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## ***Spirit Endowment In Luke/Acts: Some Linguistic Considerations***

**M. Max B. Turner**

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Of the 75 or so references to the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts, some 53 occasions refer to different kinds of endowment of the Spirit on a man. An array of quite colourful expressions is used to denote these various experiences, and we may provisionally classify the types of phraseology concerned as follows:

(1) Occasions when men are said to 'receive (the gift of) the Holy Spirit' or to be 'given' the Spirit: Luke 11: 13; Acts 2: 33, 38; 5: 32; 8: 15, 17, 18, 19; 10: 45, 47; 11: 17; 15: 8; 19: 2.

(2) Instances where men are said to be 'filled with' the Spirit or 'full of the Spirit'

(a) Using *pimplēmi*: Luke 1: 15, 41, 67; Acts 2: 4; 4: 8, 31; 9: 17; 13: 9.

(b) Using *plēroō*: Acts 13: 52.

(c) Using *plērēs*: Luke 4: 1; Acts 6: 3, 5; 7:55; 11: 24.

(3) Cases when people are said to be 'baptized' with (or in) the Holy Spirit, or when the Spirit is said to be 'poured out' upon them: Luke 3: 16; Acts 1: 5; 2: 17, 18, 33; 10: 45; 11: 16.

(4) Places where the Spirit is said to 'come upon', 'fall on' or 'descend onto' an individual or group: Luke 1: 35; 3: 22; Acts 1: 8; 8: 16; 10: 44; 11: 15; 19: 6.

(5) Contexts where a man is described as 'anointed' with the Spirit, or where it is stated that the Spirit was 'on' him: Luke 2: 25; 4: 18; Acts 10: 38.

(6) Points at which people are specifically described as performing some act 'in', 'through' or 'by' the Holy Spirit: Luke 1: 17; 2: 27; 4: 14; 10:21; Acts 1:2; 11: 28; 18: 25 (?)<sup>1</sup> 19: 21; 21: 4.

The purpose of the article is not to give a literary-theological history of each expression—that would require a much longer work—but to make some observations about Luke's *use* of his terminology of Spirit-endowment. Our task is to clarify what type of language is being used (for example, is it literal or is it non-literal?), and then to define more closely the general *sense* of each type of expression (what does it intend to say about the Spirit's work in the life of the individual(s) concerned?). We shall consider the different types of speech about the Spirit in the reverse of the order given above, commencing as it happens with what is arguably the least theologically relevant group.

### **(1) References to Acts Performed 'In', 'By' or 'Through' the Spirit**

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<sup>1</sup> I take the reference to Apollos as *zeōn tō pneumatī* to mean he was 'fervent with the Holy Spirit' (cf. Rom. 12: 11—and see the arguments of E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), 141-2; J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM 1970), 88-89, and E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 491, n.10). The dative is thus instrumental in force.

In all instances of this group the language is probably to be taken literally, and the sense is usually the immediately apparent one. For example, when Luke says that men spoke 'through' (*dia*) the Holy Spirit, he means they spoke charismatically; i.e. that God, by the Spirit, prompted the wording and/or empowered the utterance of the message in question. Thus when we are told that *disciples* at Tyre warned Paul speaking 'through the Holy Spirit' (Acts 21: 4),<sup>2</sup> we should probably understand this to denote the kind of activity Paul had in mind when he said 'in every city the *Holy Spirit warns me*' (Acts 20: 23). For Agabus, such prophecy is simply a matter of 'thus says the Holy Spirit' (Acts 21: 11; cf. 11: 28). Modern minds

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may argue that to talk of God 'speaking' can only be analogical and thus metaphorical language, but it is not at all clear that Luke would have agreed with them: in so far (at least) as 'speaking' is an appropriate way to describe the unwritten but nevertheless *verbal* communication from God which he depicts, we will not be far wrong if we say Luke believed the Spirit 'spoke' quite literally, not only in the time of the OT (Acts 1: 16; 4: 25; 28: 25), but also in his own day (Lk. 12: 12; Acts 10: 19; 11: 12; 13: 2; 21: 11). Again it may be objected that the language cannot be taken literally because for Luke, as for Judaism, the Spirit is not a divine Person, but a periphrasis, a way of speaking of God's activity.<sup>3</sup> If this objection could be sustained it would raise important *theological* questions but it is hard to see how it could introduce very substantial change to the *linguistic* status of the expressions under consideration.<sup>4</sup> Whether Luke understood the referent to be God the Spirit (as the later church certainly took it), or whether he was using a circumlocution, the point remains that he means that God (for one reason or another called the Spirit) *communicated verbally*. Thus the concept of men speaking 'as the Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2: 4; cf. 6: 10) is one with which Luke would be perfectly at home: we have no good reason to believe he intended his language to be understood as metaphorical description of some much more attenuated phenomenon.

The case of *Jesus* giving instruction 'through the Holy Spirit' (Acts 1: 2)<sup>5</sup> is possibly slightly different—because for Luke Jesus (even during his ministry) is not so much the mouthpiece of the Spirit (contrast David in Acts 1: 16; 4: 25) as Lord of the Spirit.<sup>6</sup> In this instance the emphasis is not that Jesus *received from* the Spirit the content of instruction that he then relayed to the apostles, but that when he *gave* such instruction, the words he spoke came to

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<sup>2</sup> Luke cannot have understood the words *elegon dia tou pneumatos me epibanein eis Hierosoloma* (21: 4) to have been a genuine command of the Spirit else 21: 13 (cf. 20: 24) would be meaningless. He is more likely to have taken them as a warning (cf. 9: 16)—the imperfect being conative, and the enigma best resolved by assuming a fusion here of the elements that are separate in 21: 11-12: *viz.*, a prophecy of suffering combined with a plea to Paul to avoid the doom—compare the commentaries by G. Stählin (273) and E. Haenchen (602, n.1), and see F. F. Bruce, *Int.* 27, 181-2.

<sup>3</sup> Judaism did not believe in a binity of God and the Spirit: for a fuller discussion see M. M. B. Turner, *Luke and the Spirit: Studies in the Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge, 1980), 196ff. and the literature cited there.

<sup>4</sup> On whether or not Luke regards the Spirit as a Person see J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Lutterworth, 1967), 155-6; G. Haya-Prats, *L'Esprit: Force de l'Eglise* (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 83-90, and Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 196-8.

<sup>5</sup> I assume that we should take *dia pneumatos hagiou* with *enteilamenos* not with *exelexato*, but the argument is a complex one and the textual situation is in doubt; for detailed discussion see Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 248f.

<sup>6</sup> See *Luke and the Spirit*, chapters 2, 3 and 6; cf. 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective', *Tyndale Bulletin* 32, 3-42, especially 41-42.

them clothed with the power of the Spirit (cf. Jn. 6: 63),<sup>7</sup> as God's do. The point is not that the Spirit is the authoritative source of the words (as in the cases above), but that he applies them to the hearts of men; the Spirit is not the author of the revelation, but its agent, or the instrument of its communication to the disciples.<sup>8</sup>

Of the remaining instances in this group there are possibly two occasions where men are presented as acting 'in' the Spirit where the preposition (*en*) may merely have instrumental force, and is better translated 'by' or 'through'. One of them is Acts 19: 21 where Paul is reported to have made a decision *en tō pneumati* ('in the (Holy) Spirit'(?)): here I suspect Luke means that this decision was prompted by the Spirit, or at least taken under his sovereign control.<sup>9</sup> The second occasion is Luke 10: 21, where Jesus is said to rejoice (*en*) *tō pneumati tō hagiō* (in, or by, the Holy Spirit'). Whether we adopt the reading of p<sup>75</sup>BCKΘ<sup>1</sup> *et. al.* (omitting the preposition) or that of **SD** *et. al.* (retaining it)<sup>10</sup> the meaning is the same: Jesus rejoiced 'by' or 'through' the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Spirit's action was the instrument which produced the joy (cf. Acts 13: 52).<sup>11</sup>

The remaining three occasions in our list belong together as examples of the relatively rare 'dative of attendant circumstances'. What Luke means when he tells us that 'Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit' (Lk. 4: 14) is not that the Spirit gave him the power to return to Galilee, even less that the Spirit carried him there—so the dative is not an instrumental one—but that when he returned to Galilee he did so as a man *with* the power of the Spirit. In short, his having the power of the Spirit was a circumstance which attended his return to Galilee. Another probable instance of this construction lies in Luke's mention

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that Simeon entered the Temple 'in the Spirit' (Lk. 2: 27). Creed, and others following him, take the expression to mean that Simeon came into the Temple guided by the Spirit,<sup>12</sup> but this tends to trivialize—the Spirit in this incident was not merely concerned to get Simeon to the right place at the right time—and the hypothesis requires the introduction of a verb which Luke does not supply. A more strictly instrumental sense is out of the question too: Luke does not envisage supernatural transport here (cf. Acts 8: 39)! An adverbial sense (he came in to Temple 'spiritually') would at best be awkward and a 'local' use of 'in the Spirit', to

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Vox Evangelica* 10, 30-31 [[http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol10/spirit\\_turner.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol10/spirit_turner.pdf)].

