

Is Luke an Exponent of

'Early Protestantism'?

Church Order in the Lukan Writings

(Part I)

by Kevin Giles

Mr. Giles, who is minister of St. Matthew's Church in Kensington Park, Australia, has already shown his expertise in Lukan studies in his article on 'The Church in the Gospel of Luke' in the Scottish Journal of Theology 34, 1981, 121-146. We publish here the first part of an article in which he challenges some commonly-held misrepresentations of Luke's portrait of the church in Acts.

H. Conzelmann popularized the view that the Lukan writings reflect far less of the spiritual vitality and eschatological fervour of early Christianity than do the Pauline writings.¹ We are told that in Luke's mind the church has become an entity in world history, an institution with a developed sacramental life and an ordered ministry. In Luke — Acts we are moving in a world akin to that reflected by the Pastoral epistles.² To sum it up in one word, Luke is an exponent of *Frühkatholizismus* (early catholicism).³ The debate over Lukan theology has tended to concentrate on Lukan eschatology,⁴ far less being written specifically on Lukan church order.⁵ This essay is an attempt to add some correction to this imbalance by focussing attention on the aspects of church life that Luke mentions. Naturally the book of Acts offers more evidence than the

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¹ H. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit*, Tübingen, 1954. Translated *The Theology of St Luke*, London, 1961. For an example of one recent study which adopts this interpretation of the Lukan writings see J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, London, 1975, 157-193. One response to Conzelmann and to some of those who have followed him is I. H. Marshall, *Luke — Historian and Theologian*, London, 1970. Marshall lists most of the significant work on Luke up until 1970.

² So recently S. G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles*, London, 1978.

³ So E. Käsemann, *New Testament Questions for Today*, London, 1969, 21, 236-251; *Essays on New Testament Themes*, London, 1964, 28ff., 136-148. He writes early catholicism means the 'transition from earliest Christianity to the so called ancient Church, which is complete with the disappearance of the imminent expectation' (NTQ, 237).

On the term see S. Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861:1961*, London, 1964, 160ff.; K. H. Neufeld, 'Frühkatholizismus — Idee und Begriff', *ZKT*, 94, 1972, 1-28.

⁴ The growing consensus would seem to be that we may agree that Luke concentrates on present eschatology at the expense but not total neglect of futuristic eschatology. However, recently a strong defence of a clear and persistent futuristic strand in Lukan eschatology has been made. See A. J. Mattill, *Luke and the Last Things: A Perspective for the Understanding of Lukan Thought*, North Carolina, 1978.

⁵ Work on specific aspects of Church order, especially Luke's understanding of apostleship, is of course available and some coverage of the issues is found in most studies of Lukan theology and commentary introductions. These will be mentioned when demanded.

Gospel. The conclusion that has been reached is that Luke's understanding of church order is not an early catholic one. In regard to such things as baptism, communal meals and forms of leadership his theology is simple and non-sacramental. It is an early Christian interpretation, and if any designation other than this must be given, then "early protestant" would be far better than "early catholic".

BAPTISM

Luke does not explain the origin of the Christian rite of baptism in water but he insists that from the earliest days of the Christian mission it was practised (Acts 2:38).⁶ Water baptism, as alluded to by Luke, has been taken to be the continuation of John the Baptist's work⁷ but in associating the gift of the Holy Spirit with water baptism Luke makes it not so much a continuation of John's work as its fulfilment. John administered water baptism and proclaimed the near advent of one 'who is mightier than I, . . . who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit' (Luke 3:16; cf. Acts 1:5; 11:16).

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John's contrast between 'water baptism' and 'Spirit baptism' allows for a possible separation of these two things, a separation Luke concedes was sometimes known.⁸ It is after Jesus' baptism by John in the river Jordan, while Jesus is praying, that the Spirit descends upon him (Luke 3:21-22). In the various conversion stories in Acts the Spirit comes sometimes before water baptism (9:17; 10:44-48), sometimes as the natural sequence to it (2:38; 19:5f.), and sometimes the two 'baptisms' are quite

⁶ As the 120 are not said to be baptized and Luke can call men who have been baptized only by John the Baptist 'disciples' (Acts 19:1f.), it was argued by J. Weiss, *The History of Primitive Christianity*, New York, 1937, 50ff., that Christian baptism was not the necessary mark of Christian profession at the outset. Weiss concluded that Luke antedated the situation when he introduced baptism at Pentecost. So also F. J. F. Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, 'The Development of Thought on the Spirit, the Church and Baptism, *Beginnings*, I, 383. This view is discussed and refuted by G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 1962, 92-99. The traditional viewpoint held by Beasley-Murray is also accepted by J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 183.

