

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Reformation & Revival* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_ref-rev-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ref-rev-01.php)

Reformation  
& Revival



---

A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

---

Volume 4, Number 1 • Winter 1995

---

The war in which we are engaged is more deadly than the totality of all wars ever fought. This is a war against the soul. Everyone is personally engaged in it. He is either a captive and servant of Satan or a captive and servant of Jesus Christ. Since we are involved in this war, let us take instruction from the experts in physical war from the Scriptures.

*Jim Wilson*  
*Principles of War*

All temptations from whatever quarter ... were forged in the workshop of that enemy.

*John Calvin*

To human eyes the victory of Calvary [over Satan] seems unreal in view of the tragedy and turmoil of our modern world. Frequently the illustration of sentence passed and judgment yet to be executed is used. But this does not agree with Scripture, which, as we have seen, tells us very plainly that the sentence passed in Eden was executed at Calvary. A better illustration would be that of thunder and lightning. In objective reality they are virtually one, but from our standpoint, owing to the fact that light travels much more quickly than sound, there is usually a time-lag between seeing the flash and hearing the thunder. With God the victory and judgment are all in the cross.... But to the believer who lives in time, there is a time-lag between the lightning and the thunder, between Satan being cast down and the hearing of the crash of his fall. With God there is no such gap and at the final judgment, when time will have ended, we shall see for ourselves that the cross stood at the heart of history and that there Satan was in fact cast out.

*Frederick S. Leahy*  
*Satan Cast Out* (p. 30)

## A Review Article

Gary Johnson

### *Quenching the Spirit: Examining Centuries of Opposition to the Moving of the Holy Spirit*

William DeArteaga  
Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House (1992).  
300 pages, cloth, \$14.99.

### *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: A Former Dallas Seminary Professor Discovers That God Speaks and Heals Today*

Jack Deere  
Grand Rapids: Zondervan (1993).  
299 pages, cloth, \$21.95.

Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), an English poet and statesman, who is perhaps best known for his remark that an ambassador was an honest man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country, had engraved on his tombstone a line taken from his book *A Panegyric to King Charles*, which read: *disputandi pruritus ecclesiarum scabies*—"an itch for disputation is the mange of the churches." I regretfully confess that this review was brought on by a severe case of this dreadful disease. The itch is not, however, due to the controversial nature of subject matter of the volumes under consideration. As can be seen in the respective titles, both books take up the highly volatile issue of charismatic claims. It is not my intention to even directly address that issue. My own *scabie laborare* has to do with how the two authors interact with and depict their cessationist opponents, especially B.B. Warfield.<sup>1</sup>

### *Quenching the Spirit*

Mr. DeArteaga's work, as evidenced by his ambitious title,

attempts a historical analysis which is not comprehensive in scope and is misleading (and revealing at the same time) in two respects:

1. Charismatic manifestations and claims are not necessarily the same thing as the work of the Holy Spirit. I do not think that DeArteaga would call the same type of phenomena in groups like the Mormons or the Children of God "the moving of the Holy Spirit," but he nonetheless equates all charismatic manifestations with the work of the Spirit.

2. The book deals with only one area of the Spirit's work and is myopic in that regard. DeArteaga follows a fairly typical Pentecostal-charismatic line which has an overt tendency to make all of theology into pneumatology and makes the charismata the focus of pneumatology.

The premise for the book is found on the inside flap of the dust jacket: "The greatest threat to a move of the Spirit does not come from the atheists or humanists. It comes from within the church." As the book unfolds we are astonished to discover that the Spirit's arch-foes are none other than the Reformers, the Puritans, the Princetonians, and other like-minded evangelicals.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to imagine that someone who wishes to engage in Christian scholarship could actually take such a position, but it does not take long to learn why he does so.

DeArteaga arrives at his position by establishing an analogy which, in turn, produces a narrow grid through which all of church history is forced. DeArteaga's analogy is drawn from the Pharisees. He informs us that a Pharisee "is a deeply religious person who, among other things, staunchly asserts and defends the status quo with regard to tradition, order and consensus orthodoxy ... in order to oppose any new work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 16). If DeArteaga is successful in passing off this tour de force, he will gain a tremendous psychological advantage. After all, what Christian wants to be found in league with the chief opponents of Jesus?

We cannot help but notice in his definition of a Pharisee the passing remark, "among other things," and, of course, all who read the Gospels with any attentiveness realize that DeArteaga's definition is partial, and for that reason, inadequate. Jesus in Matthew 23 condemned the Pharisees' ostentation, their hypocrisy, and their legalistic view of salvation, as well as their blind allegiance to tradition. DeArteaga is aware of this and even cites Matthew 23, but chooses to commit the fallacy of accent anyway. The Pharisees' real problem, according to DeArteaga, is that they "drastically overvalued the role of theology in spiritual life" (p. 18). I will leave this remark alone for now and point out that DeArteaga has unwittingly committed another fallacy. This time he has fallen headlong down the fallacy of the slippery slope by seeking to define the essence of Pharisaism in terms of "tradition," order and "consensus orthodoxy." He would have his unsuspecting readers believe that this aspect of Pharisaism is necessarily wrong and dangerous simply because the Pharisees supposedly stressed it.<sup>3</sup> The apostle Paul, it should be noted, likewise put a premium on these things (1 Cor. 11:2; 14:33, 40; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6). I hope that DeArteaga would not wish to place the apostle in this unflattering group, but given his overwhelming desire to make every example of "tradition, order and consensus orthodoxy" ("correct theology," p. 18) the legacy of Pharisaism, he seems to have no choice in the matter. Unless, of course, he scraps his grid altogether. It needs to be said that, given DeArteaga's definition, any and all heterodoxical groups could follow his lead and label their orthodox opponents "Pharisees."