<sup>8</sup> See *Luke and the Spirit*, 182-4.

<sup>9</sup> Against the commonly held view that the words *en tō pneumati* refer to Paul's human spirit stands the unlikelyhood that Luke would expect his reader to follow the shift in thought from the divine Spirit (whose dynamic is behind the progress of the Lord's word in the whole section 19: 1-20) to the human spirit, without even the help of a possessive pronoun (cf. V. Stolle, *Der Zeuge als Angeklagter: Untersuchung zum Paulus-bild des Lukas* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973) 66, who notes that the anthropological spirit is usually clearly designated as such).

<sup>10</sup> The variety of readings at this juncture demonstrates that scribes found the language either unusual, or offensive, from the start. In particular, the omission of *tō hagiō* should be regarded as a secondary feature (not the mark of some of our best MSS (p<sup>75</sup> **NBD**)) and can be accounted for by the desire to remove a startling reading by making the reference to *pneuma* anthropological. The reading of **SD** (retaining *en*) is easier explained either as the influence of the LXX or as the assimilation to Luke 4: 1b; 2: 27, though it is supported by the internal argument that it provides a parallel and contrast with *mē en toutō* (v. 20).

<sup>11</sup> For the argument that Luke probably thought the Spirit's work with the disciples in the mission of the seventy was the object of Jesus' rejoicing and, as such, was partly instrumental in it, see *Luke and the Spirit*, 86-88.

<sup>12</sup> J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to Saint Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 40.

designate a sphere of spiritual revelation and reality into which a man may penetrate, would fit Revelation 1: 10, but Simeon's condition is barely that of the seer! The best solution, as with Luke 4: 14, is to take this as a dative of attendant circumstances: Simeon came into the Temple as a man *with* the Spirit; the Spirit *led* him in at the appropriate moment, *enabled* him to recognise in the infant Jesus the salvation for which he had waited, *and inspired* the prophecy which he uttered in response to the situation (2: 34). The third occasion (Lk. 1: 17) offers no difficulty: John the Baptist will walk before God '*with* the Spirit and power of Elijah'—the *en* here, and the consequent dative, signal the attendant circumstances which characterize the Baptist's life before God: they do not specify the means or instrument *by* which he walks with God; far less a realm *in* which he treads.

## **(2) References to 'Anointing with the Spirit' and to the Spirit as 'On' Individuals**

Jesus is twice referred to as 'anointed' with the Spirit (Lk. 4: 18; Acts 10: 38). This is clearly metaphor, and concerning this mode of speech Caird correctly points out:

A metaphor is the transference of a term from one referent with which it naturally belongs to a second referent, in order that the second may be illuminated by comparison with the first or by being 'seen as' the first. It continues to be a living metaphor just as long as speaker and hearer are aware of the double reference, and while this is the case the connotation or sense of the word remains unchanged. But by repeated use it becomes a stock or faded metaphor, and at that point the dictionary will list the new reference as part of its sense, labelling it as figurative. The final stage is the dead metaphor, when users are no longer conscious of the word's origin, and the label (fig.) drops from the dictionary definition. A large proportion of the word-stock of any language will prove on scrutiny to have come into existence in this fashion. Consider for example the metaphorical use of parts of the body; we are not normally conscious of using a metaphor when we speak of the eye of a needle or the mouth of a river, or even of our hearts being where our treasure is (Matt. 6: 21).<sup>13</sup>

Now the verb 'to anoint' has as its natural referent the act of smearing with liquid substances (such as rubbing poison on to an arrow-tip or ointment on a person) and it was not uncommon in the OT period for the wealthy to anoint their bodies with the oil of aloes or myrrh (for personal hygiene; especially on festal occasions). When, however, Psalm 45: 7 says of the king of Israel 'God has anointed you above all your companions with the oil of gladness', the psalmist is transferring the words 'anoint with oil' from their *natural* referents and using them *metaphorically* to compare God's joy given to the king with the fragrance that surrounds a man smeared with these choice aromatic perfumes.

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This is not the point, however, of the language Luke uses. Anointing with oil had not only a personal application, but also a legal and religious one: the kings of Israel were anointed in similar manner as a symbol of their legal appointment (cf. 1 Sam. 9: 16; 10: 1 (Saul); 16: 3, 12-13 (David) etc.). Not only Israel's kings, but also her priests were anointed with oil (as a symbol of their consecration for God's use: cf. Ex. 28: 41; 30: 30 etc.) as were the ritual *objects* such as the altar of burnt offering (Ex. 40: 10), the ark, the sacred furnishings and even the tent of meeting itself (Ex. 30: 26).

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<sup>13</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 66.

In a world in which this sort of action was familiar, the way was open to use the language of anointing *metaphorically* of people whom God had consecrated to his purpose and empowered for it. Hence even the Persian king Cyrus could be called God's 'anointed' (Isa. 45: 1; his 'messiah')—though he himself was not a believer in Yahweh (Isa. 45: 4)—because God had determined to empower him to liberate Israel. In his case there is no question of a literal cultic anointing with oil; the word 'anointed' is being used metaphorically, and its real referent is God's decision to use Cyrus for Israel's redemption. Similarly, when Isaiah says 'the Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me' (Isa. 61: 1) he means neither that God actually rubbed oil on him, nor that he has literally been smeared with the Holy Spirit. He is using his language metaphorically to denote God's act of consecrating him for a particular task and equipping him with the Spirit to fulfil it. By the time Jesus, Peter and Luke use this same passage, the task envisaged has become a greater one (actually to inaugurate the proclaimed salvation; not merely to announce its imminence),<sup>14</sup> but the linguistic status has not changed significantly: it is still metaphor for consecration and empowering, albeit now certainly 'faded', if not 'dead' metaphor according to Caird's classification.

A more subtle case of metaphor lies in the assertion 'the Spirit of the LORD is upon me' (Isa. 61: 1; quoted by Jesus in Lk. 4: 18), or in Luke's statement that the Holy Spirit was 'on' Simeon (Lk. 2: 25). I call these instances 'metaphor' because I find it difficult to believe that the *spatial* reference of the prepositions is to be taken at face value. I am aware that no lesser theologians than A. J. Mason,<sup>15</sup> L. S. Thornton<sup>16</sup> and G. Dix<sup>17</sup> have tried to distinguish between the Spirit working on us from *outside* following baptism, and his becoming an *indwelling* power at Confirmation—but with A. M. Ramsey,<sup>18</sup> I suspect that this distinction is meaningless. There is surely no significant difference intended when Numbers 11: 17 (etc.) tells us that the Spirit was 'on' Moses, while Genesis 41: 38; Numbers 27: 18 and Daniel 5: 11 inform us that God's Spirit was 'in' Joseph, Joshua and Daniel respectively, and Judges 6: 34; 1 Chronicles 12: 18 and 2 Chronicles 24: 20 that he 'clothed himself in' (*lbs*; LXX *enedusen*) Gideon, Amasai and Zechariah.<sup>19</sup> Nor is Luke (3: 22: cf. Mt. 3: 16) in disagreement with the intention of Mark when he tells us that the Spirit descended 'on' Jesus (at his baptism), while Mark had said 'into' him: indeed Luke is quite prepared elsewhere to describe Jesus as 'full of the Holy Spirit (4: 1).<sup>20</sup> The assertions that the Spirit is 'on' a person, or 'in' him, are simply two different spatial metaphors denoting the same reality: *viz.* that God's Spirit is at work in and through the life of the one so described. Luke is not concerned to tell us *where* the Spirit was (six inches above the heads of Simeon (2: 25) and Jesus (3: 22); later 'inside' Jesus (4: 1) and then back to the position of a halo again (4: 18)), but rather *that* the Spirit was with these men and regularly active through them (cf. Acts 10: 38-39).

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<sup>14</sup> For substantiating argument see R. B. Sloan, *The Favourable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubiliary Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin: Schola, 1977), chapters 2 and 3; Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 67-78, and *Tyndale Bulletin* 32, 18-34.

<sup>15</sup> A. J. Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism* (London: Longmans, 1891).

<sup>16</sup> L. S. Thornton, *Confirmation: Its Place in the Baptismal Mystery* (Westminster: Dacre, 1954).

<sup>17</sup> G. Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism* (Westminster: Dacre, 1946).

<sup>18</sup> A. M. Ramsey, 'The Doctrine of Confirmation', *Theology* 48, 194-201.

