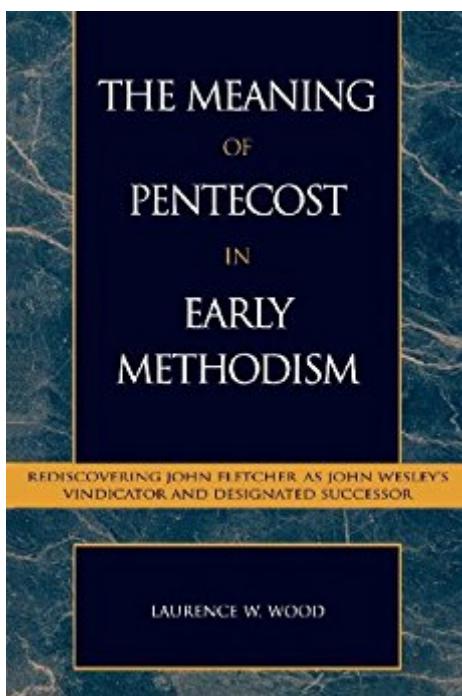


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The Meaning Of Pentecost In Early Methodism: Rediscovering John Fletcher As John Wesley's Vindicator And Designated Successor (Pietist And Wesleyan Studies)



Synopsis

John Fletcher's theology of Pentecost is generally unknown today, and this book is the first comprehensive treatise on this subject. His writings were in large part responsible for shaping the theology of early American Methodism, especially his treatise on Christian Perfection, which highlighted a theology of Pentecostal sanctification. Wood recounts the decisive influence Fletcher had on early Methodism, and shows that his writings were able to "control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen of the earth." Fletcher's views on the Holy Spirit were also relevant in the ecumenical movement, specifically with reference to the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order held in Lima, Peru, in 1982. This group recommended the introduction of a liturgy of the Spirit in Christian baptism. For students and scholars or general readers interested in Methodist history and theology. Also a resource for pastors-helpful in developing a theology of Pentecost that will preach in a relevant way in the contemporary world.

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Customer Reviews

The logic of Wood's argument is: John Fletcher was a great man intellectually and spiritually. John

Fletcher frequently used pneumatological language or made references to the Holy Spirit. John Wesley put his seal of approval on Fletcher's writings. Therefore, Wood concludes that Wesley connected the baptism with the Holy Spirit and Christian perfection. Yes, early Methodism did use pentecostal language, but they did not explicitly connect it with Christian perfection. While they preached on the baptism with the Spirit, they did not preach it as entire sanctification. Wood asserts that Fletcher's unpublished manuscript on the new birth made a distinction between the birth of water (justification) and the birth of the Spirit (full sanctification). Apparently, Fletcher's incomplete essay on the doctrine of the new birth is based upon John 3:5. However, Fletcher's essay says something different than what Wood claims it says. Fletcher said the Wesleys earnestly contended "for the birth or baptism of the Spirit and for the perfection of Christianity." Fletcher argues against baptismal regeneration by preaching that those who are born again are not only baptized with water, but with the Holy Spirit. Fletcher then refers to John Wesley's sermon, "Salvation by Faith," in which Wesley compares the faith of the apostles before and after Pentecost. According to Wesley saving faith is faith in the death and resurrection of Christ. The apostles did not have this faith before Pentecost. Or, to use the words of Fletcher in his essay on the new birth, Wesley makes a distinction between "the faith of ante-Pentecostal, imperfect Christianity; and the faith of Pentecostal, perfect Christianity."

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