvogel in Hamilton (ed.), *The Charismatic Movement*, p 81). Fletcher, with Wesley, saw the Christian life as a two-stage process in which full inward sanctity (Christian perfection, perfect love, cleansing of the heart, entire sanctification) is given experientially some time after conversion, and he envisaged Spirit-baptisms following sanctification as needed and as sought. Early North American Pentecostalism, which grew out of the Methodist holiness tradition, posited one Spirit-baptism only but then split over whether it was a third experience following the ‘second blessing’ of sanctification, or a second, the ‘finished work’ of sanctification having been wrought, at least in principle, at conversion. The latter view (‘Baptist’ as distinct from ‘Wesleyan’) is now that of the Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal denomination, and of a statistical majority of North American Pentecostals (cf. Hollenweger, op. cit., pp 24 ff, 29, 47; Synan, op. cit., pp 147-53), and all latter-day charismatics appear to assume it.
- 11) T. Goodwin, *Works*, ed. J. C. Miller (London 1861), I.227-52 (sermons on Eph. 1:13).

- 12) Wesley set out his view in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (various revisions. 1739-77; *Works*, ed. T. Jackson, London 1872, pp 366-488); it is well summarized in F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, and Hodder and Stoughton: London 1970), pp 323-32. 'A gradual work of grace constantly precedes the instantaneous work of both justification and sanctification . . . As after a gradual conviction of the guilt and power of sin you was (*sic*) justified in a moment, so after a gradually increasing conviction of inbred sin you will be sanctified in a moment.' (*The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. John Telford, Letter of 21 June 1784; Epworth Press: London 1931, VII.221 f)

- 13) In his *Memoirs* (New York 1876), pp 17 f, Finney tells how he wept and 'bellowed out the unutterable gushings' of his soul when he received a baptism of the Spirit in 1821; Mahan describes his experience extensively in Part II of *Out of Darkness into Light* (London 1875); in 1871 Moody 'dropped to the floor and lay bathing his soul in the divine' while his room 'seemed ablaze with God' (W. R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, New York 1900, pp 146 d); A. B. Simpson expounded the baptism as 'power to receive the life of Christ' in *The Holy Spirit, or Power from on High* (Harrisburg 1896). Torrey's exposition is in *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Nisbet: London 1910), pp 213-37. Bruner summarizes his views, *op. cit.*, pp 335-37.

- 14) W. E. Boardman. *The Higher Christian Life* (Boston 1859); Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (New York 1870); Evan H. Hopkins, *The Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life* (London 1884); on Boardman and Mrs Smith, cf. B. B. Warfield, 'The "Higher Life" Movement', *Perfectionism* (Baker: Grand Rapids 1958), pp 216-311; on 'Keswick', cf. Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott: London and Eerdmans: Grand Rapids); on F. B. Meyer, cf. Bruner, *op. cit.*, pp 340f.

- 15) E. C. Rickards, *Bishop Moorhouse of Melbourne and Manchester* (John Murray: London 1920), pp 15 f. The account continues: 'At the time I did not think of it as Christ, but as God the Father: but now I see that he manifested himself through Christ.' In a description of the same experience written in a letter when he was 83, Moorhouse said: 'To prevent myself from crying aloud in my joy, I was obliged to wrap myself in my bedclothes. And for days this divine rapture lasted . . . it made me love everyone intensely . . . it was heaven . . . I had been in heaven.'(pp 245 f)

- 16) For clarity, glossolalia (uttering sounds unintelligible to anyone) should be distinguished from xenolalia or xenoglossia (speaking a language one has not learned and does not know oneself to be speaking). Isolated cases of xenolalia in charismatic circles, in the older Pentecostalism and earlier (cf. Bennett and Williams in *The Charismatic Movement*, pp 27 ff, 69 ff; R. W. Harris, *Spoken by the Spirit*, Gospel Publishing House: Springfield 1973; Don Basham, *The Miracle of Tongues*, Revell: Old Tappan 1973) seem solidly attested; I believe myself to have verified one such. But most Pentecostal and charismatic tongue-speaking has been glossolalia, lacking any discernible language structure (see Quebedeaux, *op. cit.*, pp 199-203, and the academic literature there cited).

- 17) Following the first Pentecostals, and the defined doctrine of such major Pentecostal bodies as the Assemblies of God, most Protestant and some Catholic charismatics claim that glossolalia is the invariable sign of Spirit-baptism. Their point is plainly nullified, however, if linked, as it sometimes is, to direct instruction on how to start speaking in tongues. Other Catholic charismatics deny the claim: 'Some people begin speaking in tongues at the moment of the baptism. Others do not begin until hours, days, or even weeks later, and some never do.' (O'Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, p 134) Josephine Massyngberde Ford censures *The Team Manual for the Life of the Spirit Seminars*, by a fellow Roman Catholic, for making the quest for tongues integral to seeking Spirit-baptism: 'It would

seem that tongues are of very special importance to those who prepared this manual and that their stress on this gift, together with various techniques which they employ to induce tongues, and the importance of the authority figure . . . presents an enormous risk of hypnosis followed by regression of the ego and personality transference. My own advice would be to abstain from this emphasis, these techniques, and from praying over people for tongues, and to leave the gift entirely to the Holy Spirit. I believe that there is a genuine gift of tongues bestowed by God without human intervention.' (*The Charismatic Movement*, pp 122 f)

