

A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts*

**A. J. B. Higgins**

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According to ancient tradition Luke both the Gospel and the Acts.<sup>1</sup> While the identity of "Luke" is disputed, unity of authorship, including the "we" sections of Acts in their present form, is widely accepted on the basis of style and language.<sup>2</sup> The Lukan writings also form a distinct theological unit within the New Testament, so that we can speak of the theology of Luke.<sup>3</sup> The most notable attempt to disprove unity of authorship on linguistic grounds was that of A. C. Clark,<sup>4</sup> who tried to demonstrate that the linguistic differences between Luke and Acts are much more important than the resemblances; that they cannot be explained, as Hawkins thought, by the supposition that Acts was written considerably later than the gospel; and that they point, in fact, to different authors. But the complete unsoundness of Clark's arguments was proved by W. L. Knox.<sup>5</sup> The common authorship of the two Lukan writings may be regarded as established.

#### I

Does the Lukan preface (Luke 1:1-4) refer only to the gospel, or to both the gospel and Acts?<sup>6</sup> The former view is supported by H. Conzelmann<sup>7</sup> and E. Haenchen.<sup>8</sup>

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In 1953 R. Koh<sup>9</sup> and C. S. C. Williams<sup>10</sup> suggested independently of one another that the *πρῶτος λόγος* in Acts 1:1 is not our third gospel, but a sort of Proto-Luke. The present Lukan

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<sup>1</sup> Muratorian Canon; Anti-Marcionite Prologue; Irenaeus, *Haer.* iii. 1.1; etc.

<sup>2</sup> This was established by A. Harnack, *Luke the Physician* (London, 1907), and J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1909), pp. 174-93.

<sup>3</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of Saint Luke* (London, 1960).

<sup>4</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 393-405.

<sup>5</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 2-15, 100-109; cf. É. Trocmé, *Le "Livre des Actes" et l'histoire* (Paris, 1957), pp. 38-41.

<sup>6</sup> It has even been suggested (by J. L. Moreau, see R. H. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study* [London, 1963], p. 103) that the preface was originally prefixed to Acts, which was published by a different author subsequently to the gospel, and that when the two works were combined, it was transferred to the beginning of the gospel and replaced by a new introduction to Acts. But it is impossible to imagine how a preface which certainly alludes, at least in its first part, to the gospel, could originally have been intended only for Acts.

<sup>7</sup> *The Theology of Saint Luke*, p. 15, n.1.

<sup>8</sup> *Die Apostelgeschichte*<sup>12</sup> (Göttingen, 1959), p. 105, n. 3; "Das 'Wir' in der Apostelgeschichte und das Itinerar", *ZThK* 58 (1961), pp. 362-66 (Eng. trans., "We' in Acts and the Itinerary," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 1 [1965], pp. 95-99).

<sup>9</sup> *The Writings of St. Luke* (Hongkong).

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gospel was written after Acts. If so, the Lukan preface must have been prefixed to the former after the completion of both works. Doubtless the author intended his writings to be read in the correct chronological order: the ministry of Jesus recorded in his gospel, and the life of the church recorded in Acts. The preface could then have been planned to refer to both writings, although they had been composed in the reverse order. The case for the priority of Acts, however, is not strong, and *πρῶτος λόγος* in Acts 1:1, seems a more apt description of the gospel of Luke than of a hypothetical first draft of it.

The majority view is, in fact, that Luke 1:1-4 is a preface to both gospel and Acts as two parts of a single work.<sup>11</sup> This accords with the practice in antiquity of dividing a work into volumes (especially when it would not all go on a single papyrus roll), with a preface prefixed to the whole, and with secondary prefaces introducing later volumes and summarizing briefly the contents of the preceding volume.<sup>12</sup> An excellent example of this practice, including the renewed address to his patron Epaphroditus, is to be found in the two parts of the work of Josephus *Against Apion*.<sup>13</sup> The striking similarities to the beginnings of Luke and Acts not only show that these too are really two parts of a single work, but also suggest that the Lukan preface is intended also for Acts. The difficulties arise when it comes to actual interpretation of the preface. Although this refers to Acts as well as to the gospel, it is not to be expected that all its phraseology applies equally to both. The author himself says in Acts 1:1 that his *πρῶτος λόγος* concerns the earthly ministry of Jesus. Acts itself does not.

The *crux* in the preface is undoubtedly the phrase *κάμοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς*. According to Cadbury, *παρακολουθέω* does not mean follow in the sense of investigate or inquire into, for which (he claims) there is no lexical support, but to observe, to be in close touch with,

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or to participate in events.<sup>14</sup> As an example he cites Josephus, *Apion* I. 10 (53).<sup>15</sup>

δεῖ τὸν ἄλλοις παράδοσιν πράξεων ἀληθινῶν ὑπισχνούμενον αὐτὸν ἐπίστασθαι ταύτας πρότερον ἀκριβῶς, ἢ παρηκολουθηκότα τοῖς γεγονόσιν ἢ παρὰ τῶν εἰδόντων πυνθανόμενον.