<sup>19</sup> So, e.g., C. F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (London: Rivingtons, 1920), 203; but see the Commentaries.

<sup>20</sup> For the argument that 4: 1 with its mention of *plērēs pneumatōs hagiou* is redactional revision of Mark, see the Commentaries (especially I. H. Marshall and H. Schürmann).

### (3) References to the Spirit 'Coming on', 'Falling on' or 'Descending onto' Men

With the exception of Luke 3: 22 to which we shall return below, these appear to be dynamic metaphors corresponding to the static ones we have just discussed. Once again, if the spatial reference of the preposition 'on' is not purely metaphor, it is at least only very loosely local, and we are not surprised to note that those 'on' whom the Spirit is to come in not many days according to Acts 1: 8 are 'filled' with the Spirit when the day of Pentecost arrives (Acts 2: 4). Similarly, we should probably not press too literally the spatial imagery presupposed by the *verbs* in these expressions. Luke does not expect us to ask the questions where the Spirit comes *from* or whence he falls (far less, whether it was a long drop!). Of course at one level, Luke might reply that the Spirit comes from 'on High' (cf. Lk. 1: 32); from heaven (Lk. 3: 22) where Jesus has now ascended (Acts 2: 33), but it is little short of ludicrous to suggest that the primary reference of Acts 8: 16; 10: 44; 11: 15 and 19: 6 is to a sequence of literal descents of the Spirit from a far-off, localised 'heaven' to the Samaritans, to Cornelius' household and to the Ephesian 'disciples' respectively. The real problem with such a notion is not in believing that the ancients, including Luke, may genuinely have considered 'heaven' to be 'up there'. The true difficulty is that there is a sense in which Luke knows the Spirit *was* not 'up there' (or at least not only so)—for he was 'in' Philip (Acts 6: 3-5; or was it 'outside' him?: cf. Acts 8: 39!) when he preached to the Samaritans, and 'in' the apostles when they laid hands on the Samaritans as men full of the Spirit, to impart the Spirit to these new converts (Acts 8: 14-19).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, whether the Spirit was 'in', 'on' or 'with' Peter as he preached to Cornelius, it was thus presumably not from very far that the Spirit 'fell upon' the assembled household (10: 44; 11: 15); and not dissimilar considerations pertain when Paul 'filled with the Spirit' (Acts 9: 17) lays hands on the Ephesian baptizands (19: 6).

We should no more press the *spatial* reference in Luke's phraseology of the Spirit 'coming upon' people than we should when he talks of men's fate 'coming upon' them (Lk. 21: 26; Acts 8: 24; 13: 40): the spatial imagery is simply a vivid metaphor for inception—a way of saying that something begins (perhaps suddenly) to happen, by picturing it (locally) as 'arriving'. So too when Luke informs us that the father 'fell upon' the neck of his prodigal son (Lk. 15: 20), and when Acts tells us that Paul 'fell upon' Eutychus (Acts 20: 10), we should not assume the son was expected to sustain cervical injuries, nor that Paul left the third-storey room by the same exit, and landed on the same spot, as the hapless sleeper before him. The spatial imagery in these cases is a metaphor for the intensity involved in the respective experiences. To say that at a particular point in time the Spirit 'came upon' someone is to say that *from* that moment the Spirit commenced (in some sense) to be active in him; or, at least, to be active in a new *way* in him. And to say the Spirit 'fell on' someone is to denote a particularly vigorous, charismatic or intense experience of God's *Pneuma*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Pace Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 67, following G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1967<sup>2</sup>), 70, who takes the laying on of hands as the granting of the right hand of fellowship of the Jerusalem church to the Samaritan converts. This action is alleged to remove any stumbling blocks in the pathway of the Samaritan's faith so that they may subsequently receive the Spirit. In view, however, of the parallel at 19: 6 this appears most improbable, and as N. Adler (*Taufe and Handauflegung* (Munster: Aschendorffsche Vlg., 1951), 58-75, 81-83) has shown, the laying on of hands follows prayer for the Spirit (8: 15, 17) and is primarily to impart it (as Simon observed: 8: 18-20). Cf. Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 161-71.

<sup>22</sup> So, correctly, the Commentaries by Calvin and Lenski on Acts 8: 16. But on the bid to distinguish 8: 16-17 as a charismatic illapse, different from the alleged 'ordinary' sense of receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts, see Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, chapter 5; especially 167-8.

We need not be misled at this point into following R. Bultmann in his famous claim that here we have to do with Luke's *animistic conception* of the Spirit. According to Bultmann, in *animistic* thinking *pneuma* is conceived as an independent agent, a personal power which like a demon can fall upon a man and take possession of him, enabling him or compelling him to perform manifestations of power. This is to be distinguished from *dynamistic* thinking (traceable elsewhere

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in Luke) according to which *pneuma* appears as an impersonal force which fills a man like a fluid.<sup>23</sup>

But the simple fact is that whereas in the oldest strata of the OT these different types of language *may* have corresponded to animistic and dynamistic *conceptions*: of the Spirit, by the time *Luke* wrote such language can no longer be considered a sure indication of the way men *thought*; it could merely have been a *way of speaking*. The almost deliberate juxtaposition of the apparently mutually exclusive animistic and dynamistic imagery is such passages as Acts 2: 1-4; 8: 15-19 etc. is a clear sign is that Luke's language is either self-consciously metaphorical, or even that for him it is a matter of *dead* metaphor.<sup>24</sup>

We may now turn to the question of Luke 3: 22 and the Spirit 'descending upon' Jesus. The spatial reference of both verb and preposition are to be taken literally: Jesus saw a dove-like figure descend from heaven to him. It is quite another matter, however, to assert, as W. Michaelis and R. Bultmann do, that we have here the intention to describe an event in the real world, not a visionary experience.<sup>25</sup> Though *katabēnai... ep'* ('descended... on') defines a literal spatial movement, the referent is nevertheless to the descent of an object within a vision, as the standard visionary formula *aneōchthēnai ton ouranon* (3: 21: 'heaven opened') makes clear: (cf. Acts 10: 11; Rev. 4: 1).<sup>26</sup> Luke does not tell us that Jesus literally saw heaven open (whatever that might mean), nor that the Spirit literally came thence upon him in the body of a dove. What he relates is a visionary incident, the elements of which interpret *to* Jesus what the Spirit will do *through* him from this point onwards:<sup>27</sup> the details are probably

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<sup>23</sup> R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952) 1, 155-60.

<sup>24</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 190, rightly points out that the juxtaposition of images is a mark of the linguistic awareness of a writer that he is using metaphors. For a less convincing attempt to answer Bultmann, see J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles*, 120-24.

<sup>25</sup> W. Michaelis (*TDNT* 5, 353) and R. Bultmann (*The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963) 248) claim that an objective experience, not a vision is meant, and that Luke has stressed this by replacing Mark's *eiden* ('he saw') with his own *egeneto* + accusative + infinitive ('it came to pass that...'). But Luke is perfectly able to use *egeneto* + accus. + infin. to introduce events which he elsewhere describes as visionary: cf. 9: 3 and 22: 19 referring to this event as an *optasia* ('vision'). It should be noted too that when the pronouncement 'this is my Son' is made by a heavenly voice in the transfiguration account (9: 28-36) this is seen as a high point of revelation, and is restricted to a small number of close disciples. This suggests that the similar pronouncement at Luke 3: 22 was a private revelation: corresponding to this there is no audience reaction, and the voice addresses Jesus in the second person, while that at 9: 36 is in the third person. (Against the Lucan provenance of the assimilation of the heavenly voice at 3: 22 to LXX Psalm 2: 7, see the Commentary by I. H. Marshall, and Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 212.)

<sup>26</sup> For detailed discussion of this language see F. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synoptikern* (Frankfurt am Main: Knecht, 1970), 105ff.

<sup>27</sup> F. Lentzen-Deis, *Die Taufe Jesu nach den Synptikern*, chapters 5 and 6.

intended to convey that as the messianic Son and Servant, he will (from now on) act the role of the expected herald-of-good-tidings in the power of the Spirit.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, the material that makes up this section, while *prima facie* denoting spatial movements of the Spirit, turns out, on analysis, to be spatial metaphor the true referent of which is the inception of new *activities* of the Spirit. The one apparent exception (Lk. 3: 22) describes a literal descent of the Spirit, but only within the framework of a vision: an actual descent of the Spirit to Jesus here is no more intended, than is the actual descent of a sheet containing animals to Peter in Acts 10: 11.