⁷ E. R. Goodenough, 'The Perspective of Acts', *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn, London, 1970, 53f.; R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, London, 1952, 39.

⁸ This separation in Luke's theology of baptism is emphasised by C. F. D. Moule, 'Baptism with Water and with the Holy Ghost', *Theology*, 48, 1945, 247f.; M. Barth, *Die Taufe — ein Sakrament? Ein exegetischer Beitrag zum Gespräch über die kirchliche Taufe*, Zurich, 1951, 150-159; J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, London, 1970, 90ff.; It is allowed by E. Käsemann. 'The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus', *ENTT* 146. It is rejected by G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, London, 1962, 104ff., and F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids, 1970, 167, 184-185.

unrelated in time (2:4; 8:16).⁹ Nevertheless, Luke seems to be saying that ideally the two baptisms should be closely related. So far as the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' is concerned it is important to note that this is only one of Luke's metaphorical expressions to describe the coming of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

If Luke does allow for a separation between conversion/water baptism and the coming of the Holy Spirit into a person's life then it is clear that he does not have what we would call today a 'sacramental' view of water baptism. Water baptism seems to be understood by him as but the outward expression of an inward response to the Gospel. He suggests that normally the coming of the Spirit is closely associated with conversion/water baptism but he does not link the two in an absolute bond. But just as the narrative of Acts cannot be read to support an *ex opere operato* view of water baptism it cannot be read to support a doctrine of a necessary second experience of the Spirit subsequent to conversion.¹¹ Luke allows that the Spirit may come in power into a person's life sometime after conversion¹² but he implies that this is the exception rather than the rule.

These conclusions may, however, be disputed for the unusual events described in Acts 8:4-25 and in Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-10 have sometimes been taken as evidence for both of the views I have just claimed Luke does not allow. These passages have been interpreted to be teaching either that the Spirit can only be given when water baptism is administered by apostolically authorized persons — a view Professor Käsemann has adopted with some enthusiasm¹³ — or that every Christian needs a second post-conversion experience of the Spirit. The interpretation of these passages is not without its difficulties but when they are carefully examined it would seem that they do not support either view. To make the point however we must pause and study these stories in some detail.

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⁹ That these differences may be explained on the basis of sources is no longer accepted by most scholars. See *Beginnings*, 337ff.

¹⁰ So Dunn, *op. cit.*, 70. The following may be mentioned —

- (a) βαπτίζεσθαι ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (1:5; 11:16)
- (b) (ἐπ) ἔρχεσθαι τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον (1:8; 19:6)
- (c) πλησθῆναι πνεύματος ἁγίου (2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17, etc.)
- (d) ἐκχέειν ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος (2:17, 18, 33; 10:45)
- (e) λαμβάνειν πνεῦμα ἅγιον (2:28; 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47)
- (f) δίδοναι πνεῦμα ἅγιον (11:17; 15:8)
- (g) ἐπιπίπτειν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (8:16; 10:44; 11:55)

¹¹ As upheld by classic Pentecostal theology

¹² Luke does not betray any awareness of the belief that the Spirit is the agent of regeneration.

¹³ NTQ, 236-251.

The Riddle of Samaria (Acts 8:4-25)

In dealing with the tradition behind this passage Käsemann believes that Luke is faced with the necessity of either admitting Philip's administration of water baptism to be fully valid, and thus acknowledging the existence of an independent ecclesiastical structure in Samaria, or of maintaining at all costs the unity of the apostolic fellowship by stigmatizing Philip's baptism as defective. According to him, Luke chose the latter course. The Samaritans are therefore described as 'only baptized' and their real incorporation into the Church is ascribed to the apostolic laying on of hands.¹⁴