<sup>10</sup> "The Date of Luke-Acts," *ExpT* 64, pp. 283 f.; Cf. *The Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1957), pp. 12 f.; also H. G. Russell, "Which was written first, Luke or Acts?" *HTR* 48 (1955), pp. 167-74, and P. Parker, "The 'Former Treatise' and the Date of Acts," *JBL* 84 (1965), pp. 52-58.

<sup>11</sup> So recently E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London, 1966), p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1929 = 1913), pp. 311-13; H.J. Cadbury, *BC* 2 (1922), p. 491.

<sup>13</sup> *Apion* I.1, κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν Ἐπαφρόδιτε (cf. Lk. 1:3, κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν Θεόφιλε); I. 1 (3), ᾧήθην δεῖν γράψαι (Loeb edn., pp. 162 f.; cf. Lk. 1:3, ἔδοξε κάμοι . . . γράψαι); *Apion* II. 1, διὰ μ ν οὖν τοῦ προτέρου βιβλίου, τιμιώτατέ μοι Ἐπαφρόδιτε (Loeb edn., pp. 292 f.; cf. Acts 1:1, τὸν μ ν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποησάμην περὶ πάντων, ᾧ Θεόφιλε); F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: the Greek Text, etc.* (London, 1962), p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> *BC* 2 (1922), pp. 501 f.; *The Making of Luke-Acts*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1958), pp. 345-47; "We' and 'I' Passages in Luke-Acts," *NTS* 3 (1956-57), pp. 128-32. In his full study of the word ("The Knowledge Claimed in Luke's Preface," *Exp* 8th series, 24 (1922), pp.401-20) Cadbury wrote (p. 408) of the former meaning, "For a century this semasiological impostor appears to have held practically absolute sway," but pointed out that Hug in 1808 defended the same thesis as himself. He found an enthusiastic follower in J. H. Ropes, *JTS* 25 (1924), pp. 70 f., and *The Synoptic Gospels*<sup>2</sup> (1960), pp. 63 f.

<sup>15</sup> *BC* 2 (1922), p. 502; cf. *Exp* 24 (1922), p. 404; *NTS* 3 (1956-57), p. 130.

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"It is the duty of one who promises to present his readers with actual facts first to obtain an exact knowledge of them himself, either through having been in close touch with the events, or by inquiry from those who knew them."<sup>16</sup>

By using *παρηκολουθηκότα* Josephus refers to his first-hand experience of events in the war with the Romans, contrasted with inquiry from others. Similarly in Luke 1:3 the author, in employing this word in conjunction with the first person pronoun, is drawing a distinction between reports about Jesus which had reached him by tradition, and his personal knowledge of or participation in subsequent events, and in the latter case is referring to the second part of Acts, in which the "we" passages occur. Cadbury does, however, allow that Acts as a whole could be meant.<sup>17</sup>

A different interpretation is offered by Haenchen in the latter part of his article cited above.<sup>18</sup> Luke 1:1 makes it clear "that the prologue is intended only for the gospel: there were several gospels... but not acts of the apostles."<sup>19</sup> The use in the main sentence (verse 3) of *ἀκριβῶς ωιτη παρηκολουθηκότι* shows that, although the verb *can* denote first-hand knowledge, in the sense of participation in events, the context does not favour that meaning here. What is meant is investigation from the beginning,<sup>20</sup> and *ἄνωθεν* is equivalent to *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* in verse 2. If Cadbury were correct in supposing that Luke meant that he had closely followed everything for some considerable time past, and that he was referring to the second part of Acts, "then the whole thing would be senseless; Luke in his foreword to the Third Gospel would only be indicating his qualification as a writer of history in the second half of Acts but would be saying nothing about his qualification as writer of the *historia Jesu*."<sup>21</sup> Haenchen, then, judges that Luke claims to be qualified to write a gospel, because he has accurately

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investigated the matter in detail right from the beginning of the story of Jesus in the infancy narratives (*ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν*).<sup>22</sup>

In his valuable study of the "we" and "they" passages,<sup>23</sup> J. Dupont refuses to follow Haenchen in excluding all allusion to Acts from the Lukan preface, since an ancient preface applied to a work as a whole, "even if certain of its expressions apply only to a part."<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, he agrees with Haenchen against Cadbury that "the things which have been accomplished among us" can hardly be events in Acts and especially in the second part of Acts, but must be the events affecting all Christians ("us"), and forming the material of earlier attempts at producing gospel narratives. Dupont's remark, "What the eyewitnesses transmitted by their

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<sup>16</sup> Loeb edn., pp. 184 f.

