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Response to Comments

Arthur O. Roberts

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Response to Comments

ARTHUR O. ROBERTS

Dan Wilson, Cecil Hinshaw, and Eugene Collins add cautionary words to mine about the danger of substituting verbal constructs for the work of God with men. And of course we use words to express this caution! The language of ecstasy requires the gift of prophecy if the Church is to be edified. What is holiness? What happens in the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

It seems to me Dan Wilson and Cecil Hinshaw overrate contemporary experience at the expense of Biblical authority. We agree more closely upon divine inward revelations than upon the utilization of Scripture as the outward test of doctrine and practice.

I do not ignore the fact that the Bible comes to us in man's language; nor do I minimize the importance of evangelistic exposition through contemporary language. But I insist we receive the authority of the Scriptures lest the synergism which Eugene Collins rightly fears will articulate man's questions without telling us God's answers. One task of the Church is to enable the language of religion to convey Biblical truth. Our understanding of holiness needs to be informed by Biblical thought forms so that language does not erode authentic experience but communicates it at the highest level. Otherwise we find no check to the infallibility of the *human* spirit. And the idolatry of self, it seems to me, threatens the Church more now than bibliolatry. The Bible is the map of God's revelation.

In closing I would like to speak to Dan Wilson's question, "Why so little, in a paper on the Holy Spirit's action in our lives, about the direct and immediate, yes, unmediated experience of His presence?" Because the article was not cast in the nature of a testimony. But he has a good point. I would testify that the joy of the Holy Spirit is certainly beyond all telling. To abide in Christ and be led of the Holy Spirit is my experience to which I gladly give witness.