Having established in his own mind the correctness of this analogy, DeArteaga is prepared to identify this "perennial heresy" (p. 16) down through the history of the church. These Pharisees, who appear at every critical historical moment to quench the work of the Spirit, have one thing in common: they are all committed in one way or another to Calvinism. (I

counted no fewer than forty negative references to Calvin, Calvinism and Reformed theology.)

It comes as no great surprise to learn that DeArteaga is in fact an Arminian.<sup>4</sup> He is writing from within a tradition that has always been linked historically to Arminianism.<sup>5</sup> He is welcome to his opinions on the subject. That Calvinism is not sympathetically appreciated is obvious. One would wish, however, that he had taken the time to understand the major features of historical Calvinism. His discussion of divine sovereignty and Christian materialism (p. 142), as well as his comments on “materialist-realist philosophy and the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity” (p. 162), are ludicrous. Equally bad are his remarks that Calvin’s understanding of God’s sovereignty “gives little room for intercession” (p. 240) and that it is “closer to the concept of God as depicted in the Koran” (p. 241). Worst of all is his judgment that the spiritual decline of Protestant Europe is directly traceable to Calvinism (p. 89). This perspective was gained, interestingly enough, from the Roman Catholic Hilaire Belloc’s old book, *The Great Heresies*.

From Calvin onward, every manifestation of Pharisaism is traceable to Calvinism. This is DeArteaga’s *passe partout*, which he uses to the point of absurdity. Charles Chauncy, we are confidently told, is chiefly responsible for dousing the flame of the Great Awakening by using “the assumptions of Calvinist theology” (p. 52). This is stated even though DeArteaga alluded to the well-known fact that Chauncy “tended toward the New Arminianism” (p. 45). James Monroe Buckley, editor of the preeminent Methodist journal, *The Christian Advocate*, was motivated in his opposition to the claims of miracles and faith-healing in his day by a desire “to steer the Methodists away from experience-oriented Wesleyan theology toward Calvinist cessationism” (p. 118). John Nelson Darby is likewise guilty of falling prey to “Calvin’s radical cessationism” (p. 96). The same is said of contemporary charismatic critics like John

MacArthur, Jr., and Dave Hunt. It was Hunt’s book, *The Seduction of Christianity*, that originally prompted DeArteaga to take up his ax. Hunt’s major mistake was “following the Old Scottish Calvinists” (p. 241). MacArthur’s “hyper-cessationism” stems from “classical Reformed theology” (p. 260). We learn that “some Calvinist theologians claimed that evangelization among the heathen was also an apostolic gift which ceased after biblical times” (p. 83), and that “the record of orthodox Calvinism on missions is poor prior to the 1850’s.” It is disturbing that he does not cite by name any of the Calvinist theologians who supposedly held such a position, and only shows his jaundiced eye (not to mention his historical dearth) in the closing remark about Calvinists and missions.

The author’s astonishing doughtiness is nowhere more evident than in his handling of Jonathan Edwards, whom he admires and would very much like to enlist in the charismatic ranks. The fact that Edwards was a convinced Calvinist does not deter DeArteaga in the least. According to him, Edwards (who, by the way, is never identified in this book as a Calvinist) broke with his fellow Calvinist Puritans on a number of important issues. DeArteaga contends that Edwards’ understanding of conversion “did not fit the Puritan understanding of conversion” (p. 35). The Puritans, like the Pharisees, put too much emphasis on theological preaching (pp. 29, 36), whereas Edwards stressed the imagination and emotions (p. 35). As Edwards analyzed the Great Awakening, he did so in a way quite different from the Puritans because “pure Calvinist theology could not interpret the spiritual experiences that were to accompany the Great Awakening” (p. 32; a similar remark is made on p. 195). When one of the Puritans like Isaac Andrews produced a book that DeArteaga thinks has some merit, it is “in spite of its Calvinist theology” (p. 193).

Since DeArteaga believes that Edwards would have relished later manifestations of the charismata (p. 115), and that Edwards’ appraisal of the Great Awakening is proof that he

would have approved of the modern day charismatic movement (p. 249), it will no doubt come as a shocking surprise for him to learn that Edwards was a staunch cessationist.<sup>6</sup> Students of Edwards who have read him firsthand know this. DeArteaga gives us no indication that he has ever read Edwards. All of his references to Edwards are gleaned from secondary sources. In many ways, one could wish that he had followed them more closely.<sup>7</sup> Such is not the case. His free-wheeling analysis of Edwards and the Great Awakening is uniquely his own.

This is illustrated by his rejection of Edwards' explanation of why the Great Awakening was short-circuited. Edwards attributed the demise of the Awakening to its own excesses. This does not fit into DeArteaga's casual-reductionistic-Pharisee paradigm and would actually prove fatal to it. Why is Edwards' first-hand analysis mistaken? DeArteaga laments the tragic fact that Edwards was at a tremendous disadvantage in this regard because "he had no readily available theology of discernment" (p. 55). This deplorable handicap, we are further enlightened, was fostered on Edwards by those black-hatted Reformers who rejected the need for discernment when they threw out the whole of Catholic mystical theology.