<sup>17</sup> *NTS* 3 (1956-57), p. 131: "Acts as a whole or its later part."

<sup>18</sup> The page numbers are those of the English translation, followed by those of the German original in parentheses: pp. 95-99 (pp. 362-66).

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 96 (p. 363).

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 97 (pp. 364 f.); cf. W. Bauer, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*<sup>5</sup> (1963), 1227 = Arndt, p. 624.

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98 (p. 365).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London, 1966), p. 127, siding with Haenchen against Cadbury and Dupont, and not recognizing in the "I" of the preface any preparation for the "we" passages in Acts 16 ff.

<sup>23</sup> Chapter VI of *The Sources of Acts* (London, 1964).

<sup>24</sup> P. 110, n. 52.

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ministry of the word is to be found in the Gospel; Acts seek [sic] to show rather *how* they transmitted it,"<sup>25</sup> is a pointer towards a correct understanding of the implications of the Lukan preface.

The preface, then, does not refer solely to the gospel but, like other ancient prefaces, to the whole work. The question is, which of its statements refer to which parts of this work?

The first two verses refer to the gospel alone, and not at all to Acts. This might be expected from mere considerations of chronological order, but it is confirmed by examination of content and language. First are mentioned the things fulfilled among "us", that is, all Christians. And what has happened is the gospel story of salvation in the life, ministry, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus (cf. Acts 1:1 f.), of which many, i.e., several,<sup>26</sup> predecessors of Luke have endeavoured to draw up a narrative. There is no evidence, on the other hand, that Acts was preceded by any attempts to record systematically the activities of the early churches and their leaders, nor could παρέδοσαν and the following words bear any such meaning. Verse 2 alludes to the transmission of the tradition about Jesus by those (in particular, we may suppose, the Twelve) who had been eyewitnesses of his ministry, and after the resurrection "servants of the Gospel" (*NEB*). Although the writer distinguishes himself from these primary authorities, and includes himself among the recipients of the tradition ("us" in verse 2 perhaps denoting especially himself and his predecessors in gospel writing), it does not follow that he lived so much later (near the end of the first century) that he might not have been Luke, the companion

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of Paul. παρέδοσαν does not necessarily signify a prolonged process of transmission of tradition, as is clear from 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3.

We now come to the disputed passage in verse 3a: ἔδοξε κάμοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γραψαι. As we have seen, there is a tendency to adopt one of two meanings for παρηκολουθηκότι, either investigation,<sup>27</sup> or close acquaintance with, and even personal involvement and participation in, events. In the latter case the events can only be those in Acts and especially, as Cadbury maintains, in the second part of Acts, in particular the passages punctuated by the intrusion of "we". In fact, however, verse 3 refers to both the Lukan writings. It is unnecessary to expect that, because verses 1 f. refer only to the gospel, the next statement refers only, or even primarily, to Acts. Reference to the gospel is guaranteed by the fact that this is the apodosis of a sentence which begins by speaking about predecessors in gospel writing. "I also decided to write a gospel narrative as others before me have done." But if verse 3 refers to both the gospel and Acts, the need for a firm choice of one of the two possible meanings of the verb παρηκολουθηκότι disappears. In regard to the gospel material Luke has "investigated" matters in detail. He has done the same thing for Acts, but with the advantage that he has more immediate knowledge of more recent events,

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110, n. 53.

<sup>26</sup> Perhaps only three? Cf. J. Bauer, "ΠΙΟΛΛΟΙ, Luk.i:1," *NovTest* 4 (1960), pp. 263-66 (p. 266). Less plausibly B. P. W. Stather Hunt, *Primitive Gospel Sources* (London, 1951), pp. 44 ff., suggested that Luke refers to a single document, a primitive testimony book of proof-texts and their fulfilment in Jesus, to the compilation of which many had contributed, and undertakes to improve its chronological arrangement.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. E. E. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

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and has actually participated in some of them himself. And Cadbury sees in the "I" in the Lukan preface a preparation for the reader's encounter with "we" in the second part of Acts.<sup>28</sup>

The words ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν mean that the whole narrative, although divided into two parts, is a unity. It starts from the beginning of the story in the nativity narratives of John the Baptist and Jesus, and recounts all the acts of God manifested first in Galilee, Samaria and Jerusalem, and then in the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem as far as Rome.<sup>29</sup> The preface concludes by saying to Theophilus that he now has at his disposal, in this orderly and connected narrative (καθεξῆς), full confirmation of the reliability of the matters of which he had been informed.<sup>30</sup> Since by this we are to understand the truth of the tradition about Jesus' deeds and teaching, the reference is in the first instance to Luke's gospel. If, however, the record of Acts is included in what is said in verse 3, it must be intended here as well. That is, Acts is an essential part of the confirmation Luke is able to provide, because so much of it, and not only in the *preaching* of the church leaders, is a witnessing to the truth of the *historia Jesu* which

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Theophilus had learned and which is now recorded afresh in the "former treatise".