196 The sequence of events in this passage is as follows. Philip, driven from Jerusalem by the persecution following Stephen's death, travelled to Samaria and 'proclaimed to them the Christ' (8:5), with the result that 'they believed Philip' and 'were baptized both men and women' (8:12). It is not, however, until Peter and John arrived, 'and prayed for them', (8:15) and 'laid their hands on them' (8:17), that they received the Spirit. The chronological separation between believing and being baptized in water and receiving the Holy Spirit is seen as the focal point of this story. Why Luke emphasises this distinction is perplexing and several answers have been given. The following have gained some support:¹⁵ (a) the Samaritans had already received the Spirit and vv. 14-17 records only a charismatic manifestation; (b) the Samaritans had already received the Spirit and vv. 14-17 records a second bestowal; (c) the gift of the Spirit is entirely dependent on the presence of apostolic leaders who alone can facilitate his coming; or (d) the Samaritans were not genuinely converted by Philip's preaching and only received the Spirit for the first time when they believed in Christ.

The first two interpretations founder on the explicit statement of Luke that before Peter and John arrived the Spirit had 'not yet fallen on any of them' (8:16). Only when Peter and John laid hands on them was the Holy Spirit given (v. 18) and received (vv. 15, 17, 19). The fourth suggestion is also to be discounted. This novel idea, put forward by Dunn,¹⁶ rests on the statement that the Samaritans 'believed Philip' (8:12). The use of πιστεύειν, taking as its object the preacher, says Dunn, is unique in the New Testament and 'indicates that the Samaritan's response was simply an assent of the mind . . . rather than that commitment distinctively described elsewhere which alone deserves

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁵ These suggestions are fully documented and discussed by Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 55-56.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63ff.

the name Christian.¹⁷ But Dunn's case rests on the inclusion of Simon within this group and Luke explicitly says 'even Simon himself believed' (ἐπίστευσεν) (8:13). This use of the aorist in the absolute is one of the most common ways Luke depicts genuine faith (cf. Acts 4:4; 13:12; 13:48; 17:12; 17:34, etc.). When this is observed, the claim that the preceding use of πιστεύειν refers to something less than genuine faith becomes untenable. In addition we should recall that in Jerusalem the news was received that 'Samaria had received the word of God' (8:14), an expression finding parallel in Acts 11:1 (cf. 17:11). The latter report is not questioned as to its genuineness and we should therefore find no reason to question the former.

The third explanation is the one that Käsemann in his own particular way advocates. His interpretation is not new,¹⁸ except in so far as he takes the apostolic laying on of hands as a demonstration of the oneness of 'the apostolic Church'. Philip's work had to be 'stigmatized' as defective because he 'had begun upon the evangelization of Samaria on his own initiative and without express authorization.'¹⁹ Thus Luke introduces the story about Peter and John's visit to show that 'the Spirit is accessible solely within the boundaries of the apostolic fellowship'.²⁰ The weakness of this argument is demonstrated by the surrounding stories, all of which run counter to this interpretation of Acts 8. If Luke held the view Käsemann advances why, we must ask, does he then proceed to outline the story of Philip's successful solo ministry to the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26f)? And why does he allow that Paul received the Spirit after the laying on of hands by an otherwise unknown disciple named Ananias (9:17)? And why does Luke recount the story of the spontaneous and successful non-apostolic mission in Antioch (11:19f.)? When news of this came to Jerusalem Barnabas is sent to Antioch and on his arrival, Luke tells us, he 'saw the grace of God and was glad' (11:23).

What then is the meaning of Acts 8:4-25? No solution explains all the details but the focal point of the story does seem to be the separation between conversion and the reception of the Spirit or to put it another way, between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Usually Luke closely connects these two things, which we infer is what he took to be the normative pattern, but here explicitly and perhaps elsewhere implicitly he allows for a chronological separation, to show that this was

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁸ See also R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 1925, 116; C. S. C. Williams, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 1957, 116, *Beginnings*, IV, 92 *et al.*

¹⁹ Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 145.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Lk. 3:21-22; 2:4; 9:17.

possible even if it was exceptional. That Luke wishes his readers to understand that this pattern is not the usual state of affairs is brought out in his comment about the Samaritan believers at the time the apostles arrive. Speaking of the Holy Spirit he says: οὐδέπω γὰρ ἦν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ αὐτῶν ἐπιπεπωκός, μόνον δὲ βεβαπτισμένοι ὑπῆρχον (8:16). The commencement of the sentence with οὐδέπω emphasises the unexpectedness of this separation while the inclusion of μόνος suggests that what they did have before the apostles came was incomplete.²² In other words Luke is not only saying that such a separation is exceptional but also that the reception of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for genuine discipleship. This last point, I will now argue, is also the main thrust of the two unusual incidents that took place at Ephesus.