DeArteaga's positive assessment of many features of Catholic theology is evident in his remarks on the valid use of relics (pp. 71-72) and the role of the sacraments in healing (p. 70). I am not endeavoring to convey the impression that Mr. DeArteaga's theological sympathies are completely in line with Roman Catholicism. They are, however, not distinctly Protestant.<sup>8</sup> He states that, whatever its faults (and he admits there were many, something he likewise acknowledges about the charismatic movement, p. 250), "the Catholic position on miracles, healings, and gifts of the Spirit is superior to that of the Reformers" (p. 77). He is, however, sharply critical of Thomas Aquinas. As in the case of Edwards, DeArteaga dem-

onstrates no hands-on acquaintance with Aquinas. Even his one secondary source leaves much to be desired considering the pivotal role Thomas is supposed to have played.<sup>9</sup> After reading DeArteaga's discussion of Aquinas I was left wondering if perhaps he has another Aquinas in mind. DeArteaga's claim that Reformed theology "incorporated the philosophical assumptions of Catholicism, specifically the Christian materialism of Thomas Aquinas" (p. 79), is faulty from the start. He assumes that the Reformers drank deeply from Aquinas and that Aquinas is actually guilty as charged. This is a classic example of poisoning the well. DeArteaga makes much to do over Christian-materialist-realism versus what he calls faith idealism, which I have neither the time or space to discuss. I will simply state that, like his grasp of historical theology, Mr. DeArteaga's philosophical endeavors are unimpressive.

By the time I reached the chapter titled "The Destruction of the Healing Revival by Victorian Pharisees," I was blotchy from all my scratching. The itch brought on by DeArteaga's abuse of Warfield turned into Saint Anthony's fire. It should be noted that DeArteaga is not the first person from within the ranks of the charismatics to throw disdain on Warfield.<sup>10</sup>

DeArteaga does not hide his dislike for Warfield. He is entitled to argue against Warfield, and (if he can) to refute the great Princetonian. But Warfield is not given a fair hearing. His views are either not stated in their completeness or entirely misrepresented; and they are refuted in mere caricature.

I am reminded of Warfield's words on a similar matter. "Cromwell was right in demanding that the artist should paint the wart on his nose. But it would hardly do to look at the wart through a microscope and paint it and it alone in this exaggerated light in all its hideous rugosities, and label it 'Cromwell.'"<sup>11</sup> It is something like this (but worse) that Mr. DeArteaga has done to Warfield.

DeArteaga's attempted refutation of the man is hardly

advanced by imputing to him things that have no basis in fact. He accuses Warfield of denying even the possibility of demonic possession.

Taking Calvin's suspicion about exorcism to the extreme point reached by seventeenth-century Calvinist theologians, Warfield asserted that, with the establishment of the church, demons were banished from the earth, and therefore possession was impossible. Thus the Catholic rite of exorcism was nothing but a regression to paganism (p. 123). Warfield certainly looked askance on the Catholic claims of exorcism, but he did not rule out the possibility of demonic possession. This is nowhere even implied by him.<sup>12</sup>

In order to cast further aspersion on Warfield, DeArteaga adds, "Significantly, to buttress this position he quotes the extreme liberal theologian Alfred (*sic*) Von Harnack." There follows a quote from Adolf Von Harnack as cited by Warfield, but Warfield's qualifying phrase that Harnack's work is "written, of course, from his own point of view" is omitted. DeArteaga knew this and, if he had read the entire book by Warfield, he would have noticed the numerous times that Warfield addressed himself to the liberal school of thought to which Harnack belonged.<sup>13</sup> Yet the effort is made by DeArteaga to convey to his readers the distinct impression that Warfield is not to be trusted simply because he cites a theological liberal. If such things are to be taken into stock, why does DeArteaga cite the likes of Paul Tillich (p. 268), or why does he quote approvingly from a book that likewise appeals to Harnack in the same fashion that Warfield did?<sup>14</sup> DeArteaga's scurvy argument is nothing but an example of abusive *ad hominem*.

We are also told that Warfield "unconditionally reasserted that healing, exorcism and the gifts of the Spirit ceased after the death of the last apostle" (p.122). Again, this is a misrepresentation of Warfield's position. Warfield indeed states that the charismata was particular to the apostolic age and that the power of working miracles was not extended beyond the

disciples upon whom the apostles conferred it by the imposition of their hands.<sup>15</sup> I realize that as far as charismatics are concerned, this is just as unacceptable as the position DeArteaga imputes to Warfield. That is not the point. Fairly and accurately stating your opponent's position is the point. This DeArteaga has not done. Warfield most certainly did not believe that "the gifts of the Spirit" in toto had ceased.<sup>16</sup> Nor did he believe that healings did not take place.<sup>17</sup> Warfield was, however, very careful in how he stated the issue, and his nuanced language reflects this cautious concern.<sup>18</sup>

DeArteaga is especially contentious with Warfield on the subject of healing, and his biliousness is transparent in the way he presents Warfield. He accuses Warfield of callously holding the position that "Healing prayer had nothing to do with ... recovery other than adding an element of mental suggestion!" (pp. 123-24). He refers his readers to pages 190-91 in Warfield's work on *Counterfeit Miracles*, but upon examination one finds nothing that even remotely resembles the accusation. He contends that Warfield thought it was presumptuous to seek bodily healing (p. 124). But again when we check the reference in Warfield, neither the language or the thought to that effect is found. What we do find, however, is a well-crafted statement on the objective nature of redemption as opposed to its subjective effects.<sup>19</sup>