## II

This former treatise records "all" that Jesus "did and taught".<sup>31</sup> Acts, in its turn, as part two of a single work, records both the post-resurrection proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ by leading personalities, and also their deeds. The kerygmatic speeches in Acts 2-5, 10, and 13 have been held by many, following C. H. Dodd, to represent "the *kerygma* of the Church at Jerusalem at an early period".<sup>32</sup> Others, however, see in them a reflection, not of the earliest preaching, but of the church's preaching in the author's own day. According to Dibelius, all these speeches are Lukan compositions echoing the pattern of preaching current when Luke wrote Acts about A.D. 90.<sup>33</sup> A basically common outlook is shared by Haenchen, Conzelmann, and Wilckens. The last named calls Luke the theologian of the post-apostolic period. The common pattern of the kerygmatic speeches summarizes Lukan theology at the end of the first century, and preserves no ancient tradition.<sup>34</sup> In Britain C. F. Evans has reached similar conclusions.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Whether the author, on the assumption that he was the Luke of tradition, utilized a personal diary of his own, cannot be proved. That he used the diary or notes of someone else who had been a companion of Paul on some of his journeys (and could, therefore, have belonged to a later period), is less likely, if only because the occurrence of "we" is so slight and sporadic.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin, 1961), p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> Whether as already a Christian is uncertain.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 106, and H. Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tübingen, 1963), p. 20, on why the rendering "began to do and teach" (as in RSV) is probably incorrect; *per contra* F. F. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 66, taking ἤρξατο as emphatic.

<sup>32</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London, 1936), p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greeven (London, 1956), especially essay 9, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography." Dibelius, however, allowed for occasional use of old kerygmatic or liturgical formulae, cf. p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (Neukirchen, 1961), pp. 186, 193.

<sup>35</sup> "The Kerygma," *JTS* N.S. 7 (1956), pp. 25-41.

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This more recent approach, however, should not necessarily be accepted without question or modification as a new orthodoxy, completely supplanting the findings of Dodd and his followers. It may well be that Dibelius and others have attributed too much construction of speeches to the author of Acts.<sup>36</sup> But analysis confirms that the kerygmatic speeches are of basically identical structure, while at the same time they appear to use older material in the christological parts.<sup>37</sup> The question is, how old is this material? M. Wilcox maintains that the relative absence of "semitized" material from the kerygmatic (or "credal") elements, "suggests that it is less probably a statement of the primitive preaching of the Apostles than a traditional liturgical or apologetical summary of the cardinal elements of the gospel."<sup>38</sup> At any rate, the contacts between the early speeches in Acts, and the Pauline epistles and other parts of the New Testament, particularly

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in the use of *testimonia* from the old Testament, are less probably due to mere imitation on the part of Luke, than to parallel, although possibly rather later, use of firmly established features of the primitive preaching. Granted that Acts and the Gospel of Luke have a distinctive theology, the author of Acts reveals himself in other aspects of his work (e.g., in his knowledge of Roman institutions), as one who was hardly likely to have been ignorant of what that preaching was like.<sup>39</sup>

We go on to the importance for the author of Acts of prominent figures in the early church as proclaiming, or witnessing to, the good news of Jesus Christ both in words and in deeds.

The idea of witnessing is included in five of the six kerygmatic speeches in Acts 2-5, 10, and 13. The preacher claims that he and his associates are μάρτυρες.

In the following passages the apostles are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.

2:32, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (Peter).

3:15, "...whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses" (Peter).

5:32, "And we are witnesses to these things," the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus (Peter and the apostles).

13:30 f., "But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people" (Paul).

In 10:39-41 Peter says the apostles are both witnesses to Jesus' ministry, and chosen by God as witnesses of his resurrection.

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. A. Ehrhardt, "The Construction and Purpose of the Acts of the Apostles," *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (Manchester, 1964), pp. 86-88.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. E. Schweizer, "Concerning the Speeches in Acts," *Studies in Luke-Acts* [in honour of Paul Schubert], ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (New York, 1966), pp. 208-16.

<sup>38</sup> *The Semitisms of Acts* (Oxford, 1965), p. 182.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. R. P. C. Hanson, *The Acts* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 35-39.