#### **(4) References to Groups Being 'Baptized in Holy Spirit' or to the Spirit Being 'Poured Out' on Them**

Etymologically *baptizein* (usually rendered 'to baptize') is an intensification of the verb *baptein* ('to dip, or dye') with the sense 'to immerse' or 'to sink'. By the time of the NT it was used quite frequently to denote the sinking of e.g. vessels at sea, or persons in water (Josephus alone has six references to the former, and four to the latter, in a total of thirteen uses of *baptizein*). In such expressions the original connotation of (literal) immersion is obviously present. However, the verb also came to be used metaphorically, of those who were 'sunk' in a variety of conditions varying from drunkenness (e.g. Josephus, *AJ* 10: 169; Philo, *De Vit. Cont.* 46) to moral destitution (Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* 3: 18) or civil and social collapse (Josephus, *BJ* 4: 137). Many of such uses retain the idea of immersion within the metaphor, especially in cases of *baptizein eis* ('into') e.g. as at Josephus *AJ* 10: 169: 'seeing him in this condition, sunken into unconsciousness (*bebaptismenon eis anaisthēsian*) and a drunken sleep...'. There are places, however, where it is

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the idea of a flood or deluge coming upon a person and overwhelming him that may be uppermost in the mind, not specifically the concept of dipping or sinking into a medium: cases in point are Philo, *Leg. Alleg.* 3: 18; *De Mig. Abr.* 204 (which speaks of the five gluttonous senses each weighing down and overpowering (*baptizein*) the mind; it would force Philo's imagery to say that he pictures the senses as a 'sea' into which the mind is 'immersed'); *De Vit. Cont.* 46 (where men overwhelmed with drunkenness are described); Posidonius, *ap. Aet.* 6: 3, and Josephus *BJ* 4: 137 (where the author states that excessive influx of people, which strained the resources of the besieged city, was the circumstance which 'overwhelmed' (*ebaptisen*) Jerusalem). Nevertheless the thought of being 'submerged' or 'sunk below' that which 'overwhelms' or 'overpowers' is possibly always at hand.

In the NT period then, *baptizein* could be used both literally (to mean dip, sink or immerse) and metaphorically (to mean 'sink', 'deluge with', overwhelm or overpower). When John the Baptist made his prophecy that the coming Messiah would 'baptize... in (or 'with')<sup>29</sup> Holy

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<sup>28</sup> For fuller treatment see my 'Jesus and the Spirit in Lucan Perspective' (*Tyndale Bulletin* 32, 14-21), or, with more detail, *Luke and the Spirit*, chapter 2; especially 42-57.

<sup>29</sup> The proposition *en* is probably instrumental, not local. Mark omits it giving *baptisei humas pneumatī hagiō* ('he will baptize with Holy Spirit'); Luke omits the *en* in relationship to the water element ('I baptize you with (not 'in') water': 3: 16). This suggests that where *en* does appear it too should simply be translated 'with' not 'in'.

Spirit-and-fire' (Mt. 3: 11/Lk. 3: 16)<sup>30</sup> he was using his language metaphorically: the verb here has been transferred from its normal referents (devastation by sea, by flood, or by deluge) to the future experience of Holy Spirit-and-fire so that this second referent may be illuminated by comparison with the first. The point is not that the Holy Spirit is like a large expanse of water<sup>31</sup> (nor indeed that baptizing with Spirit must be some kind of initiation, by analogy with Christian *water* baptism!), but that the future encounter with God's Holy Spirit-and-fire will be like an angry sea engulfing and sinking a boat, or like a massive surge of flood water suddenly sweeping down on a man as he attempts to cross the river, and overwhelming him. It will be immense, majestic and devastating. It is highly probable that the referent of this language in the Baptist's mind was not something like what took place at Pentecost, but rather the end of the world, the destruction of the hosts of evil and the establishing of God's end-time rule in a new creation: the kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 3: 2). The idea of the End coming as a fiery torrent on the world was not uncommon in Judaism,<sup>32</sup> and John immediately goes on to develop such eschatological imagery: the Messiah already has his winnowing fork in his hand, ready to perform the judgement by separating the grain, and burning the chaff (Mt. 3: 12/Lk. 3: 17). The water-rite administered by John may well not have been the source for his imagery of Spirit-baptism, but *vice-versa*: that is, we can perhaps best explain the origins of John's baptism in a deliberate attempt to symbolise his message of the cosmic end-time deluge with Spirit-and-fire.<sup>33</sup>

According to Acts 1: 5, Jesus took up the words of John's prophecy (that Israel would be baptized in Holy Spirit) and declared, shortly before Pentecost, that the promise would soon be realised. The disciples could hardly be expected to understand Jesus' words as meaning anything other than the imminent end of the world; the consummation of all that had begun in Jesus' ministry. Their question—whether the kingdom will now be restored to Israel (Acts 1: 6)—is neither foolish nor a misunderstanding of what Jesus' ministry was about:<sup>34</sup> it would follow naturally from their understanding of the Baptist's teaching. But for Luke, Jesus cannot have literally meant that the end of the world had dawned: for him Jesus is referring to Pentecost, and so must be using the language metaphorically. I see no reason to doubt that Luke was right. Jesus quite commonly used end-of-the-world language to refer to the events of his ministry, and used it thus in a

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<sup>30</sup> The expression 'baptize with the Holy Spirit-and-fire' is a hendiadys, found in Q, and older than the form of the promise found in Mark 1: 8. S. Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zurich: TV, 1972), 368, is the most recent of a long line from Harnack to the present who argue that the Baptist promised only a baptism of fire (or of *wind* and fire). *Per contra* see the arguments of J. D. G. Dunn, *NovT* 14, 81-92 (and elsewhere) and I. H. Marshall, *EvQ* 45, 136-37.

<sup>31</sup> I. H. Marshall points out that the Spirit is never represented in the OT or in Judaism as a river or pool into which a person might metaphorically be dipped: 'The meaning of the verb "to baptize"', *EvQ* 45, 132.

<sup>32</sup> See the evidence provided by I. H. Marshall (*EvQ* 45), 132-5.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, chapter 2, and I. H. Marshall, *EvQ*, 45, 130-40, who argues on a similar basis that the water-rite was probably performed by affusion. But Marshall's case rests in part on his view that *baptizein* (when used metaphorically) had lost the sense 'immerse'; a view which seems to us to be unjustified by the evidence. Being 'overwhelmed' by water always leads to the idea of being drowned below its surface, and it can plausibly be argued that this concept of 'immersion' carries over into all the metaphorical uses.

<sup>34</sup> *Pace* Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 50 (and those he cites n.34).

metaphorical sense to illuminate what was taking place there and then in terms of what would happen at the End.<sup>35</sup> So there is no difficulty in assuming that he could similarly adapt the Baptist's prophecy and reapply its metaphor to an event such as Pentecost. For Pentecost has the two points on which the Baptist's original metaphor hangs: it is *messianic/eschatological* in character (cf. Acts 2: 17-21) and it involved an *overwhelming* experience of God's Spirit.

The expression 'baptize in Holy Spirit-and-fire' in Luke-Acts so far has two denotations<sup>36</sup> (the Pentecost event, and the end-time deluge which it foreshadows, both in its character and in its intensity), but one basic connotation (an eschatological and overwhelming experience of God's Spirit).

Finally, we must make an observation about the continued use of this expression (or rather its non-use) in the church. If, as we have suggested, the point of the metaphor was to denote a relatively *overwhelming* experience of the Holy Spirit then we should not be surprised if there were a certain reserve in the use of the expression—after all, not everyone in the earliest church had such a dramatic encounter with the Spirit. In fact the term occurs just once in the Johannine literature (Jn. 1: 33: on the lips of John the Baptist where (as with Mt. 3: 11/Lk. 3: 16 and Mk. 1: 8) it is a reference to the end-time *dénouement*), and then once again on Peter's lips at Acts 11: 15. These, with Acts 1: 5 already mentioned, are strictly the only occurrences of the expression in the NT; for 1 Corinthians 12: 13 does not speak of an immersion in or deluge with Spirit, but a baptism *into the body of Christ* performed in (the sphere of) the Spirit. There is not any trace of the substantive (a 'baptism' in Holy Spirit) in the New Testament, and what Peter is reported to say at Acts 11: 15 suggests there was no such term in use. For, when explaining what had taken place, he does not simply say that Cornelius' household received "the baptism of the Holy Spirit (like everyone else)", rather his response to the situation was "then I remembered what the Lord had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with Holy Spirit'". In other words the dramatic experience of the Spirit at Cornelius' house served to remind Peter of an *almost forgotten, but singularly apt metaphor*: it reminded him of the time when Jesus had used John's evocative language of the end-time deluge of Spirit-and-fire to describe the then forthcoming, and subsequently unforgettable encounter with the Spirit at Pentecost.