I have highlighted only a few of DeArteaga's inaccuracies. There are many others.<sup>20</sup> The degree to which DeArteaga will go to indict Calvinists like Warfield is matched only by his efforts to absolve some of his fellow charismatics from criticism. Kenneth Hagin is one example. D.R. McConnell produced a critical analysis of the Modern Faith Movement with special reference to Hagin.<sup>21</sup> In his book McConnell documents Hagin's extensive plagiarism of E. W. Kenyon. In many cases this involved the lifting of texts word for word, sentence for sentence, paragraph for paragraph, in huge bites. DeArteaga devotes a chapter to McConnell's work and ends up labeling

it “pharisaical” (p. 230). He states that Hagin’s plagiarism of Kenyon had to be “unintentional” (p. 228) and is no doubt traceable, so he tells us, to Hagin’s “almost perfect photographic memory.” Since Hagin is a person of “unquestionable integrity,” DeArteaga feels this is the only possible explanation.

DeArteaga makes an interesting remark in his preface. He tells us that he spent six years involved in the Gnostic-metaphysical cults like New Thought and Christian Science. This experience, he says, helped prepare him to write this particular book. But he confesses, “I am thankful that what little I wrote during that period was not widely distributed” (p.13). The present work, unlike his earlier efforts, is being widely distributed and is praised by charismatics as a work that is “long overdue.” This book, they claim, is one that “the church of Jesus Christ desperately needs to hear. Now.” Twenty high-profile charismatics, listed by the publisher on the dust jacket and in the opening pages, lavish praise on this book. These include people like Oral Roberts, Francis MacNutt, Jack Hayford, Vinson Synan, and C. Peter Wagner. It is hailed as a “scholarly and sensitive work,” “must reading,” a “tremendous book” that “puts the debate on solid ground historically and biblically,” written “in the proper spirit by a man with good credentials.” Incredibly, one of the endorsees feels the book “will bring balance and, hopefully, restore some unity among Christians.” If Mr. DeArteaga had that as one of his objectives, *oleum perdisti* (You wasted your time!).

### ***Surprised by the Power of the Spirit***<sup>22</sup>

Jack Deere has written an altogether different kind of book. The style is lucid and is aimed at a general readership. Deere pauses frequently to relate his own personal experiences as he describes his pilgrimage from cessationist to charis-

matic, prompting Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee to call the book “narrative theology at its best.” He manages during this process to avoid, for the most part, the type of argumentation that characterizes the efforts of DeArteaga. There are, however, other very similar features between the two, especially in regard to emphasis.

Deere and DeArteaga do differ in the way they approach the historical dimension of their subject. One carries away the distinct impression that Deere has little if any real interest in the historical perspective when it comes to this issue.<sup>23</sup> He does seek to give the impression that he is aware of the part church history plays in this debate, but when all is said and done, he contends that this is at best a minuscule part and really should not be allowed to have much say in the matter. “Again, our decision must be based on clear and specific statements of Scripture regarding the nature and purpose of miraculous gifts. Ultimately, it is only Scripture, not historical research, that will settle this question” (p. 73).<sup>24</sup> I know of no one (especially the cessationists that Deere cites in the volume) who would not agree that Scriptures are the deciding factor in the discussion.

But Deere is clearly uncomfortable with the fact that he is aligning himself against a vast body of godly and learned fellow believers whose experience and testimony down through the history of the church is decidedly cessationist. In this position he very naturally wishes to have as little reference as possible to church history. The question, however, is nonetheless significant: Why do we find so little evidence for the charismata, not only in church history in general, but particularly in the lives of Christians who stand out in its pages? Deere seeks to avoid the force of this question by claiming that for the first fifteen hundred years of church history we have actually very scanty historical sources,<sup>25</sup> but he knows this is not the case from the Reformation onward. This is where Deere finds himself on the proverbial horns of



a dilemma, the points of which are a discomfort to him.

The testimony of the Reformers in the sixteenth century; all the English Puritans like Perkins, Sibbes, Owen, Baxter, Bunyan, and the Westminster divines in the seventeenth century; Edwards, Whitefield, the Wesleys in the eighteenth century; the Princetonians, Spurgeon, the missionary giants like Carey, Hudson and Judson in the nineteenth century (to name but a few)—all present Deere with a major problem. I am not resorting here to the argument from authority, but I do wish to press Deere into answering the question: why were none of these prominent Christians the recipients of charismata? Why is this where the shoe pinches for Deere? Because he contends that God gives the charismata to those who have the faith to believe Him (p. 165). One of the major issues between charismatics and their cessationist opponents has to do with the direct implication on the part of the charismatics that those who do not experience the charismata do not because they are inexcusably ignorant or deliberately disobedient. In fact, Deere declares that simply being open to the charismata is not enough. “Being open doesn’t count very much with God. A person who is simply open is still a person who does not yet believe” (p. 154). In light of that statement, what are we to make of this remark: “God doesn’t demand that we have perfect theology or practice in order for him to act in our lives” (p. 127)? Did God not act in the lives of the Christians we have listed? Are they guilty of quenching the Spirit? Is Deere willing to say that they were all disobedient, or they did not really seek God?<sup>26</sup> Deere claims that “God works miracles among those who have spiritual abuses, doctrinal error and even immorality” (p. 78). Well then, why then did God not work the charismata in the lives of these Christians? Is their particular doctrinal error something that God could not overcome? Deere seems to be saying throughout this book that the only thing that will hinder God from bestowing the gifts of the Spirit is orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup> Deere comes close to saying the same thing

that DeArteaga said about the Pharisees: They “drastically overvalued the role of theology in the spiritual life.” Does Deere wish to subscribe to such a statement? As it now stands, it is difficult to determine, even though he recognizes the need for sound doctrine in the life of the church (p. 149).