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The idea of the apostles as witnesses also occurs a number of times elsewhere in Acts, in non-kerygmatic settings. In 22:15 Paul relates how he had been told by Ananias that he would be a witness of the risen Lord who had recently appeared to him on the way to Damascus. In the same address Paul calls Stephen the μάρτυς of Jesus (22:20). The word here (and in Rev. 2:13 (Antipas)), while still meaning a witness, is on the way to the meaning of martyr (Rev. 17:6), through its association with the death of the witness. In his account of his conversion addressed to Festus and Agrippa, Paul says the risen Jesus appeared to him in order to appoint<sup>40</sup> him as his servant and witness (ὕπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα). See also, in addition to the passages in the last footnote, Acts 4:33: "And with great power the apostles gave their testimony (μαρτύριον) to the resurrection of the

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Lord Jesus"; and 22:18 (μαρτυρίαν), 23:11 (μαρτυρήσαι), both referring to Paul.

Is this idea of the apostles as witnesses a part of the traditional kerygma? T. F. Glasson<sup>41</sup> has claimed that it is. He does not mention, however, the absence of this feature from Peter's speech in 4:8-12, which has other primitive traits, in particular the proof-text Psalms 118:22. This weakens his contention that the mention of witnesses was an integral part of the apostolic preaching, notwithstanding his appeal to 1 Corinthians 15:5-8, 15.

μάρτυς is not used in kerygmatic contexts outside Acts.<sup>42</sup> The use of the term in the kerygmatic speeches in Acts is prepared for by the author in Luke 24:48, in the words of the risen Jesus to the apostles, "You are witnesses of these things"; in Acts 1:8, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and to the end of the earth"; and finally in 1:22, where the man to be chosen as successor to Judas must be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. There is little room for doubt that the concept of witnessing did not belong to the traditional kerygma, but has been introduced by Luke himself.<sup>43</sup> The purpose of this procedure, it is suggested, is to focus attention on the speakers as the fully accredited witnesses appointed by the risen Jesus in person, and charged by him with the preaching of the kerygma.

Here it may be noted that two of the kerygmatic speeches which include the idea of witnessing are occasioned by, and closely associated with, incidents in which the speaker has been involved. Peter's address in Solomon's porch (3:12-16) is the immediate sequel to the healing of the lame man (3:1-11). The next speech, delivered before the Sanhedrin (4:8-12), also refers back to this healing (vv. 9 f.). Peter's speech in 10:34-43 links Cornelius's report of how he came to summon him with the descent of the Holy Spirit. The concept of

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<sup>40</sup> προχειρίσασθαι, 26:16. The same verb is used, and again in close connection with μάρτυς, in Paul's first version of his conversion. Ananias informed him that God had appointed him to see and hear the just One, "for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard" (22:14 f.). This points to witnessing as a Lukan idea (see below), which has also been imported into the christological kerygma; cf. especially 10:41, μάρτυσιν τοῖς προκεχειροτονημένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡμῖν. To the vocabulary of witnessing belong also μαρτύρομαι (26:22f.) and διαμαρτύρομαι (2:40; 8:25; 10:42; 8:5; 20:21, 24; 23:11; 28:23).

<sup>41</sup> "The Kerygma: is our version correct?" *HJ* 51 (1952-53), pp. 129-32.

<sup>42</sup> In 1 Pet. 5:1, Peter is a witness, but of the *sufferings* of Christ.

<sup>43</sup> See also above, p. 84, n.2.

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witnessing in Acts transcends the vocabulary, for the church leaders bear their testimony not only in words, but in actions.

### III

In thus emphasizing the importance of leading personalities, does the author of Acts depend on earlier information and interest? Was there anything much of this kind available to him? The first and broader aspect of this question is whether first-century Christians were conditioned for a biographical interest in their great leaders by the climate of the times in which they lived. The Graeco-Roman world certainly did not lack interest in prominent figures. Outstanding among biographical works are, on

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the Latin side, the *Agricola* of Tacitus and Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, and on the Greek side, Plutarch's *Lives* and the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Philostratus. It would, therefore, hardly be surprising if converts to Christianity in the empire beyond Palestine showed an interest in the lives of the apostles and other pioneers — not to mention that which does not concern us here, the life of Jesus himself. Nor is it necessary to suppose that biographical interest was first aroused in the church outside Palestine, and was therefore a secondary development. The Old Testament, inherited and claimed by the church as its own possession, is a rich storehouse of traditions concerning the patriarchs, prophets, and kings of Israelite history. Biographical interest must have been firmly rooted in the earliest, Palestinian churches, and this was fostered with the spread of the missionary enterprise farther afield. At a later stage we encounter the fabrications of the apocryphal writings, produced in response to a growing curiosity in the lives of Jesus and his apostles, which the canonical books failed to satisfy.