Irregularities at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-10)

198 The main passages to which Käsemann appeals in arguing that Luke's understanding of baptism is basically sacramental are Acts 18:24-28 and Acts 19:1-10. He maintains that Luke includes these two stories to show that disciples outside of the fellowship of the apostolic circle were an anomaly which had to be corrected. He describes the living context of these passages as 'the reception of ecclesiastical outsiders into the *una sancta catholica*'.²³ They betray Luke as a representative of 'early catholicism'.

With Käsemann we agree that Luke intended these stories to be taken together and we offer the following evidence for this.²⁴ (a) Luke places the two stories side by side and chronologically and geographically connects them; (b) both Apollos and the Ephesian disciples are, in some way, dependent on John the Baptist's ministry (18:25b; 19:3); (c) both Apollos and the Ephesian disciples stand in the twilight era between Judaism and Christianity (note Luke's curious mixture of Christian and non-Christian nomenclature); (d) both stories relate how that which was missing in their Christian faith is supplied; (e) both stories emphasise that there existed disciples dependent neither on the twelve apostles' ministry nor that of Paul.²⁵ The question remains, however, as to what is the unifying theme of these two stories, or to put it in other words, what are they supposed to teach? We must examine them in turn to decide the answer.

²² Bruner, *op. cit.*, 178; Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Tübingen, 1963, 55.

²³ *Op. cit.*, 141.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 143. So also H. Preisker, 'Apollos und die Johannesjünger, Apg. 18:24 - 19:6', *ZNW*, 30, 1931, 301-304.

²⁵ On Käsemann's interpretation, Luke could have achieved more by omitting the stories. As they stand they acknowledge the existence of 'ecclesiastical outsiders'!

We can agree that Apollos is, in some way, an exception to the rule, for despite his fruitful ministry, 'he knew only the baptism of John' (18:25). Nevertheless, Luke describes him in such a way as to accord him the status of a Christian. He was 'well versed in the scriptures' (18:24), had been 'instructed in the way of the Lord' (18:25) *i.e.*, the Christian way,²⁶ 'taught accurately the things concerning Jesus' (18:25) and had the Holy Spirit (18:25). (The phrase ζέων τῷ πνεύματι, since it stands between two expressions which describe Apollos as a Christian, should be taken to mean Holy Spirit rather than human spirit.)²⁷ What then did he lack? In Kasemann's estimation the story teaches that 'Apollos was insufficiently informed only as far as the necessity and character of Christian baptism was concerned.'²⁸ He must therefore be 'incorporated into the apostolic fellowship'²⁹ by supplementary instruction from Aquila and Priscilla, the companions of Paul.³⁰ Luke does 'not dare to report the re-baptism . . . of the celebrated missionary',³¹ but he implies this by associating this story with that of the irregular Ephesian disciples who did need to be re-baptized.

In answer it may be said that we find here no evidence to show that Luke thought Apollos' baptism was invalid or that he believed Apollos had failed to teach correctly about Christian water baptism. The fact that there is no mention of re-baptism suggests that it was not even contemplated. In knowing only the baptism of John, Apollos stands in the same position as the original disciples of Jesus, whom Luke does not think needed to be re-baptized. The only possible clue as to what Apollos lacked may be hinted at in Luke's description of Apollos' ministry after his instruction. He is now said to have 'powerfully confuted the Jews in public, *showing by the scriptures* that the Christ was Jesus' (18:28; *cf.* 18:25). Could it be that Priscilla and Aquila introduced him to the messianic interpretation of certain key Old Testament passages which aided him in his ministry amongst Jews?

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²⁶ B. T. D. Smith, 'Apollos and the Twelve Disciples at Ephesus', *JTS*, 16, 1915, 242-243.

²⁷ Preisker, *op. cit.*, 103; Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 143; Dunn, *op. cit.*, 88; Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, 109.

²⁸ *Op. cit.*, 144. So also Bruner, *op. cit.*, 178.

²⁹ Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 147.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, 147.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, 147, so also Smith, *op. cit.*, 245.