In summary, the author of Luke-Acts believes that all Christians will truly be 'baptized in Holy Spirit-and-fire' in the judgement that comes only at the end of the world; nevertheless, he also allows that this metaphor has a legitimate application when used to denote a devastatingly powerful experience of God's Spirit such as evokes the end-event. However, the very nature of the metaphor, its restricted use and the way it is handled, suggest he does not think that *all* Christians in this age (or even many) have sufficiently intense experiences of the Spirit as to warrant the application of the metaphor in their case. We should probably follow him and reserve use of the phrase for particularly spectacular corporate occasions of receiving the Spirit, if we use it at all.

On three occasions in Luke-Acts the Spirit is said to be 'poured out' on people: once in Peter's quotation of Joel's promise that in the last days the Spirit of prophecy would be poured out on all Israel (Acts 2: 17-21: cf. Jl. 3: 1-5); once in Peter's application of these

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<sup>35</sup> See especially G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, chapter 14, though I should not wish to endorse all his examples.

<sup>36</sup> By denotations, I mean the things (or persons) to which an expression refers; the referents of the expression.

words to the charismata manifest on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 33), and a third time in Peter's report of a similar event at Cornelius'

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home (which, as we have already noted, Peter compared in other respects with Pentecost).

In the OT the language of the Spirit being 'poured out' from above is relatively frequent (by contrast, it has been noted, the Spirit was never pictured as a sea or lake into which men are immersed). In Isaiah 32: 15 and 44: 3-4, a future outpouring of the Spirit on Israel bringing spiritual 'life' and 'growth' is directly compared to the vivifying effect of God pouring out water on a parched earth. Ezekiel 39: 29; Zechariah 12: 10 and Joel 3: 1-2 are merely less explicit uses of the same metaphor.

As even Gunkel (who more than any stressed the primitive nature of the earliest church's pneumatology) hesitantly recognised,<sup>37</sup> Peter's talk of the Spirit being 'poured out' is not to be taken literally: the Spirit is not regarded as a kind of liquid. The point of correspondence between the metaphor and reality in the OT promises was that the promised Spirit would be vivifying and richly transforming. This is possibly the referent of Luke's metaphor too, though as he regards Pentecost as a foretaste of the end-time deluge with Spirit-and-fire it is more probable that there has been a shift in the comparison, which now turns rather on the likeness between the impact of a near-eastern torrential downpour and the spectacular and overwhelming encounter with the Spirit at Pentecost and in Cornelius' home.

### **(5) References to People Being 'Filled with' or 'Full of the Holy Spirit**

The language in this group is Luke's own way of speech. The word *plērēs* ('full of'), for example, appears sixteen times in the NT, and ten of these occurrences are in Luke-Acts. More significantly, of the total NT instances, eleven are cases of persons being described as 'full of some quality, and all ten of Luke's uses of *plērēs* come into this category (only John 1: 14 providing a possible parallel within the NT).<sup>38</sup> At Luke 4: 1 and 5: 12 *plērēs* has actually been added by the author to his source (Mark), and this itself might suggest it was a favourite expression of his.

The linguistic aspects of this formula are well exemplified in the case of Acts 9: 36. To talk of a woman as 'full of good works and acts of charity', as Luke describes Tabitha, is clearly to speak metaphorically. These things were not literally inside her; but her life was characterised

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<sup>37</sup> H. Gunkel, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 64: though, note, he advances other reasons for still believing that the Spirit was regarded as material in the earliest church. But he recognised, nevertheless, that no appeal could be made to the expression 'pour out' in this respect, for by Luke's day it could have become a dead metaphor.

<sup>38</sup> So, *contra* J. D. G. Dunn (*Jesus and the Spirit*, London: SCM, 1975, 171) who thinks that *plērēs* in Acts is a sign of Luke's source, the use of the word is probably a Lucanism. Luke's use of the expression has been called a septuagintalism; but it is not: at least, it does not accord with the usual LXXal usage which either envisages the literal fullness of some vessel, or translates *sāba'* ('satisfied' or 'to be or to become satisfied'); cf. *TDNT* 6, 284-5. Closer to Luke's usage are Sirach 1: 30; 19: 26 and 1 Esdras 1: 23; but on these occasions it is the heart or innards of a man that are said to be 'full', rather than the man himself. Nearest to Luke are Job 14: 1; Isaiah 51: 20 and 3 Maccabees 6: 31. Similar expressions can be found (though not often) in Greek writers and in hellenistic Judaism (Philo can describe men as full of darkness (*Leg. Alleg.* 3: 7) or courage (*de Ebr.* 94), but he usually uses the word (when it refers to persons) to mean 'complete' or 'self-sufficient'—particularly of God).

by good works and charity, almost as though she had been 'crammed full of them' and they were now pouring out. Here clearly the *spatial* reference of the adjectival phrase 'full of is *metaphorical*. Its purpose is to draw attention to the observed rich degree or intensity, in association with the person so described, *of the qualities defined by the nouns in the genitive* ('good works' etc.). To say this woman was 'full of good works' means that her life was seen to abound with them. Similarly a man 'full of leprosy' (Lk. 5: 12) is someone who is covered with it (not someone who contains it!) and a crowd 'full of anger' (Acts 19: 28) is one that reacts *openly* with anger, not one that has bottled it up. Thus at one point the metaphorical language 'full of means exactly the opposite of what it could be taken to imply. *A life 'full of a particular quality was a life which observably expressed that quality, so that it was seen clearly to mark the man, rather than merely residing in him as a potential.* To describe Stephen as a man 'full of grace and power' (Acts 6: 8) was to say that he was characterized by these qualities in the sight of his fellow men (Christians at least; his Jewish opponents may have demurred!).

The striking metaphor 'full of the Holy Spirit' is almost certainly to be under-

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stood in the same way as these other expressions. In describing Jesus as *plērēs pneumatos hagiou* (Lk. 4: 1), Luke is (proleptically) summing up the whole ministry from the baptism of John onwards and characterizing it as one that *manifested* the power and presence of God's Spirit (cf. 4: 14, 18; Acts 10: 38).<sup>39</sup> Similarly Stephen, described as 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit' (6: 5; cf. Barnabas at 11: 24) or 'full of the Spirit and wisdom' (6: 3—with the others of the seven), is being presented as a Christian who had a dynamic faith; a charismatic and effective wisdom (cf. Acts 6: 10) and whose life richly expressed the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (cf. 6: 8, 10; 7: 55).

By way of a final remark on the use of metaphors initiated by the adjectival expression 'full of', we should point out that in Luke-Acts and elsewhere these are usually employed to describe a quality manifest over a long period of time (weeks or more) rather than an immediate inspiration: exceptions are (perhaps) Acts 7: 55 where the metaphor may denote the immediate inspiration which afforded Stephen's vision, and Acts 19: 28 where the expression is 'becoming full of and thus more closely analogous to the form 'to fill with' examined next.

When we turn to the verbal expression 'fill with' we note once again that we are concerned with a Lucanism. Luke is the only writer in the NT to use *pimplēmi* ('to fill') with respect to persons.<sup>40</sup> He does so some 14 times, two of which (Lk. 5: 26; 6: 11) are additions to Mark.

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<sup>39</sup> For substantiating argument see Luke and the Spirit chapter 2; especially 79-85.

<sup>40</sup> In the LXX, Philo and Josephus *pimplēmi* is more often used of objects being filled than people; in the latter category there is a marked tendency to use *empimplēmi* (in place of *pimplēmi*), and either verb is more often to be translated 'satisfy' or 'sate' rather than 'fill' or 'overwhelm' as in the Lucan instances. Directly parallel with Luke's usage, however, are (e.g.) LXX Proverbs 15: 4; Ecclesiastes 23: 11; 48: 2; Daniel 3: 19; and Josephus *AJ* 17: 177. Parallels using *empimplēmi* are relatively common (see Turner, *Luke and the Spirit* 263, n.32). Luke's idiom is sufficiently different from the usual expressions elsewhere, and sufficiently self-consistent in Luke-Acts, as to warrant referring to it as a Lucanism.

On each of the occasions where 'to fill with' is used with a defining noun or noun phrase *other than* 'the Holy Spirit' it is perfectly obvious that we are concerned with a metaphor; it would be precious to suggest that Luke thought of anger (Lk. 4: 28); fear (Lk. 5: 26); rage (Lk. 6: 11) etc., as fluids which literally fill men. In each case the metaphor designates the intense presence, or abnormally strong activity of the defining quality *in a definite event of short duration*: at no point does 'to fill (with)' designate the inauguration of some continuous state.