The second and more immediate aspect of the matter involves the related questions of whether in fact, and not according to probability alone, however strong, there existed traditions about the apostles and other prominent leaders, from which the author of Acts could have drawn, and whether his work can be subjected to form-critical analysis.

In his famous essay of 1923, "Style Criticism of the Book of Acts,"<sup>44</sup> Dibelius turned from the search for literary sources to style analysis, and maintained that Luke wrote Acts in a very different way from his gospel. Yet he conceded that he did use traditional material, for example, the travel diary, and such narratives as that of Peter's release from prison (12:5-17), which he described as "preserved by Luke, almost ungarnished, in the form in which, as an isolated story, it was current among Christians."<sup>45</sup> But Luke's creative activity, Dibelius held, is such that, generally speaking, he is much more an author where Acts is concerned, than a transmitter of tradition. If this is pressed, however, form-critical analysis is going to be much less successful than in the case of Luke's gospel. Himself a pioneer of the application of the form-critical method to the gospels, Dibelius reached far less fruitful results in extending it to Acts. Perhaps his clearest statement appears in his essay on the form—critical study of the

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<sup>44</sup> *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 1-25.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

New Testament outside the gospels, namely, that one searches in vain for paradigms in Acts, because there was no preaching about the apostles in the early church.<sup>46</sup> In Acts the situation is quite different from that in the

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gospels, in which everything revolves round the central figure of Jesus, and the stories about him are adapted for use in preaching.

Haenchen<sup>47</sup> in his commentary represents the culmination of this estimate of Acts, in association with Conzelmann's interpretation of Lukan theology. Whereas the early church expected an early parousia, and so had no interest in preserving traditions about the apostles, Luke views the present as the time of the church and its mission until the end of the world. This new epoch is the continuation of the gospel. Luke had no predecessors; neither had he any successors, because the apocryphal Acts are in quite a different category. To Luke the link between the life of Jesus and the time after the ascension is the preaching to all peoples of the message of forgiveness of sins and salvation through faith in Jesus. The description of this mission in itself serves to awaken faith, and so to lead to the attainment of salvation. For this purpose Luke allows full play to his powers as a creative author, and from such material as was available constructs stories about its leaders for the church's edification.

J. Jervell has shown, however, from a study of the Pauline letters as the earliest extant Christian writings, that a tradition about the apostles coexisted with the tradition about Jesus from an early date.<sup>48</sup> I give a few of his examples, and his conclusions. In Romans 1:8 Paul thanks God that the faith of the Roman Christians is proclaimed in all the world. Since the word he uses (καταγγέλλειν) is kerygmatic (cf. 1 Cor. 2.1; 9:14; 11:26; Phil. 1:17; Acts 4:2 17:23), the faith of the church itself is what is proclaimed. Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 ff. the word of the Lord is the faith of the Thessalonians. The message consists (1) of the entry of the apostles among the Thessalonians and its results, and (2) of the content of their faith. Thus in the early tradition the activities of the apostles and the faith of the churches naturally belong together. The apostles themselves can act as an exhortation. They are examples to be imitated (1 Cor, 4:17; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:7 ff.). Such exhortations, in which the apostle presents himself as an example to the churches, must have formed part of the regular instruction, and could only have been effective if a church was well informed about the apostle's life and activities. Moreover, the tradition about Jesus itself included tradition about the apostles and the church. The appearance of the risen Lord to Peter and the Twelve in 1 Corinthians 15:3 ff. is striking evidence of this. What Paul had received and in turn handed down, is the preaching of the primitive church, which is at the same time a preaching *about* the primitive church.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> "Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments (ausserhalb der Evangelien)," *Theologische Rundschau*, N. F. 3 (1931), pp. 207-42 (pp. 233-41 on Acts): "Die für die Predigt bestimmten Beispiele [of paradigms] sucht man in der Apostelgeschichte natürlich überhaupt vergeblich, denn von den Aposteln gepredigt hat man in der Urkirche noch nicht" (p. 236).

<sup>47</sup> *Die Apostelgeschichte*, especially pp. 87 f., and his essay "The Book of Acts as Source Material for the History of Early Christianity", *Studies in Luke-Acts* [in honour of Paul Schubert], pp. 258-78.

<sup>48</sup> "Zur Frage der Traditionsgrundlage der Apostelgeschichte," *StTh* 16 (1962), pp. 25-41. This article is summarized in part by the late Professor Johannes Munck on pp. XXXIX-XLI of his commentary on Acts (*Anchor Bible*, vol. 31, New York, 1967).