With the possible exception of Jonathan Edwards (who Deere, like DeArteaga, wants very much to claim for support),<sup>28</sup> readers will have some difficulty finding cessationists depicted in this book as anything other than driven by questionable motives or deficient morals.<sup>29</sup> This has also been observed by White who writes, “To see what I mean, one need only read his chapter on abuses (Chap. 6, where the depictions are appropriate to the topic), and his caricature of the Reformers (pp. 99-101) where the depiction is contrived and snide.”<sup>30</sup>

Deere admits he had “an ignorant prejudice” against charismatics and Pentecostals at one time (p. 267).<sup>31</sup> I submit he expresses this same type of prejudice against the theology of the Reformation. Those who are committed to Reformed theology are portrayed as holding Calvin in higher regard than the apostle Paul (pp. 250-51). Warfield is supposedly biased in his treatment of the historical evidence (Deere is quick to point out that Warfield has come under severe criticism in this regard, and, therefore, may be safely put on the shelf and forgotten).<sup>32</sup> To what extent Deere has read Warfield I do not know, but like DeArteaga, Deere fails to properly represent Warfield’s position. Warfield’s analysis of Augustine’s testimony on miracles encompasses more than Augustine’s emphasis on the role of relics and healing. Yet this is all that Deere alludes to and says, “Apparently for Warfield this is a sufficient basis to demonstrate that Augustine is not a credible witness” (p. 74). That is not the only reason Warfield cites. His lengthy discussion takes up the issue of heretical miracles (something that greatly troubled Augustine, but is inconsequential for Deere [p. 80]) as well as the question of tongues and prophecy

(which Augustine declared did not occur in his day). Warfield elaborates in some detail the borrowing of pagan legends that were incorporated into the Christian system by Augustine and others, and Warfield, far from resorting to ridicule (as DeArteaga charges [p. 122]), calls Augustine “an honest old man and a lover of truth” (p. 260) who was nonetheless “a child of his times and cannot rise above them” (pp. 76-77). How any Protestant evangelical can take offense at this section of Warfield’s book is surprising. How is Warfield “biased”? Deere feels compelled, like DeArteaga, to enter the fray and oppose the great champion of the cessationist Philistines, and it is enough (if we go by C. Peter Wagner’s remarks about this work “neutralizing Warfield”) if he merely throws verbal stones at him.<sup>33</sup>

As in the case of DeArteaga, Deere’s title is also very revealing. Deere claims he was surprised by the power of the Spirit who overcame his theological prejudice. Yet as we read on we discover the Spirit rarely violates theological prejudices (p. 78). If the Spirit does this in Deere’s case why not Edwards? Deere claims he came to his present position by being as objective as possible in his study of Scripture (p. 22) and that he did so with “an open mind” (p. 75). Cessationists, however, develop their position, not with a careful study of Scriptures, but from the lack of experience (p. 99). This is true, Deere claims, of *all* cessationists (p. 56). That little word “all” has an encompassing ring to it. Name the cessationist and regardless of who he is, he is one of the “all.” If, as Deere tells us, God wants to change the whole church into a full-blown charismatic church (p. 173), why did He not change any of the noted cessationists who preceded Deere in a similar fashion? Did any of them approach the Scriptures with “an open mind” and try to be as “objective as possible”? Where, in the history of the church, is the surprising power of the Spirit as Deere describes it?

Deere says that during his transition, he had “exceptionally

good theology” (p. 15), going so far as to call it “flawless (p. 35). Be that as it may, it was not, either in substance or emphasis (and certainly not in approach), the same theology as espoused by Edwards or Warfield. No, Deere’s theology was distinctively dispensational theology, and what we find in this book, surprisingly, is the application and outworking of Deere’s own particular dispensational hermeneutic. Deere’s hermeneutic (and by this term I am referring to his approach to doing theology) is to ignore the past and simply read the text in a rather flat fashion. It is no wonder that at least three times in the book (pp. 54, 99, 114) Deere states that if we were to lock a new Christian in a room with only a Bible and tell him to study the Scriptures on the subject of the charismata, he would come out of the room a charismatic. Is this the approach we are to take in determining the correctness of our theology?