The same appears to apply when *pimplēmi* is defined by *pneumatōs hagiou*. When Luke tells us that Elizabeth and Zechariah respectively were 'filled with Holy Spirit' and spoke (Lk. 1: 41 and 67), he means that the speeches they uttered were given by the direct impulse of the Spirit, and the situation was vibrant with the Spirit: i.e., *the metaphorical language 'filled with Holy Spirit' denotes the immediate inspiration and charismatic character of the speech-event itself, not the inception of some more generally conceived endowment of lasting nature*. The force of Luke's expression is entirely exhausted in identifying the words uttered by Elizabeth or Zechariah as semi-ecstatic prophecy.

Similarly the aorist participial form of the metaphor in the statement 'filled with Holy Spirit... (he) said' (at Acts 4: 8 and 13: 9) designates the immediate inspiration and charismatic quality of the speeches given by Peter and Paul (neither more nor less), while the referent of the assertion (they were all filled with the Holy Spirit' at Acts 4: 31 is the freshly given impulse to begin once more to preach with boldness which is recorded in the same verse (and which answers the prayer just uttered by the persecuted church).

We should not deal otherwise with the assertion that the disciples at Pentecost 'were all filled with Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance' (Acts 2: 4). It may well be that from that time forth many or most of them lived as men Luke would readily describe as 'full of the Spirit'; but this is not the point of the words *eplēsthēsan... pneumatōs hagiou* here.<sup>41</sup>

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Their purpose is simply to denote the immediate inspiration of the tongues miracle, and Peter's prophetic speech. Luke uses the aorist metaphor (filled with') exclusively to designate short 'outbursts' or intense 'flashes' of the defining quality; be it anger, fear or the Holy Spirit. Only at Acts 9: 17 do we find what appears to be the expectation of a long-term endowment: Ananias explains to Paul that he has been sent to lay hands on him that his sight be restored and he be filled (*plēsthēs*) with the Spirit. It seems that Paul's whole mission empowered by the Spirit, not some immediate charisma, is intended. Linguistically, however, this is not an exception to what we have said, for this aorist subjunctive is constative: its perspective reduces the whole of Paul's life in the Spirit to a point or 'flash'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Contra inter alios*, I. H. Marshall, *ScotJT* 30, 355, and those cited at n.46 below.

<sup>42</sup> I do not wish to imply that the aorist is necessarily (or even usually) what has been called a 'punctiliar' tense (C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, Cambridge: CUP, 1963, 5); cf. K. L. McKay, *Tyndale Bulletin* 23, 34-57; F. Stagg, *JBL* 91, 221-31, and Professor Moule's own comments, *op. cit.*, 99. It is not clear whether the *plēsthēsetai* of Luke 1: 15 envisages a long-term endowment, or, more probably, repeated 'infillings'.

Once we observe that in Luke-Acts the words 'filled with Holy Spirit' designate specific short outbursts of spiritual power, rather than the inception of long-term endowments of the Spirit, we need not agonise with J. E. Hull over the question why the disciples who were 'filled' with the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2: 4) needed to be 'filled' again with the Spirit at 4: 8, 31, etc.<sup>43</sup> The Lucan use of these expressions allows that a man might on many occasions be 'filled with Holy Spirit' while nevertheless constantly remaining 'full' of the Spirit: *the two types of metaphor make different but complementary assertions.*

The discussion of the material in this section so far allows us to offer the following comment on positions currently held. Those scholars are probably wrong who make Acts 2: 4 (with its assertion that the disciples were 'filled with Holy Spirit') the key to Luke's pneumatology, and who describe the period before Pentecost either as one of the absence of the Spirit in the disciples, or as a period of the *meagre* activity of the Spirit in them—both states to be contrasted with the messianic 'fulness' of the Spirit received at Pentecost and after.<sup>44</sup> Luke is not saying that all Christian disciples receive the 'fulness of the Spirit': whether by virtue of Confirmation (*contra inter alios* N. Adler)<sup>45</sup> or conversion (*contra inter alios* F. D. Bruner).<sup>46</sup> For Luke does not believe all Christians to be 'full of the Spirit': this language is designed precisely to distinguish those whose lives are particularly marked by the work of the Spirit from ordinary Christians (cf. Acts 6: 3!). And (in Lucan terms) the criterion for judging whether it is appropriate to call a man 'full of the Spirit' is not whether he has a Baptismal or Confirmation certificate—nor even whether he has in the past experienced some 'second blessing'—but whether the community of Christians *feel the impact of the Spirit through his life*. Indeed at Acts 2: 4 Luke is not saying the disciples became 'full of the Spirit' in his sense of the expression at all; he says they were 'filled with Holy Spirit', as they were also on subsequent occasions, and what he means in this instance is that they spoke charismatically.

### **(6) References to the Spirit Being 'Given' or 'Received' by Christians**

It is characteristic of the NT to speak of the Spirit being 'given to' and 'received by' Christians: Peter's promise that those who repent and are baptised will 'receive the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2: 38f.) is typical, at least at this point. Luke also provides a *terminus a quo* for this 'gift'; it became available at Pentecost.

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<sup>43</sup> J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles*, 121-24. H. M. Ervin, *These Are Not Drunken As Ye Suppose* (Plainfield: Logos, 1968), chapter 8, seeks to avoid problems by attributing to Acts 4: 8 a pluperfect sense, and by pronouncing that those who were filled with the Spirit at Acts 4: 31 were merely the new converts, not those who were 'filled with Holy Spirit' at Acts 2: 4.

<sup>44</sup> So N. Adler (*Das Erste Christliche Pfingstfest* (Munster: Aschendorffsche Vlg., 1938), 91; *Taufe and Handauflegung*, throughout) who explains 2: 4 in terms of the messianic 'fulness' of Spirit normally received in Confirmation (and the power to bestow the same); F. D. Bruner (*A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 163) who equates being filled with the Spirit with reception of the Spirit at conversion on the wholly inadequate basis that 'the Holy Spirit is a person, and therefore where he is, he is fully, and not two-thirds or three-quarters!', and H. M. Ervin, *These Are Not Drunken As Ye Suppose*, 59-87, who insists that *eplēsthēsan* (in 2: 4) is an ingressive aorist denoting irreversible entrance into a state of 'fulness of Spirit' understood in pentecostalist perspective as a 'second blessing'. (For the general pentecostalist view see H. Horton, *The Gifts of the Spirit*, Nottingham: AOG, 1968; P. S. Brewster (ed.), *Pentecostal Doctrine*, Cheltenham: Brewster, 1976; also W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, London: SCM, 1972, chapter 24, and J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, throughout.)

<sup>45</sup> As at n.44.

<sup>46</sup> As at n.44.

But what sort of language is Luke using when he speaks of 'receiving' the Spirit, and what does he mean by it? New Testament scholarship seems very uncertain, and many different answers have been proposed.<sup>47</sup> A number of scholars appear to have assumed that this language is intended quite literally at least by analogy

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with the literal sense in which a man might be 'given' a wife and she might 'receive' a husband at their wedding. On this view, to talk of receiving the Holy Spirit is to speak of the joining of persons: the Christian is contractually united to the Person of the Spirit. The Catholic exegete and theologian N. Adler has presented such a position,<sup>48</sup> and something similar is frequently implied in the works of conservative writers (e.g., *inter multos alios* F. D. Bruner and J. R. W. Stott).<sup>49</sup> men, it is claimed, had received a variety of gifts of the Spirit before Pentecost, but at Pentecost Christians began to receive the Giver of these gifts himself, the Third Person of the Trinity.<sup>50</sup>

Although this appears attractive, it nevertheless faces two serious difficulties.

(1) On Adler's assumption the Holy Spirit has (presumably) always been the third Person of the Trinity, so it is not clear why OT endowments with the Spirit should not be regarded as occasions of receiving the Holy Spirit 'himself' too. Adler would presumably have to reply that though the Holy Spirit *was* a person in the OT, he was nevertheless not *experienced* as a person then. But such a distinction cannot really help him, because it is not obvious that the NT church was conscious of *experiencing* the Spirit *as a person* in any ways beyond those already met in the OT and in Judaism. For example, on most of the occasions in Acts the activity of the Spirit is one of speech; but this is common in the OT (cf. particularly at 2 Samuel 23: 2; 1 Kings 22: 21-28; Zechariah 7: 12; Ezekiel 2: 2; 3: 24; 11: 15) and much more so in Judaism, both hellenistic and rabbinic.<sup>51</sup> Again, as in Acts, the Spirit in the OT may be thought of as a guide or instructor for God's people (Neh. 9: 20; Ps. 143: 10; Isa. 63: 10, 14), and the same idea is attested in hellenistic Judaism,<sup>52</sup> at Qumran<sup>53</sup> and in rabbinic Judaism.<sup>54</sup> And if the Spirit seems 'personal' in Acts because he can be resisted, and lied to (7: 51; 5: 3-4), then the same applies to the Spirit in the OT who can be 'grieved' (Isa. 63: 10), or perhaps to Philo's concept of the Spirit when he speaks of him being driven away from men by their base desire.<sup>55</sup> Even the starkly anthropomorphic personal language of the Holy Spirit 'seizing' Philip and speaking to him (Acts 8: 29, 39) is matched in Ezekiel 2: 2; 3: 24, etc. So, while allowing that Judaism stopped well short of understanding the Spirit as a hypostasis of God it still clearly thought of the Spirit as 'personal', and there is no hard evidence that Christians

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<sup>47</sup> For a survey of such views see M. M. B. Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 1-34 and 'The Significance of Receiving the Spirit in Luke-Acts: A Survey of Modern Scholarship' forthcoming in *Trinity Journal*.

