

## PREFACE

A theology of *The Holy Spirit* is urgent business in today's church. The Fifth Oxford Institute on Methodist Theological Studies was called in the summer of 1973 to address that need.

Pentecostalism demonstrates a sensational vitality and commands a reassessment by main line churches. If grandchildren of the Wesleyan Evangelical Revival are confused by the charismatic return, perhaps a fresh reminder of our own heritage would give clarity. Churches born of the missionary movement may still be close enough to the Bible and sufficiently distant from traditional structures to speak a clear word regarding the Spirit and ministry. Furthermore, we perceive the emphasis given to the renewal of the church during the past decade as related to the liberating activity of the Spirit. Renewal has brought forward the ministry of the laity. These and other currents running through the church today underline the importance of a new depth study on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Oxford Institute of the World Methodist Council is grateful to Tidings for making the papers from the Fifth Institute available to the whole church. These papers take their place alongside previous Institute offerings: *Biblical Theology and Methodist Doctrine* (1955); *The Doctrine of the Church* (1962); *The Finality of Christ* (1965); and *The Living God* (1969). The last three volumes were published by Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

My personal gratitude is deep for the co-secretaries from Great Britain: Prof. Raymond George, Wesley College, Bristol; and Prof. Brian Beck, Wesley House, Cambridge.

Through ten days of discussion, one central issue divided lecturers and members: *whether the Spirit works only in and through the church, or whether the Presence may be discerned in movements outside the People of God?*

A debate between Dr. Richard Tholin (USA) and Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright, recently from the Faculté de Théologie Protestante, Cameroun, West Africa, sharpened the issue on the proposition: "The Spirit can be discerned where the Name is not named." Dr. Tholin, whose paper is included here, had no difficulty showing how the Spirit urges believers to social justice. Dr. Wainwright insisted the Bible speaks of the Spirit almost exclusively as working within the People of God. It would be more biblically consistent, he contended, to ascribe God's work outside the church to the *Logos*. In each instance, the speakers were putting forward positions strongly dividing the Institute.

It was agreed that the king of Babylon, for example, was used by God to chastise the People of God. The question was: Is the Holy Spirit, strictly speaking, active in the king or in the prophet who discerned the action of God through the king, or in both? A diversity of opinion persisted, as it undoubtedly does throughout the church. In worship and discussion, however, Institute members were aware of strong elements of unity—the most assuring benefit of the work of the Spirit in our midst.

The one hundred participants who gathered at Lincoln College, Oxford, from all parts of world Methodism bore marks of the glory and limitations of our *koinonia*. Churches with few financial resources and great distances from England were not as fully present as they should have been. Some correction was furnished by the impact of non-Anglo-American delegates.

The Warden of the Institute was Prof. José Miguez-Bonino, of Buenos Aires. Prof. E. Bolaji Idowu, Iba-

dan, Nigeria, related the Spirit of God to the vital forces in traditional African religion. Dr. Stanley Samartha of the World Council of Churches Department on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, and Dr. Daniel Arichea, from the Philippines and Thailand, kept the Asian perspective alive in all discussions.

The most significant addition over past Institutes was the larger number of women. Male patterns, however, continue to shape the process. Challenge came not only from the women and some men, but also from the theological critique by Dr. Tholin and Father Meyendorff. Each in separate ways claimed the feminine gender for the word "Spirit." The difficulty of achieving in such a gathering a balance of youth, women, and non-whites results from the same imbalance at leadership levels in the church.

We turned to theologians from other confessions for their distinctive contributions on the two more "theological" questions: the definition of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Incarnation and to the Godhead. Prof. Maurice Wiles, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, took the first. Fr. John Meyendorff, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, New York, and chairperson of Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, the latter.

Appreciation is acknowledged to those already named and to the other readers whose lectures are included in this volume: Prof. André Pieters, President of the United Protestant Church and its seminary in Brussels; Dr. Thomas Langford, Dean of Duke Divinity School, USA; Dr. Peter Stephens, Wesley College, Bristol, England; Prof. Walter Hollenweger, another non-Methodist, who shared his life experience and expert understanding of worldwide pentecostalism.

One can only wish it might have been possible to have shared our experience of the Spirit's movement

in the evening led by Dr. Hycel Taylor, Professor of the Black Experience, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, USA, on "Spirit and Soul—the Black Experience;" in the Bible studies by Dr. Morna Hooker, Methodist laywoman, Lecturer in New Testament, Oxford University; and in numerous worship occasions. The Warden's sermon is part of this volume as an illustration of how the theology of the Spirit is preached.

The church in our time is searching for renewal of its life. The vitality which marks its history clearly resulted from the activity of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit stirs today. Whether a book becomes the instrumentality of the Spirit may be debated. Yet this volume is sent forth with the prayer:

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
 And lighten with celestial fire.  
 Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
 Who dost thy seven-fold gifts impart.  
 Thy blessed unction from above  
 Is comfort, life, and fire of love.  
 Enable with perpetual light  
 The dullness of our blinded sight.  
 Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
 With the abundance of thy grace.  
 Keep far our foes, give peace at home;  
 Where thou art guide, no ill can come.  
 Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
 And thee, of both to be but One;  
 That through the ages all along,  
 This may be our endless song:  
 Praise to thy eternal merit,  
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.  
*(Veni, Creator Spiritus)*

Dow Kirkpatrick

Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.  
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