<sup>49</sup> "Eine Verkündigung über die IJrgemeinde," Jervell, p. 39.

A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

In answer to Dibelius and Haenchen, then, Jervell produces strong

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evidence that, so far from conditions being unfavourable to the formation of a tradition of the apostolic period, accounts of the apostles and of the faith of the communities had their place in the preaching from the beginning. If this is so, the presumption is that the author of Acts has built upon a *Traditionsgrundlage*.

In Part I it has been argued that the preface to Luke was intended by the author to refer to both parts of his work. The first two verses concern the gospel alone, but the next two refer to both the gospel and Acts. That is, Luke has investigated in detail both the tradition about Jesus and, as we perhaps may now say, the coexistent tradition about the apostles and other leaders and the churches with which they were associated. If the whole narrative of Luke-Acts is fundamentally a unity, from the beginning of the story of Jesus to the arrival of Paul with his gospel in Rome, it would be rather surprising, to say the least, to find the author, in his preface, describing only his use of tradition and sources in the *gospel*. When Luke came to write Acts, he found he had the advantage of more immediate and, at certain points, even personal knowledge of events — a fact reflected in his choice of the word *παρηκολουθηκότι* to cover something more than historical investigation; on the completion of his gospel and Acts, he prefixed to the former the preface as an introduction to both parts of his work.

In a study which has not received adequate attention, S. E. Johnson<sup>50</sup> attempted to show that from the form-critical point of view the difference between Luke and Acts is one of degree rather than of kind. "Although Luke undoubtedly did allow himself more freedom in Acts, nevertheless he was dealing with traditional material much of which can be subsumed under the standard categories employed by form-critics." In this Johnson is much more positive than Dibelius who, while admitting the presence in Acts both of *Novellen* (e.g., the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, 3:1-10) and of numerous legends (e.g., Peter's release from prison, 12:5-19), says there are no paradigms there, because the subject of the early preaching was Jesus alone, with nothing about the apostles.<sup>51</sup> Johnson, however, begins his own investigation with seven stories "which bear a certain resemblance to the paradigms of the gospels", namely, 1:4-8; 1:23-26; 2:37-39; 4:5-12; 4:13-20; 5:26-32; 6:9-14, all of which "could be useful for preaching purposes".<sup>52</sup> He goes on to list *Novellen* (miracle stories) and "legends" (or "stories").<sup>53</sup> The former include five centred upon Peter (3:1-10; 5:15; 5:17-23; 9:32-35; 9:36-43), of which the healing miracles resemble those in the gospels. This is especially true

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of the last (the raising of Tabitha or Dorcas), which has affinities with the raising of the young man at Nain (Lk. 7:11-17). Johnson then lists eleven stories about Paul approaching closely the *Novellen* type, including four miraculous healings (16:16-18, the girl with a spirit of

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<sup>50</sup> "A Proposed Form-critical Treatment of Acts," *ATR* 21 (1939), pp. 22-31.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, it may be noted, does not mention Dibelius's essay in *Theologische Rundschau*, cited above.

<sup>52</sup> Johnson, p. 23.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. the "stories about Jesus," V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1933), pp. 142 ff.

A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

divination; 19:11 f., "healing by relics of Paul"; 28:1-6, Paul unharmed by a viper; 28:7-10, healing of the father of Publius), and twenty stories of the *Legende* category.

However, there remains more in Acts than in the gospels which cannot easily, or in some cases at all, be classified on form—critical principles. It is also true that while, as a comparison with Matthew and Mark shows, Luke impresses his own literary and theological stamp on much of the Markan and Q material, in Acts he uses with greater freedom whatever sources and traditions were available to him. Perhaps the knowledge that he had no predecessors in the field of "church history", as he had in gospel writing, was a contributory factor. Possible imitation of gospel pericopae in Acts is another factor to be borne in mind, and one which could materially reduce the validity of form-critical analysis of the book. Nevertheless, despite legitimate uncertainties as to when the author is accurately transmitting earlier material, and when he is imitating the gospel tradition, embellishing, or even inventing, much recent scepticism as to his reliability is insufficiently based. Acts may be taken to preserve a rich storehouse of tradition from the expanding missionary first-century church, much of it centred upon the apostles Peter and Paul, but also including other prominent leaders like Ananias of Damascus, Apollos, Barnabas, James of Jerusalem, Judas Barsabbas, Philip, Silas, and Stephen.

To sum up. Since Acts, like the gospels, is susceptible of form-critical analysis, much of its content must have reached its present form along somewhat similar lines to the gospel material. Before Acts was written, there existed a living apostolic tradition alongside the Jesus tradition. This was used in instruction and exhortation; the activities of prominent leaders were remembered and repeated as part and parcel of the Christian message. In this connexion the work of Jervell on the Pauline letters is important, and has a direct bearing on Acts. This viewpoint is supported by the interpretation of the preface to Luke given above.