After the smoke clears, Deere’s book leaves one with the empty feeling that the Spirit’s power is really at the mercy of a particular theological bent and that those who do not have this bent are castigated for lacking humility (p. 86) or, worse yet, love for Jesus. In the final analysis Deere splits the church into Christians of the first rank who have been changed by God, and Christians of the second rank who have not been changed by God, but will be someday. Deere contends that this is the import of Jesus’ high-priestly prayer in John 17 (p. 173).<sup>34</sup> As harsh as this might sound, Deere has fallen prey to an elitist mentality, something that has long been associated with the position he now embraces.<sup>35</sup>

### Conclusion

I share with John Murray the opinion that “if this country in the present century produced one master theologian it was B.B. Warfield.”<sup>36</sup> I would go one step further. I consider him, along with Edwards and John Owen, to be one of the three greatest English-speaking theologians to date. I am not saying,

however, that Warfield was infallible. But he is a very reliable and reputable guide to understanding Christian theology. I have been a close student of his writings for almost twenty years (I hope Mr. Deere does not conclude from my remarks that Warfield carries more authority for me than the apostle Paul), and I am appalled by the cavalier way that he is treated in charismatic circles. One generous charismatic informed me that *if* Warfield is in heaven, “he is hewing wood and hauling water like the ancient Gibeonites!” He said it laughingly, but it reflected his opinion of Warfield, even though he admitted that he had personally never read, nor did he intend to read anything by Warfield. I am afraid that books like the two under review will only perpetuate this mind-set among charismatics. It will be difficult, for me at least, to avoid developing an itch to dispute or even pay much attention to what they have to say if this is their attitude. It will be equally difficult not to question their exclusivistic claims that they are the real vehicles through whom the Holy Spirit is so obviously working.

#### Endnotes

- 1 The volume of Warfield that has attracted their attention is *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Son, 1918). This is reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust and was issued under the title *Miracles: Yesterday and Today: True and False* by Eerdmans in 1953. The pagination is the same.
- 2 DeArteaga refers to the contributors in *The Agony of Deceit: What Some TV Preachers Are Really Teaching*, ed. Michael Horton (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990) as fundamentalists (p. 123).
- 3 There is considerable debate on this subject. Cf. M. Silva, “The Pharisees in Modern Jewish Scholarship,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 395-405.
- 4 He informs us that “In the period of the Great Awakening,

deism had become attached to Arminianism. Arminianism as a theological opinion was not a heresy, but rather a deviation from traditional Calvinism. The Arminian view recognized the individual's role in accepting God's gift of salvation. However, most of the leaders of the Awakening sincerely believed that Arminianism was the great heresy of the age and often preached against it. With historical perspective we can see that this was a false issue” (p. 32). It is not a question of “historical perspective.” This was a very real theological concern and was seen as such by Jonathan Edwards.

- 5 Vinson Synan, a historian from within the Pentecostal tradition, describes the early hostilities between fundamentalists and Pentecostals and states: “The heavy Calvinist orientation of most Fundamentalists constituted another theological barrier to the Armenian [*sic*]-oriented Pentecostal Holiness people” (*The Old-Time Power: A History of the Pentecostal Holiness Church* [Franklin Springs: Advocate Press, 1973], 187).
- 6 Edwards preached through the whole of 1 Corinthians 13. Part of these sermons were later published as *Charity and Its Fruits* (Reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982). Edwards devoted special attention to the last five verses since they had special bearing on the closing of the canon. This series is yet to be published, but John Gerstner has provided us with extensive quotations from Edwards' manuscript in Volume 1 of his *Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Orlando: Ligonier Ministries, 1991), pp. 161-79. DeArteaga could have consulted Gerstner, and he certainly could have read *Charity and Its Fruits*, especially pages 314-22, along with “The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God” in *Jonathan Edwards on Revival* (Reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1984), pp. 140-42, to ascertain Edwards' position.
- 7 His sources include C.C. Goen, ed., *The Great Awakening*

- (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); David Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World: Heresy to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); and Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987).
- 8 He affirms that "the traditional Catholic understanding of the preternatural powers is probably closer to the biblical truth than the evangelical" (p. 162). The Reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura* is denied because it does not allow for "revelatory dreams and visions" (p. 82).
  - 9 He appeals to the Episcopal scholar Morton T. Kelsey's two books, *Tongues Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience* and *Healing*. This is hardly a basis from which to launch an attack on someone with the stature of a Thomas Aquinas.
  - 10 Vinson Synan wrote the article on "Presbyterian and Reformed Charismatics" in *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 724-26, and credited Warfield with quenching the Spirit "in the lives of numerous clergy who in turn influenced their church members." C. Peter Wagner, in his endorsement of Jack Deere's book, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, writes: "One of the most severe historical setbacks to the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God in the U.S.A. was Benjamin Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles* published seventy-five years ago. Jack Deere's new book, more than anything I have seen, has all the potential for neutralizing Warfield and his followers and opening the body of Christ to the full power of God's Holy Spirit." Since DeArtega's book preceded Deere's work by a year and Wagner also blurred DeArtega's volume, I wonder if this is where

Wagner gained his opinion of Warfield.

- 11 *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), pp. 96-97.
- 12 Warfield reviewed John Nevius' *Demon Possession* for *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* VIII (April 1897): 359-60. In this review he refers to the value of Nevius' study but said he remained unconvinced that the cases described are really instances of possession. He did not deny the possibility of such things, but added, "Whether these cases stand as really instances of demoniacal possession or not, we shall not lose our confidence in the reality of those cases described for us in the New Testament."
- 13 Warfield took special notice of Harnack (pp. 234-39). This was something that was a vital concern to Warfield and one only has to read, for example, his masterful articles like "The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ" in Volume III of his works, or the ones that appear in Volume VIII on "'Miserable-sinner Christianity' in the Hands of the Rationalists" to appreciate his efforts in this regard.
- 14 DeArtega appeals on a number of occasions to Harold O.J. Brown, *Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1984). Brown critically engages Harnack throughout his book because, as all students of dogma know, Harnack's massive work on the subject is indispensable.
- 15 Warfield cites with agreement Bishop Kaye (p. 23).
- 16 Warfield speaks of gifts that were "distinctly gracious and those which were distinctly miraculous. In fact, in the classical passage which treats of them (1 Cor. 12-14) both classes are brought together under this name. The non-miraculous gracious gifts are, indeed, in this passage given the preference and called 'the greatest gifts'" (p. 4).
- 17 Writes Warfield, "We are far from wishing to suggest that cures at Lourdes are not in the main real cures. We should