<sup>48</sup> As n.44 above. See also those cited by G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, xxiii.

<sup>49</sup> Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, as at n.44; J. R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fulness*, Leicester: IVP, 1975<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> *Das Erste Christliche Pfingstfest*, 74, 91.

<sup>51</sup> For rabbinic references see A. Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinic Judaism* (London, 1912, and New York: Hermon, 1969), chapters 18, 19; P. Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom Heiligen Geist in der Rabbinischen Literatur* (Munich: Kösel, 1972), 151, 153, 162.

<sup>52</sup> *Wisd* 7: 7, 22; 9: 17; Philo *de Gig.* 24-28, 47, 53, 55; *de Somn.* 2: 252, etc.

<sup>53</sup> 1QS 3: 6-7; 4: 6; 1QH 9: 32; 12: 11-12—and see the discussion of these; cf. Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 197-8.

<sup>54</sup> Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom Heiligen Geist in der Rabbinischen Literatur*, 151ff.

<sup>55</sup> *de Gig.*, 55.

thought they *experienced the Spirit in more definitely personal ways* than had their ancestors. The fact remains that the clearest presentation of the personal being of the Spirit in the NT comes in John 14-16 where John presents the Spirit-Paraclete as a figure set in parallel to Jesus, mediating the Father and the Son to the disciples as Jesus had mediated the Father during his ministry (Jn. 14: 6-11).<sup>56</sup> But even in these circumstances there is no suggestion made by John that Christians (after Pentecost) will consciously receive the Spirit as a divine Person. Jesus as mediator of the Father revealed himself; but the Spirit precisely does *not* do so (16: 13), revealing only Christ and the Father.<sup>57</sup> So the Christian is in virtually the state Alder predicates of some of the OT saints who were endowed with the Spirit: he may believe the Spirit is a person more definitely than his OT counterparts but he does not more consciously experience the Spirit as Person. Like them he is merely aware of the Spirit's gifts, without being noticeably more aware of the Giver.

(2) The way Acts speaks about the 'giving' and 'receiving' of the Spirit, or of the

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'gift' of the Spirit, strongly suggests that the earliest church did not use this language primarily to express the idea of contractual 'giving' and 'receiving' of the person of the Spirit in union with believers.

Such a concept would have been so strikingly new, and of such central theological importance that it would inevitably have led to a suppression of other manners of speaking of the Spirit that could only be considered less worthy ways of referring to this holy union. Yet in Acts we even hear Peter say 'the gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the gentiles too' (10: 45). Now if this gift of the Holy Spirit is supposed to express God's giving of his Spirit into a union of persons with gentile disciples (who are said to have thus 'received the Holy Spirit' according to 10: 47), then surely Peter is guilty of an extremely harsh mixture of images. Neither 'persons' nor 'unions' are 'poured out' (10: 45; cf. Acts 2: 33); nor usually, for that matter, are they 'given' by laying on of hands (cf. Acts 8: 18).

I believe the Holy Spirit to be personal, and I accept that it is a valid way of speaking to say that Christians are brought into union with him at conversion—indeed, Luke himself may have thought so—but, nevertheless, *Luke quite clearly is not using the language of 'giving' or 'receiving' the Spirit to express such thoughts.* It does not appear that Luke is using his phraseology literally, at least the only other literal way of interpreting the language leads to the highly implausible conclusion that Luke conceived of the Spirit as an *impersonal* heavenly substance or fluid which could be 'handled' and thus 'given' by one person and 'received' by another. Such a hypothesis raises awkward questions, such as why Jesus is reported to have 'received the promised Spirit' (literally) when he ascended (Acts 2: 33) if (*ex hypothesi*) he already had it (Lk. 3: 22; 4: 18; Acts 10: 38); and the theory comes to grief on

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<sup>56</sup> See especially R. E. Brown, *NTS* 13, 113-32; and compare Turner, *Vox Evangelica* 10, 26-28 [[http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol10/spirit\\_turner.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol10/spirit_turner.pdf)].

<sup>57</sup> For the similar perspective in Paul's writings see the comments by N. Q. Hamilton, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 6; and cf. Turner, *Vox Evangelica* 9, 61-65 [[http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol09/spirit\\_turner.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol09/spirit_turner.pdf)]. For a fuller discussion of Adler's position see Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 35-40.

its inability to cope with the extensive personal language Luke employs with respect to the Spirit.<sup>58</sup>

The belief that Luke is using the language *lambanein to hagion pneuma* ('to receive the Holy Spirit') in a literal way only leads us into conceptual cul-de-sacs, and the observation that so much of his other language about the Spirit is intentionally metaphorical beckons us to explore this area of speech for a possible solution to our problem.

Once we allow the possibility of metaphor into purview, an explanation of Luke's language quickly suggests itself from the way he develops his material. Acts 2 which is programmatic for Acts in general, and for Lucan pneumatology in particular,<sup>59</sup> hinges on the citation of Joel's promise;<sup>60</sup> and a proper understanding of this latter may provide us with the key we seek.

The referent of Joel's promise is relatively clear: God says he will pour out his Spirit on all people (3: 1 (Heb.: EVV 2: 28)), and this is repeated in the subsequent verse. Between the two assertions, however, Joel proffers the *sense* of the promise. The Spirit poured out on all people *means* that men and women will prophesy, and both young and old will receive dreams and visions (imparting the revelation basic to prophecy). In other words, Joel promises neither more nor less than what Judaism called the gift of the Spirit of prophecy:<sup>61</sup> that is the Spirit *qua* the organ of communication of God's revelation to a man, enabling him to receive God's word and will. From the broader perspective of the Biblical revelation we should have to say that Joel was promising not the Spirit 'himself', *but that the Spirit (himself) would perform a specific nexus of revelatory activities*. Joel's pledge that the Spirit will be 'poured out on all flesh' is a *metaphorical* asseveration that in

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the last days the Spirit will act (somewhat impressively) to reveal God in the hearts of men.

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<sup>58</sup> There are undoubtedly occasions where the Spirit is presented as the agent of an action, and to that extent as 'personal': Luke 12: 12 (*didaskein*); Acts 2: 4 (*apophtheggesthai didonai*); 5: 32 (*martus einai*); 8: 29 (*legein*: cf. 1: 16; 10: 19; 11: 12; 13: 2; 19: 1; 28: 25 (*lalein*)); 8: 39 (*harpazein*); 13:4 (*ekpempsein*); 16: 6 (*kōluein*); 16: 7 (*ean*); 20: 23 (*diamarturesthai*); 20: 28 (*episkopous tithenai*). In addition further hints of the personal nature of the Spirit are to be found at (1) Acts 5: 3 where we find the expression *pseusasthai to pneuma to hagion*; in the following verse this is further defined: *ouk epseusa anthrōpōis alla tō theō*; (2) Acts 7: 51 where the Spirit is 'resisted'; (3) Acts 15: 28 where a decision seemed right to the Holy Spirit and to the apostolic council (though see Haya-Prata, *L'Esprit: Force de l'Eglise* 83ff. for a less 'personal' explanation of this text), and finally (4), Acts 28: 25f., where a masculine participle (*legōn*) appears to have the Spirit as its antecedent. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (1955), considers the last particularly significant; but for caveats see *Luke and the Spirit*, 196-7.

<sup>59</sup> See Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>60</sup> See Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 117-28; 130-46; 160ff.

<sup>61</sup> As W. Rudolph (*Joel-Amos-Obadja-Jona*, Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971) 72, observes, Joel's prophecy 'geht nicht um die Kraft zu einem neuen sittlichen Leben, sondern um die Gabe der Prophetie'. For the meaning of the 'spirit of prophecy' in ancient Israel see J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 177. On the meaning of the term in rabbinic Judaism see especially P. Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom Heiligen Geist in der Rabbinischen Literatur*, throughout. For apocalyptic Judaism and Qumran see G. Dautzenberg, *Unchristliche Prophetie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975) part 1, chapters 3 and 4; also T. M. Crone, *Early Christian Prophecy* (Baltimore: St. Mary's, 1973), 75ff. For further detail on Philo's more complex position, see *Luke and the Spirit*, 219-23.

