
Reviewed by John Christopher Thomas

The publication of James D.G. Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (SCM Press, 1970) inaugurated a new period in the dialogue between Pentecostals and critical biblical scholarship. Although more than a decade after its appearance there were still no full-length responses from Pentecostal scholarship, Dunn's monograph had nonetheless sparked an enormous amount of reflection in a variety of Pentecostal/charismatic circles. Beginning in 1983, there appeared a succession of monographs by Pentecostal scholars which were designed to dialogue with and respond to many of the issues raised by Dunn in *Baptism* and its sequel, *Jesus and the Spirit* (SCM Press, 1975). Each of these responses exhibits careful research as nearly all of them were revisions of theses and dissertations written in the USA, Canada and Scotland.

Of the many criticisms leveled against Dunn's work, none has been more consistent than the charge that he has read Luke through Pauline eyes and, consequently, has misinterpreted Luke's distinctive pneumatology as a result. Not surprisingly, most of the activity among Pentecostal biblical scholars has been devoted to Luke-Acts. One of the most recent offerings comes from James B. Shelton, Associate Professor of New Testament in the Department of Theology and Missions at Oral Roberts University. The work is a popular revision of the author's doctoral thesis at Sterling University (Scotland), which had been written under the direction of Dr. John Drane.

The purpose of Shelton's monograph, described in chapter one, is to examine and identify the role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts on its own terms. Only then is it appropriate to compare Lukian pneumatology with its Pauline counterpart. In order to carry out this investigation Shelton begins by comparing the Lukian texts which deal with the Holy Spirit with their synoptic counterparts. Next, he pays particular attention to the teaching on the Spirit which is distinctive to Luke's Gospel (the so-called "L" material). Finally, the author turns his attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts, where there are no synoptic parallels. As may be deduced from this brief description of

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purpose, Shelton’s methodological approach is that of redaction criticism, which proves to be both its strength and its weakness.

The implications of Shelton’s approach become apparent in his examination of “The Holy Spirit and the Infancy Witnesses” in chapter two and in many ways this chapter is representative of Shelton’s thesis and approach. Observing that Luke uses the same terms to describe the Spirit’s enablement of Mary, John, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna to witness as he does for inspired speech in the early church, Shelton concludes, “Apparently Luke considers the witness of the pre-Pentecost believers equally as inspired and valid as those he presents in Acts after Pentecost” (15). If a distinction is to be drawn “between the infancy narrative witnesses with the Holy Spirit and that of the disciples at Pentecost, it must not be seen as a qualitative difference but as a quantitative one” (26). In other words, these individuals are not simply heralds of the new age, “they themselves are part of it” (25). Shelton argues that the clear-cut divisions in salvation history, emphasized by Conzelmann and Dunn, are not of Luke’s making. Rather, this evangelist does not attempt to pinpoint the arrival of the new age but sees salvation history as progressive. At any rate, with each of these infancy witnesses, Luke’s emphasis is upon anointing for witness (inspired speech) not conversion.

In dealing with the Baptism of Jesus, Shelton avoids the simplistic deduction that this event was Jesus’ Spirit baptism and as such can be equated with that of the disciples. While there is a great deal of continuity, in that the Spirit’s anointing is to result in power for ministry, Jesus’ experience is unique in that he was the Spirit-conceived Son of God. Nevertheless, Shelton notes that one of the primary functions of the Holy Spirit for Jesus is anointing for inspired speech, which he seeks to demonstrate in chapters on the Temptation of Jesus and the inauguration of his ministry.

Shelton sees a close relationship between the work of the Spirit and the working of miracles in Luke-Acts, devoting an entire chapter to this topic. While not denying an important role to the miracles, the author sees them primarily in terms of confirming the witness produced by the Spirit. In another chapter (eight) Shelton takes up the relationship between the Holy Spirit and prayer and praise. In this section he gives a fair amount of attention to a textual variant in the Lord’s Prayer which reads, “Father, hallowed be your name. Let your Spirit come upon us and cleanse us.” Despite its weak textual attestation Shelton believes that it merits serious consideration as original because it so fits with “Luke’s program of Spirit and prayer and also parallels his minor theme of linking the Spirit and cleansing” (96).

In chapters nine and ten Shelton discusses the “Holy Spirit and Blasphemy and Witness” and the “Holy Spirit and Jesus’ Farewell Address and Ascension,” respectively. Here he argues that in contrast