be glad to believe that the whole of the four to eight thousand which are alleged to have taken place there, have been real cures, and that this great host of sufferers have been freed from their miseries" (p. 110). He further states that "no one who is a Christian in any clear sense doubts that God hears and answers prayer for the healing of the sick in a generally supernatural manner" (p. 160). How Arteaga can make the statement that Warfield denied healing altogether begs for explanation.

- 18 Note his concern. "When once the distinguishing mark of miracles is obliterated, it is easy to eliminate the specifically miraculous altogether by the simple expedient of sinking it in the general supernatural; and that not merely in contemporary Christianity, but in the origins of Christianity also" (p. 163).
- 19 Warfield knew that healings took place and was fully prepared to acknowledge that they did so in what appeared to be a miraculous fashion—often entirely outside the boundaries of Christianity. His remarks serve to alert the reader to the fact that healings per se are not necessarily supernatural. Scientists in the emerging field of psychoneuroimmunology—the study of the connection between the mind, spirit, and immune system—have established this fact. Healings take place in a variety of religious beliefs, and the fact that this occurs always seems to strengthen the individual's belief system, be it Christian, Islamic, or whatever. Warfield refused to link the claims of the Gospel to such things and he was right in not doing so.
- 20 Contrary to DeArteaga, Princeton theology did not extend back to the foundation of Princeton University. The Princetonians did not invent the doctrine of biblical inerrancy (p. 122). DeArteaga declares that Finney coined the expression "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" in reference to

ment came the most sophisticated theology of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit of the era" (p. 105). Luther, like Calvin, failed to understand the importance of revelation knowledge and lacked a doctrine of spiritual discernment (p. 226). One of the major issues raised by MacArthur, Hunt, McConnell, and others like Walter Martin in *The Agony of Deceit* is the heretical Christology that is being espoused by men like Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. Yet DeArteaga says, "Significantly, none of the other critics of either the charismatic renewal (or its faith movement component) has seriously objected to the present Christology of the renewal" (p. 249).

- 21 D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel: A Historical and Biblical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), pp. 6-12. McConnell places sections from the two in parallel columns to show how Hagin copied verbatim from Kenyon's writings. "This is only a sample of such plagiarism." McConnell adds, "Many more could be cited" (p. 8).
- 22 R. Fowler White has produced a lengthy critique of Deere's book: "For the Sparrow in the Hurricane: A Review of Jack Deere's *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*"—a paper given at the 1994 Evangelical Theological Society Eastern Region. White's efforts address directly Deere's arguments biblically and theologically. Cf. also the review by Edith L. Blumhofer, "Dispensing with Scofield," in *Christianity Today*, 10 January 1994, 56-57.
- 23 "Historical research," says Deere, "is an imperfect science. Who really knows history that well?" (p. 73). This de-emphasis on history and its role and importance are maintained throughout the book. That Deere is not a historian is crystal clear. His remarks should serve to alert the reader to that fact.
- 24 Deere claims that "Even the greatest of the cessationist

his case on Scripture alone. He appealed both to the Scriptures and to 'the testimony of later ages'" (p. 268). This dehistorical approach to doing theology is a badge of honor as far as Deere is concerned. This failure on Deere's part to see the importance of doing synthetic theology (depth theology is the expression that S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., uses; cf. his article "Romans 5:12—An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology" in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, edited by Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974], p. 299) is a disturbing feature throughout this book. It is akin to the approach taken by Zane Hodges in his book *The Gospel Under Siege: A Study of Faith and Works* (Dallas: Redencion Villa, 1981). Deere gives Hodges' work a glowing endorsement. Deere shares with Hodges the same dehistoricizing hermeneutic. Cf. the critique of Hodges in D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 137.

- 25 Deere describes the majority of cessationists as lacking "the ability to read the original historical sources in Greek and Latin, many of which are still untranslated, nor the critical skills to evaluate these sources" (p. 273). I hope he is not wishing to give his readers the impression that this was true of Warfield, since he quotes Warfield in this same section. Warfield was a master linguist, and not only could work easily in the original texts, but did possess the necessary critical skills to evaluate these sources. One cannot read his volume on *Counterfeit Miracles* without being aware of this aspect of Warfield's scholarship.
- 26 This is similar to the position taken by DeArteaga who writes, "God blesses believers with the gifts of His Spirit not because their theology is perfect but because of their commitment to Jesus" (p.66). Did Edwards lack this? Is commitment to Jesus the exclusive property of charismatics? I would also like to ask DeArteaga and Deere

their evaluation of former Pentecostals like Erroll Hulse, a British Reformed Baptist who edits *Reformation Today*. Hulse was for many years a Pentecostal pastor, but began to question his charismatic theology and experience and underwent a significant shift in his understanding of Scripture. Was Hulse sincere in his quest for the gifts as a Pentecostal? Cf. his *The Believer's Experience: Maintaining the Scripture Balance Between Experience and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978) and *Crisis Experience* (Sussex: Carey Publication, Ltd., 1983).