Now when Peter refers to the 'promised Spirit', and quotes Joel, it would be natural to assume that the referent of *his* statements is roughly the same as that of Joel's and that he too therefore means the Spirit will be 'received' as the Spirit of prophecy. The probability that this is so is greatly enhanced by the fact that the Judaism of Peter's day exhibited a marked tendency to identify references to the Spirit as pertaining to the Spirit of prophecy;<sup>62</sup> and certainly no Jews of the time would have understood Joel's promise otherwise. Indeed Luke too seems to have taken Peter's words in this way, if it is he who is responsible for the addition in verse 18 of the words 'and they shall prophesy' to the Joel citation.

If our observations so far are along the right lines, then most of our problems relating to the language of 'giving' and 'receiving' the Spirit can be resolved at a stroke: *such language is metaphor, and its application to an individual denotes the beginning in that person of the set of revelatory activities of the Spirit promised by Joel.* This statement needs slight qualification, and amplification: but before we offer these we should note the linguistic character of the assertion as it stands. We are affirming that the phrase 'to receive (the gift of) the Holy Spirit' is metaphor, because the language of receiving a gift has been transferred from its natural referents—receiving concrete objects (whether persons or things)—and has come to be applied to the inception of an *experience* of some specific area of *the activity* of God's Spirit, so that this second referent (i.e., what God's Spirit *does* in a man) is 'seen as' a gift given by God and received by his people (cf. the similar phenomenon in Nehemiah 9: 20; Ezekiel 36: 27, etc.).

We may now venture our qualifications and amplification. By way of a first qualification we must aver that the referent of Joel's promise—the Spirit of prophecy—had undergone some degree of evolution in the thinking of Judaism, and even more so in that of the earliest church; so that by the time Luke wrote, the range of charismata traced back to the Spirit of prophecy included not only those explicitly mentioned by Joel but also all manner of gifts of wisdom and guidance and, in addition, charismata of inspired speech (including powerful preaching)<sup>63</sup> and perhaps even the acts of power which expressed the kerygma.<sup>64</sup> In short, the concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy' in Luke-Acts can account for virtually all the phenomena in Acts that are traceable to a man's having received the gift of the Spirit: *we are not obliged to believe that Luke's language of 'receiving the Spirit' has any wider scope of reference than that which was understood by the 'Spirit of prophecy'.* 'To receive the Spirit' throughout Acts merely designates the inception of the experience of the Spirit in the character promised by Joel, or, more correctly, in the character understood at the time of Luke to be the referent of Joel's promise of the Spirit of prophecy.

A second qualification that must be introduced relates to the statement that Jesus 'received the promised Spirit' at his ascension (2: 33): clearly this cannot be meant in the same sense as is predicated of Christians. The ascended Jesus does not experience the Spirit as the source of revelation to him. What Luke means is that Jesus receives the *authority and power to administer* Joel's promised 'gift' from now on the Spirit of prophecy is no longer merely the activity of the Spirit of God revealing God's will and word: it is also the Spirit of Jesus,

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<sup>62</sup> See Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom Heiligen Geist in der Rabbinischen Literatur*, 107f.; 114 and also W. Foerster, *NTS* 8, 117-34, and J. Schreiner, *BZ* 8, 161-80.

<sup>63</sup> On aspects of the evolution of the concept of the 'Spirit of prophecy' from Judaism to Luke-Acts see Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 66-7; 71-8; 117-87.

<sup>64</sup> See Turner, *Luke and the Spirit*, 139-45.

giving *his* wisdom (compare Acts 6: 10 with Luke 12: 12-13 and 21: 15) and guidance (cf. Acts 16: 7),

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and inspiring the preaching about him.<sup>65</sup> In short, Jesus now 'pours out' the gifts of the Spirit of prophecy (2: 33).

Our original assertion required not only those qualifications, but also further amplification or clarification, some of which it has received already in the last two paragraphs. This is certainly not the place to prosecute in detail the thesis that the referent of *lambanein to hagian pneuma* in Acts is always the Spirit of prophecy; that I have attempted to do elsewhere.<sup>66</sup> But some comments are called for on how such a thesis bears on Luke's pneumatology more generally. Firstly, it should be clear from what we have said that Luke's understanding of the Spirit of prophecy makes this gift essential to what Christian life is: at a basic level the Spirit thus received provides the only means for communion between the Lord and his disciples once Jesus has ascended. How else could the exalted Lord exercise his leading in the lives of his disciples, and how could a man be a Christian without this gift? One *cannot* therefore relegate the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit to the status of a 'second blessing' (as much pentecostalist exegesis does); nor, however, can one deny (as much anti-pentecostalist literature does) that charismata of prophecy and inspired speech belong very properly with the character and purpose of the gift of the Spirit promised by Peter to all believers (Acts 2: 38-39).

Secondly, in identifying the referent of the language of receiving the Spirit as the inception of that area of activity which can be described as deriving from the Spirit operating as the Spirit of prophecy, we do not wish to imply that the concept of the Spirit of prophecy exhausts Luke's understanding of the Spirit and his work. (Luke, for example, thinks of the Spirit on Jesus during the ministry as the power in his words and deeds which liberated men into new-age existence, and in Acts there are occasions which show he thinks of the Spirit as operating beyond the sphere of the Spirit of prophecy as well as within it: cf. 8: 39!)<sup>67</sup> All that we are asserting is that the expression 'to receive the Holy Spirit' is a metaphorical way of speaking of the beginning of a specific and coherent set of activities within the broader panoply of the Spirit's workings. In Acts we have identified one particular nexus of activities as the usual referent of *pneuma lambanein* language (Acts 2: 33 providing something of an exception when the same language is applied to Jesus). In other NT documents, including the Gospel of Luke (cf. 11: 13)<sup>68</sup> the language of giving and receiving the Spirit is used to denote different areas of activity of the Spirit.<sup>69</sup> This does not mean there is any fundamental disagreement between the NT writers; it merely means they use their metaphors in differently nuanced

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<sup>65</sup> For more general considerations on Jesus' exercise of Lordship through the Spirit see G. Stahlin ' "Τὸ Πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ" (Apg. 16.7) ' in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (eds., B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley, Cambridge: CUP, 1973), 229-52.

<sup>66</sup> *Luke and the Spirit*, chapter 5, and 'The Spirit at Pentecost in Lucan Perspective' forthcoming.

<sup>67</sup> For detail, and for relationship of the work of the Spirit of prophecy to other areas of Luke's pneumatology see *Luke and the Spirit* (throughout), and *Tyndale Bulletin* 32, 4-42, especially 36-40.

<sup>68</sup> I take Jesus to be referring to a kind of receiving the Spirit which was available to the disciples during the ministry. It is unlikely he would use a parable thus to defend a purely future possibility: see *Luke and the Spirit*, 112-5.

<sup>69</sup> What the language connotes for Paul and for John (esp. 20: 22) I have attempted to describe in *Vox Evangelica* 9: 56-69 and *Vox Evangelica* 10: 24-42 respectively.

ways. Or, to be more precise, the phrase 'to receive (the) Holy Spirit' has a common connotation (it always means the beginning of some new nexus of activities of the Spirit in a man) but it has several different denotations (or referents) depending on which particular area of activity of the Spirit in a person is in mind. We could rightly say that Jesus 'received the Spirit' at the Jordan (Lk. 3: 22) *and* after his ascension (Acts 2: 33); and that the disciples 'received the Spirit' at Pentecost (Acts 2: 4), and perhaps before (cf. Lk. 9: 1; 11: 13; Jn. 6: 63; 14: 17 and 20: 22). At each point the language bears the same general sense: viz., the Spirit began a new work in relationship to the persons concerned. But each of these 'receivings' of the Spirit was fundamentally different in character and purport. It would be possible (at least in theory) to speak of one person 'receiving the Spirit' on a series of occasions, if each occasion corresponded to a different and comple-

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mentary set of activities of the Spirit. The phrase 'to receive the Holy Spirit' is thus a relatively ambiguous metaphor:<sup>70</sup> its precise referent in any instance is only recoverable by an examination of the context in which the assertion is made.

## CONCLUSION

As this article is not the sustained argument of a specific thesis, it can perhaps have no 'conclusion' in the ordinary sense. All I have attempted to show is that much of the language pertaining to the Spirit is metaphorical rather than (as is often assumed) literal. This sometimes makes the real referent of the language more difficult to identify, but we cannot afford to shirk the task simply for that reason.

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<sup>70</sup> In this respect it is like much language of the presence of God. A Christian may wish to affirm 'God is everywhere', 'God is with Christians' and 'God was really with us last night'. The third of these is not intended to deny the former two, but to make a complementary assertion at a new level.