#### IV

It has been maintained earlier in this paper that witnessing did not form part of the primitive kerygma, but is Lukan, and that the purpose of its introduction by Luke is to focus attention on the pioneers of the church as bearing testimony to the gospel both in their preaching and in their deeds. This concept of witnessing, however, is securely based on information derived from reliable tradition about its leaders current in the church. The acceptance of Luke's substantial integrity as a historian in his use of

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tradition, not only in his gospel, but also in Acts, is not inconsistent with the recognition of a considerable degree of interpretative elaboration of traditional material for edifying and theological purposes.

Doubtless Luke regarded himself also as a witness in the writing of his two-part work. Above all, however, it is the Holy Spirit who is the witness, the supreme witness. He alone enables the apostles to be witnesses.

A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

"You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk. 24:48 f.).

"...he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 1:4 f.).

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).<sup>54</sup> This gift of the Spirit is not confined to the first sermon at Pentecost and to the first wonders and signs wrought through the apostles (Acts 2:43), but pervades the whole of Acts.

Luke regards the witness of the apostles in the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations in the name of Jesus as part of the fulfilment of scripture.

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations" (Lk. 24:46 f.).

But in Acts he will show that the works of the Christian leaders are also part of their testimony, and therefore, we may suppose, are also part of the fulfilment of the gospel foretold in scripture. The ministry of Jesus in works and words (Acts 1:1) is continued in the ministry of his witnesses. This is the link between the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts (Lk. 24:46-48).

The witnessing, both in (a) words and (b) works, leads to faith in Jesus on the part of the hearers or the onlookers. For (a) see Acts 4:4 (Peter); 8:12 f. (Philip); 11:20 f. (men of Cyprus and Cyrene); 13:48 (Paul and Barnabas); 14:1 (Paul and Barnabas); 16:31-34 (Paul and Silas); 17:12 (Paul and Silas); 17:34 (Paul); 18:8 (Paul). For (b) there are the following narratives. In 5:12-16 the working of signs and wonders by the apostles resulted in some people thinking that even Peter's shadow would be sufficient for the working of a cure. Of Paul it is said that his miracles were so extraordinary, "that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of

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them" (19:11 f.).<sup>55</sup> Only in the former of these passages is there explicit mention of faith (5:14). Peter's healing of Aeneas led all the inhabitants of Lydda and Sharon to turn to the Lord (9:34 f.), and many believed in the Lord after his raising of Tabitha from the dead (9:42). The proconsul Sergius Paulus "believed" when he saw the effect of Paul's stern rebuke of Elymas the magician (13:12). To these are to be added the occasions when the name of Jesus

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. J. H. E. Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1967), pp. 46 f.

<sup>55</sup> These two passages foreshadow the later cult of the saints, and especially the veneration of Peter and Paul.

A. J. B. Higgins, "The Preface to Luke and the Kerygma in Acts," W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970. Hbk. ISBN: 085364098X. pp.78-91.

is invoked in a healing miracle: 3:6 (cf. 3:16, with probable reference also to the healed man's faith); 16:18; and especially p34, where Peter says to Aeneas, "Jesus Christ heals you".<sup>56</sup>

The kerygma in Acts, then, is not confined to the missionary preaching. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the apostles show the reality of the gospel they proclaim by their miracles performed in the name of Jesus, as Jesus himself demonstrated the reality of his proclamation of the coming kingdom of God through mighty acts already in the present. The author of Acts interprets the kerygma in this extended sense as the bearing of witness to Jesus. It is to this kerygma in Acts, as well as to the *historia Jesu* in his gospel, that Luke, in the second part of the preface to the gospel, refers Theophilus, "so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. also the following additions to the text: 6:8 + διὰ τοῦ ἁνόματος (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι E) , κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (E 33) 614 *al it sa*; 9:40 Ταβειθα ἀνάστηθι + in nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi g m p vg(D) syh (sa Cyr) Ambr; 14:10 φωνῆ + σοὶ λέγω ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ CD (E) 614 *al it syh(mg) sa bo(pc) Ir Ambr*.

<sup>57</sup> JerB. Although he studies Lk. 1:1-4 from a completely different angle (and interprets the passage also as referring only to the gospel), H. Schürmann's recently republished essay of 1962 may be mentioned here for its characteristically thorough discussion of the exegetical problems: "Evangelien-schrift und kirchliche Unterweisung. Die repräsentative Funktion der Schrift nach Lk. 1:1-4," *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synoptischen Evangelien* (Düsseldorf, 1968), pp. 251-71.