- 27 In Deere's mind, seeking to understand the Bible and orthodox theology is somehow in conflict with "pursuing the Son of God" (p. 188). "Jesus is not a doctrine, a theology. . . . Jesus is a person, a real person" (p. 191). This sounds very good, and all true Christians believe that Jesus is a real person, but it also sounds as if Deere has simply reworded the old liberal motto, "Christianity is a life, not a doctrine!" J. Gresham Machen clearly perceived the inherent dangers in such an attitude in his *Christianity and Liberalism* (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), pp. 17-53.
- 28 Unlike DeArteaga, Deere is not ignorant of Edwards' cessationist position. However, when Edwards does not serve Deere's purposes (especially when Edwards expresses his views on the charismata), he can easily be described in a demeaning fashion and lumped with the hard-hearted Pharisees (p. 284).
- 29 People who have a concern for doctrinal purity are portrayed as having serious moral problems (this is done not just once [p. 80], not twice [p. 82], not three times [p. 133], but four times [p. 184]). Deere informs us that these are not isolated stories and are not uncommon among anticharismatics who put high value, "perhaps the highest value, on the teaching of Bible doctrine" (p. 83). Unfortunately, Deere does parrot DeArteaga when he affirms,

“there is a far greater threat to the life and power of the church than the New Age. Legalism, pharisaism and enslavement to tradition are far greater threats within the church than anything that could attack us from without. This blind traditionalism sucks the very life out of the church and persecutes any new work the Holy Spirit wants to establish among us” (p. 171). “Blind traditionalism” in this book turns out to be any theological position that historically has not embraced charismatic teaching.

- 31 Deere accuses John MacArthur, Jr., of being motivated by theological prejudice in his opposition to charismatic claims (p. 292).
- 32 Deere points to the efforts of Max Turner, “Spiritual Gifts Then and Now,” *Vox Evangelical* 15 (1085): 1-64, and, along with DeArteaga, draws support from the Ph.D. dissertation of “John [sic] Ruthven,” *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Marquette:1989). Deere informs us that Sheffield Press will soon publish this work (p. 276). I have interacted with Max Turner and Jon Ruthven in my forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation, *Warfield and His Critics* (Westminster Theological Seminary, Spring 1995). Ruthven contends that Warfield not only went astray on cessationism and Pneumatology but was likewise in error on the doctrine of inspiration (p. 179), and “his Christology, ecclesiology and eschatology warrants [sic] substantial review” (p. 310). All this because Warfield failed to see the central importance of the charismata. I am reminded of Gulliver’s often used phrase to the Lilliputians, “My, my.”
- 33 Deere acknowledges that Warfield’s position on the role of miracles and inscripturated revelation “is the best possible way to attempt to prove from the Scriptures that miracles and the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were confined to the New Testament period” (p. 277). Since Deere argues that we should expect the same type of New

Testament quality miracles (p. 58) and God still gives “divine revelation” (p. 159), then why not expect further inscripturated revelation? If God is doing the same things He did in the book of Acts (p. 114), then Deere, who claims to be able to immediately recognize the voice of the Lord inside his mind (p. 168) should have no problem with a continuing “Scripture-writing ministry” (p. 277). Deere’s position (despite his protests to the contrary) leaves open the question of inscripturated revelation.

- 34 Deere confidently states: “One day the church will be unified over the issue of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. That issue was settled when the Lord Jesus Christ uttered his high-priestly prayer” (p. 174). In light of this Deere urges his charismatic brethren to be patient with the rest of us. In due time God will change us as well.
- 35 Deere’s triumphalism prompts him to state, “I believe that in my lifetime the majority of the church is going to believe in the practice of the gifts of the Spirit. All of the current statistical evidence from church growth studies indicates that the church is moving swiftly and inevitably to the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit” (p. 173). I am inclined to agree with the substance of this statement, but not for the same reason. Rather I concur with the analysis of David F. Wells on this issue: “Aside from the commercial appeal, however, the growth in this type of evangelical faith in America is in part also to be explained by the powerful undercurrents of self-absorption that course through the modern psyche. Many charismatics have made the experience of God rather than the truth of God foundational. The self therefore becomes pivotal. This, in turn, links with the deep subterranean sense of progress that is inescapable in America, as the proponents of the movement tout it as the most recent cresting of the Spirit. Here is the cutting edge of progress in what God is now doing. This by itself is a validation of all that takes place within this

movement and within its churches. In America, it has always been hard to quarrel with success; it is even more futile when there are those who are convinced that the success has been divinely produced. Yet, if one understands modernity, it is not difficult to imagine that much of what is vaunted as the Spirit's work may have causes that are rather more natural. Nor is it difficult to understand that where a religion is busy accommodating itself to culture there will be a period of success before the disillusionment sets in. In the end, those who promote the sort of Christianity that accommodates the culture always have to answer the question as to what they are offering in Christ that cannot be had from purely secular sources" (*No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Society?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], pp. 174-75. Cf. remarks on p. 182. I consider Wells' work to be one of the most significant books published in this decade.)

**36** *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 3: 358.

**Author**

---

Gary L. Johnson serves as senior pastor of Church of the Redeemer, Mesa, Arizona, and is a candidate for the Ph.D. degree at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.