³² The use of the term μαθηταί (VI) and the comment about their having 'believed' means that Luke considered them as Christians and not simply as followers of John the Baptist. So Käsemann *op. cit.*, 136; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Oxford, 1971, 553 *et. al.* Dunn, *op. cit.*, 84, notes that only here in the Lukan writings is the term μαθηταί used without a definite article. This he takes to mean: 'they are disciples but they do not yet belong to the disciples' (85).

The status of the 'disciples' at Ephesus is less ambiguous. They too lack something but their need is far greater than Apollos' for they lack the Holy Spirit. Paul's question is not: 'Did you receive Christian (water) baptism' but, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' (19:2). This is the crucial issue. Apollos had the Spirit and so there was no need for re-baptism, but these men had not received the Spirit. Thus they were baptized in water in the name of Jesus (19:5) and then they received the Holy Spirit (19:6). The connecting theme in the two stories can now be seen. It is the absolute necessity of possession of the Holy Spirit for genuine Christian discipleship.³³ On this point the need of both Apollos and the Ephesian disciples is determined. Apollos needs only fuller instruction, the Ephesian disciples need Christian baptism and the Holy Spirit.

It would seem then that neither Acts 8:24-25 nor Acts 18:24-28, 19:1-10 reveal a catholic sacramental view of water baptism nor a belief that all Christians need a second, post-conversion bestowal of the Spirit. Luke's one point in these stories is that the normal Christian life is one in which the Spirit is experientially known. This is the one true mark of the genuine disciple of Christ.

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Some other details

Several other details in Luke's treatment of baptism further substantiate the conclusions reached so far. For instance in Luke's writings water baptism is never mentioned by itself as the condition for being saved.³⁴ He only refers to it in connection with some other attitude, e.g. 'repentance' (Lk. 3:3; Acts 2:38), or act, e.g. 'calling on his name' (Acts 22:16).³⁵ Water baptism is never thought of as the sole prerequisite for acceptance with God in the same way as is repentance and faith (Lk. 5:20; 24:47; Acts 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38 etc.). With Schweizer we would agree that, "For Luke Baptism is simply a natural episode in what he regards as much more important, namely conversion".³⁶

The new convert, we are told, is baptized 'in (ἐν) the name of Jesus Christ' (Acts 10:48) or 'into (εἰς) the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5). The variation in prepositions is merely stylistic but the meaning of the formula 'in the name' demands comment. The expression is found in both Hebrew and Hellenistic traditions but with a 'fundamental likeness' in meaning.³⁷ The use of these words implies that in

³³ So Preisker, *op. cit.*, 304; Dunn, *op. cit.*, 89.

³⁴ Pace Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, 218 who holds that Luke teaches that the 'Baptism confers forgiveness and the Spirit'.

³⁶ *TDNT*, VI, 411.

³⁷ Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, 90-92.

baptism the believer is made over to Christ. The washing in water symbolises a break with the past and a determination to begin a new life as a disciple of Christ.

This Christocentric emphasis in Luke's theology of baptism implies what we might call an individualistic soteriology. The new believer becomes Christ's man or woman in baptism; there is no suggestion made that water baptism incorporates a person into a community known as a church.³⁸ If baptism for Luke symbolizes or demonstrates incorporation, it is not into 'the church' (however the word is defined), but into Christ, and Christ and the community are not confused by Luke.³⁹ Moreover, Luke never depicts baptism as taking place in a cultic or liturgical context (*cf.* Acts 5:12, 36; 10:44ff.; 6:15-33 etc.) It seems to be of no interest to him who does the baptizing in water. An otherwise unknown disciple baptizes Paul (9:8). In four places in which Paul is connected with the baptism of others Luke does not say who actually performed the deed.⁴⁰ Paul may have been the initiator in at least one case (*cf.* Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:14) or in all of them, but by his silence on the matter Luke shows that he is not interested in this question. Apparently any Christian could baptize. Thus baptism is not depicted as a formal act performed by an official ecclesiastical representative but rather as the spontaneous response to a profession of faith.

