

**THE NEW TESTAMENT, ITS BACKGROUND, GROWTH AND CONTENT**, by Bruce M. Metzger. Lutterworth Press, London, 1969. 288 pp. 30s. £1.50p.

There is often a formal dullness about introductions to the New Testament, so it is with happy relief that we turn to this work of Professor Bruce Metzger whose writing is very different. He sets out the basic information needed for an intelligent reading and understanding of the New Testament. The book is dedicated to the Professor's two sons, and the sights are set for schools and colleges. Yet most people who have left college can still profit by this comprehensive yet concise and balanced survey of and use of present-day scholarship. Only one who is completely master of the subject could succeed in presenting the many facets of modern findings without distortion and in relatively simple language which reads well; and this is what the author has done. His standpoint is in part illustrated in the pages on Miracles in the Gospel (pp. 132-135). He shows how the 37 recorded miracles of our Lord are not described simply for the sake of the miraculous. Yet miracles they were, and he sees them both critically and with robust faith which never thinks of whittling all away—as some would.

The general plan of the work comprises introductory articles on the political and

social backgrounds. Next come the sources for our knowledge of the life and teaching of Christ, a summary of the life of Christ and aspects of the teaching of Christ. The Apostolic Age is considered to stretch from A.D. 30-100. The Acts, and the expansion of Christianity through the Epistles, and Gospels, and finally the Apocalypse, come in for consideration, and each book is also summarized. Much summarizing would seem to be a good way of teaching and learning; even Philemon, 2 and 3 John, and the Apocalypse have a summary. A last chapter, called Appendix, is on the formation of the canon of the New Testament. Professor Metzger's conclusion on the difficult subject is presumably that of a number of our Christian brethren. Thus he talks about 'the self-authenticating quality of these writings which imposed themselves as canonical upon the Church' (p. 276).

The work ends with an annotated bibliography and an index of principal New Testament references. It is perhaps ungracious to suggest that a chapter is missing: on the geographical background of the Holy Land, and of the world of St Paul. The two maps provided are not sufficient. ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

**BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**, by James D. G. Dunn. S.C.M., 1970. 248 pp. 50s.

This book is a revised doctoral thesis by a young Presbyterian theologian, and offers detailed discussion of New Testament texts, with a view to refuting both sacramentalists and Pentecostals. The author (hereafter JD) contends that, for the New Testament, baptism in the Spirit is what makes one 'a Christian'; so the sacramentalist is wrong to claim this for baptism, and the Pentecostal is wrong to regard it as a *second* blessing. Unfortunately, the needs of this twofold polemic often lead to questionable exegesis, aided by a highly-loaded but quite unjustifiable use of the phrase 'Christian in the New Testament sense of the word' (let me refer JD to a New Testament concordance!).

JD's purpose is to provoke discussion, and this is welcome—on all sides we need to broaden the basis of our thought on the Spirit, and recapture the diversity, not to say confusion, in New Testament and early Patristic sources.

Rather than take up particular points in the book, let me raise a couple of basic methodological questions which, I think, JD has failed to cope with.

First, there is a very complicated interplay between exegesis and experience. JD is right to say that for the New Testament 'possession of the Spirit was a fact of *immediate* perception', not an inference from ritual or ethical correctness. He is probably also right to claim that Christian initiation is a work of the Spirit, and that, for the New Testament, this was a matter of experience. But we cannot infer that it is the *experience* of the Spirit which is, strictly, constitutive of Christian initiation. And if we do, as JD seems to, then we have unchurched most of our fellow Christians. The Pentecostal doctrine of the *second* blessing is one way of not doing this; whatever we think of their exegesis and terminology, their problem is real: there are Christians who *have* had the sort of

experience of the Spirit indicated in the New Testament, and there are equally Christians who have *not*. For better or worse, they have adopted the term 'baptism in the Spirit' as a way of providing a scriptural theory of this.

And here comes my second methodological difficulty. 'Baptism in the Spirit' appears thematically only in Luke, and was not taken up in the early Church, which concentrated much more on baptism, as understood by Paul, and John's 'rebirth from water and Spirit'. Acts 2, 38 shows that even for Luke baptism was the normal occasion of receiving the Spirit. It is thus far from clear what theological use we are to make of the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit'.

The two occasions in Acts where it is mentioned are Pentecost, and the Cornelius episode. Both times the outpouring of the Spirit takes place apart from baptism (as JD points out); but it is also (*contra* JD) distinguished from Christian initiation. I do not see what sense there is in saying that the apostles were not 'really' Christians before Pentecost; and the whole point of the Cornelius story seems to come in water baptism, which, on JD's view, should have been rendered superfluous by the descent of the Spirit.

Our use of these texts is complicated by the fact that in neither case is anyone actually stated to have been 'baptized in the Spirit'. The phrase comes in the prophecy contrasting John's baptism with the eschatological, messianic baptism; and these two occasions are cited as manifest fulfilment of this prophecy. And the Pentecostals are, in a way, equally justified in acclaiming a fulfilment of the same prophecy in their own experience. But it is of the nature of such cases that the experience comes first, and is then recognized as a fulfilment of prophecy; it does not necessarily make it helpful to generalize the application of the prophetic text to a regular Church practice, especially where, as here, it leads to confusion with the traditional use of other texts (especially John 3, 5 here).

The critical case for all concerned is Acts 8, the Samaritans who were baptized, but did not

receive the Spirit until the apostles came and laid hands on them. We must resist the urge to try to cope with this in Pauline terms. For Luke, *pneuma* was primarily a phenomenological term, something you can see and hear. And he was not concerned to distinguish between a basic, implicit salvific indwelling of the Spirit, and a visible charismatic empowering. JD may be right in inferring that the Samaritans were only half-converted, as well as deficient in charismata. Their baptism is not impugned; but something seems to have gone wrong.

This is a recurrent problem. It was one of the factors that led to the Western development of Confirmation, as the sacrament of the bestowal of the Spirit to those validly but fruitlessly baptized outside the Church. It is the problem which gives rise to Pentecostalism.

And it is theoretically and practically important to make the distinction Luke does not make, between *gratia gratum faciens* and *gratia gratis data*—although we must recognize that even the latter is not intrinsically *ad extra* (tongues 'builds up' the recipient of the gift himself). What the Pentecostals call 'baptism in the Spirit' may involve, on the one hand, a revivification of baptismal grace, and, on the other, a charismatic equipping of the believer. Though both may be experienced simultaneously, the distinction is not otiose: there may be many a Christian who is alive in the Spirit, who would resist any suggestion that he was not 'baptized in the Spirit', but who could still be open to a more explicit experience and more manifest gifts, for his own comfort and the good of the Church. 'To *each* is given the manifestation of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 12, 7).

We need to follow JD, then, gratefully, into a renewed and perhaps humbling investigation of the New Testament doctrine of the experience of the Spirit; but we need also to be much more sensitive both to the diversity of language within the New Testament, and to the delicate interplay of exegesis and experience. Who knows? Perhaps for James Dunn himself, this is but the beginning of a road to Damascus!

SIMON TUGWELL, O.P.

#### METAPHYSICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, by Gerd Buchdahl. *Basil Blackwell*, 1970. 105s.

This difficult but impressive and rewarding book is a study of the development of theories of knowledge and its relation to the world during the classical period of modern philosophy, from Descartes to Kant; and the

relevance of this development to the nature of empirical science. The book as a whole is a salutary corrective to any tendency to see the history of philosophy as a smooth progression of positions, counter-positions and reconciliations.