- 18) Eleven times in 1 Cor. 14 (verses 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27), and in 12:28, 13:8, NEB renders *glōssa(i)* as tongues of ecstasy or ecstatic speech. O'Connor's observation is on target: 'The New Testament *nowhere* describes prayer in tongues as "ecstatic utterance". That term has been coined by modern scholars in their efforts to conjecture what the gift must have been like. The experience of the Pentecostal movement suggests that their guesswork has been ill-advised.' (op. cit., p 126)
- 19) Bennett, in *The Charismatic Movement*, p 32. Bennett is warding off the idea that Christian glossolalia is schizophrenic, hypnotic or demonic in origin.
- 20) Richard Baer, quoted by Ford, in *The Charismatic Movement*, p 115.
- 21) That Paul in this passage discourages tongues in Christian gatherings so as to make way for intelligible speech is well shown by C. W. Parnell, *Understanding Tongues-Speaking* (S. African Baptist Press: Johannesburg 1972), pp 74-81. On 'I want you all to speak in tongues' (v 5), O'Connor rightly says: 'This text cannot be used as an argument that everyone ought to speak in tongues, since Paul has expressly declared . . . that the Holy Spirit does not give this or any other of the charisms to all men but only to some (1 Cor. 12:4, 10, 11, 30). Rather, this is a concessive clause . . . the sense of the passage is, "The gift of tongues is always good, but prophecy is better".' (op. cit., p 125)
- 22) Cf. Arnold Bittlinger, *Gifts and Graces: a Commentary on 1 Cor. 12-14* (Hodder and Stoughton: London 1967); *Gifts and Ministries* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1973).
- 23) This emphasis, always characteristic of the Brethren movement and recently prominent in the ecumenical theology of the laity, was not a main feature of the old Pentecostalism. The late Alan Stibbs (d. 1971) is gratefully remembered by many as an Anglican pioneer of it. Cf. J. I. Packer, 'The Holy Spirit and the Local Congregation,' *The Churchman*, June 1964, pp 98-108.
- 24) So in hymnology: the repetitive, slow-moving, sometimes incoherent style of charismatic hymns and choruses contrasts strikingly with the more theologically and poetically accomplished words, and brisker tunes, of earlier days.
- 25) Original Pentecostalism sought to be an 'ecumenical revival movement' rather than a denomination (Hollenweger, op. cit., pp 505 f) but was forced to create its own denominational structures because the older churches rejected it as false fire, fanatical and to many minds Satanic. G. Campbell Morgan called it 'the last vomit of Satan' (cited in Synan, op. cit., p 144); German evangelicals condemned it as diabolical (Hollenweger, op. cit., pp 223 ff).
- 26) Hollenweger, op. cit., pp 291 ff, expounds Pentecostal doctrine with formal accuracy if not full sympathy. The 'Fourfold Gospel' of the Presbyterian A.B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, seems to have been one source of it; the characteristic Pentecostal message was and is the 'Fourfold Gospel' (Christ as Saviour through personal conversion, Sanctifier through baptism in the Spirit, Healer through specific faith for healing, and Coming King through premillennial return) with the second item enlarged to include tongues as evidence of the baptism (see note 17 above). Simpson denied that glossolalia was the invariable

or sure evidence of the baptism, but in 1907 defined an attitude to tongues ('seek not—forbid not') that was friendlier and more tolerant than that of other evangelicals in his day (see Synan, *op. cit.*, p 145).

- 27) Cf. Quebedeaux: 'Pentecostalism was a legitimated way to dismantle inhibition and to enjoy emotional release, which for a long time was limited in modern society. In some ways, it may be anti-cultural (or counter-cultural?), but it may also function as a safety valve, and may thus in the long run prevent emotions from running into socially nihilistic channels. If (*sic*) might be interesting to speculate why in the 1900-60 period the lower socio-economic levels of society needed this kind of release; and why in the 1960s and 1970s the middle class needs it. The need could, perhaps, be linked to the declining relative position of the middle class in a period of economic redistribution and the reduction of status differences (i.e., a limited experience of relative deprivation).' (*op. cit.*, pp 230 f)
- 28) R. Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (Harper & Row: New York 1974), p 43; cf. *The New Charismatics*, pp 153 f.
- 29) German Pentecostals mostly dissociate themselves from the 'two-stage' understanding of baptism in the Spirit. The charismatic Lutheran Arnold Bittlinger writes: 'We Christians do not look for a special act of the reception of the Spirit in "sealing" or "the baptism of the Spirit", but we know that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian and desires to be visible in every Christian.' (Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p 247, cf. p 15) A similar viewpoint is expressed in Thomas Smail, *Reflected Glory*, (Hodder and Stoughton: London, and Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1976), and in the joint 'charismatic'—'non-charismatic' Anglican evangelical statement *Gospel and Spirit*, sec. 2 (Fountain Trust/CEEC, 1977; also in *Churchman*, April 1977).
- 30) Chrysostom (late fourth century) wrote: 'In the beginning, charismata were given even to the unworthy, because the ancient period needed this help to foster the faith; but now they are not given even to the worthy because faith is strong and firm enough not to need this support' (J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, 51:81). This, the common position at all times, was restated by B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Scribners: New York 1918). *Miracles Yesterday and Today* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1953), who argued that since the charismata 'were part of the credentials of the Apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church . . . they necessarily passed away' with the Apostolic age (*Miracles Yesterday and Today*, p 6). Later presentations of this view (e.g. Walter J. Chantry, *Signs of the Apostles: Observations on Pentecostalism Old and New*, rev. edn. Banner of Truth: Edinburgh 1973) lean heavily on Warfield.
- 31) Cf., e.g., F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 1970 and Hodder and Stoughton: London 1971); J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (SCM: London 1970); J. R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fulness*, rev. edn (IVP: London and Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove 1976).
- 32) Charles E. Hummel, *Fire in the Fireplace: Contemporary Charismatic Renewal* (Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove 1978), p 47; cf. the description of charismatic prayer groups among Roman Catholics in USA in O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp 111-21.
- 33) O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp 225 ff.
- 34) 'Thus, there are people who want their entire lives to be guided by heavenly messages and revelations, and hence neglect the planning and deliberation that are within their power. Some people want all sicknesses to be healed miraculously, and refuse to see a doctor or take medicine. On similar grounds, others would like to see theological study and sermon preparation replaced by a kerygma [=pulpit utterance] of purely charismatic inspiration, and the

institutional offices in the Church . . . replaced by a purely charismatic leadership.’ (O’Connor, op. cit., p 227) All this expresses very clearly and typically the super-supernaturalist cast of mind.

- 35) ‘The longing for the supernatural and for the healing of sickness by prayer is a constant feature of nineteenth-century works of edification.’ (Hollenweger, op. cit., p 353). See A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (1877), A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing* (1882), etc., and cf. Hollenweger, pp 115-20, 353-76. Otto Stockmayer (Switzerland) and Andrew Murray (South Africa) were among leaders who held out hope of regular conquest of illness by prayer.
- 36) ‘Deliverance from sickness is provided in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers’ (Declaration of Faith of the Assemblies of God, 12); ‘Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement’ (Declaration of Faith of the Church of God (Cleveland). 11): cited from Hollenweger, pp 515, 517. That total healing for the body, with total sinless perfection, are ‘in the atonement’, in the sense that entire personal renewal in Christ’s image flows from the cross (cf. Rom. 8:23; Ph.3:20f), is true, but it is a potentially disastrous mistake to expect on earth what will only be given in heaven.
- 37) Cf., for instance, Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (Ave Maria Press: Notre Dame 1974), pp 13 f: ‘I would no longer have to tell people whose sicknesses were disintegrating their personalities that their illness was a God-sent cross, but I would hold up the hope that God wanted them well, even when medical science could not help.’ Assessing claims to supernatural bodily healing through prayer is hard, for the evidence is regularly incomplete and disputed. Sample sceptical evaluations high-lighting this difficulty are B. B. Warfield, op. cit., and W. Nolen, *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle* (Random House: New York 1974), a study of the healing ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman, who in 1962 had ventured to publish a book called *I Believe in Miracles*. The argument in the text does not depend on, nor does it justify, assessments as negative as these, though it is hard to see on what grounds one could safely be more positive.
- 38) Cf. John F. MacArthur, *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids 1978), pp 55 ff; W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Baker: Grand Rapids 1973 and Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh 1977), pp 400 f.
- 39) Epaphroditus, Phil. 2:27; Timothy, 1 Tim. 5:23; Trophimus, 2 Tim. 4:20; Paul himself, the agent of widespread supernatural healings of others (cf. Acts 28:8 f, etc.), according to the natural exposition of 2 Cor. 12:7 ff, where ‘thorn’ points to physical pain and ‘flesh’ to created, flesh-and-blood humanity.
- 40) See on this the superb book by the quadriplegic Joni Eareckson and Steve Estes, *A Step Further* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids 1978, and Pickering & Inglis: Glasgow 1979)
- 41) ‘Healing does not fail because of the will of God, but because of the unbelief of his children.’ (Pentecostal evangelist Richard Vinyard, 1958; Hollenweger, op. cit., p 358) See Hummel. op. cit., pp 219 f.
- 42) Cf. John Richards, *But Deliver us from Evil* (Darton Longman & Todd: London 1976).
- 43) Cited from Josephine Massyngberde Ford in *The Charismatic Movement*, pp 115 f.