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In water baptism a man or a woman publicly confesses Jesus as Lord and Christ, either after having received the Spirit or in anticipation of receiving him. This baptism in water and the Spirit does not signify a breach with historic Israel. The disciples are not a new Jewish sect nor a 'third race' but Israel brought to life by the Spirit. This is confirmed by

³⁸ Time and time again it is said that Luke thinks that baptism incorporates the new believer into 'the Church'. So Dunn, *op. cit.*, 101; W. F. Flemington, *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, London, 1948, 49; H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament*, London, 1969, 47, *et. al.*

³⁹ So C. P. M. Jones, 'The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Lukan Writings', *Studies in the Gospels*, ed. D. E. Nineham, London, 1955, 127, says Luke leaves us with 'the impression that Christ is one thing and the Church is another'. Similarly, C. F. D. Moule, 'The Christology of Acts', *Studies in Luke — Acts*, 180. However, Acts 9:4 and parallels has been taken to imply such an identification. See J. A. T. Robinson, *The Body*, London, 1967, 58. A recent refutation of this line of reasoning is found in R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology with Emphasis in Pauline Anthropology*, Cambridge, 1976, 240ff.

⁴⁰ Lydia (16:14-15), the jailer (16:30-34), Crispus (18:8), the twelve Ephesian disciples (19:1-7). It is worth noting, at this point, that Luke does not depict baptism as an important part of Paul's missionary effort. It is never made the thrust of Paul's work. The emphasis always lies on preaching (*cf.* 1 Cor. 1:17). Here H. von Campenhausen's statement is interesting: 'The first missionaries were not seeking to found the churches but to proclaim Christ'. See *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, Stanford, 1969, 55.

the fact that Luke speaks of Jews, who have been baptized, as continuing to worship in the temple and synagogue and as continuing to practise circumcision.⁴¹

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

This discussion of baptism naturally prepares us for a consideration of Luke's understanding of Christian communal meals. Luke's account of the Last Supper, which Jesus celebrated with his disciples, just before his betrayal, is the briefest and most debated of our four records of this event (Lk. 22:14-20).⁴² The most difficult question that this passage raises is the textual one. Is the shorter or longer version the original? Recent studies⁴³ have favoured the longer recension on textual and linguistic grounds, but if Luke's theology is allowed as one criterion then the scales tip back in the other direction.⁴⁴ Outside this passage Luke himself does not describe Jesus' death as an atonement for sin, does not mention a Eucharist in which the death of Christ is symbolic, and makes no mention of the wine in connection with communion meals. He speaks only of 'a breaking of bread' (Lk. 24:35; Acts 2:42; cf. 2:46; 20:7, 11). These omissions are so significant that the present writer is inclined, on this basis, to favour the shorter text. It is not, however, a point on which certainty is possible.⁴⁵

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Turning to the statements about the breaking of bread we find Luke twice uses the phrase κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου (Lk. 24:35; Acts 2:42) and five times the verbal form κλᾶν ἄρτον (Lk. 24:30; Acts 2:46; 20:7, 11; 27:35). The question is, do these words refer to a Eucharist, an *agape* feast or an ordinary meal? The argument that they allude to a Eucharist is by far the most difficult interpretation but it is often advocated. Thus Goppelt tells us that in Acts this 'phrase has become a fixed designation

⁴¹ This point is argued at length by J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*, Minnesota, 1972, 41ff. On the use of water baptism in Judaism see Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.*, 1-31. That Judaism at the time of Jesus favoured the baptism of new converts shows that in itself water baptism was not a divisive activity.

⁴² Cf. Matt. 26:26, 29; Mk. 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

⁴³ So I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter, 1978, 799-801. Marshall gives an excellent summary of both points of view and lists the most important literature. He favours the longer text. In support he says that elsewhere Luke 'retains sacrificial ideas' and quotes Acts 20:28 (800). However, Acts 20:28 does not reflect Lukan theology but Pauline.

⁴⁴ The doctrinal criterion is given priority by W. E. Pilgrim, *The Death of Christ in Lukan Soterology*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1971, 167ff. Pilgrim strongly favours the shorter text because he maintains the longer text does not reflect Luke's theology.

⁴⁵ The doctrinal peculiarities in the longer text could be explained by arguing that the text is liturgical in character and as such is traditional and not Lukan.

in the Church's language for a sacramental meal' — a meal which 'culminated in the sacramental eating and drinking which the liturgical formula in 1 Cor. 11:23ff., the so-called words of institution, describes'.⁴⁶ That the expression 'the breaking of bread' carries this specific meaning is, however, most unlikely. Not only does Luke make no mention of the characteristic features of the Pauline Eucharist but also he uses the same expression for a shipboard meal with a group of pagan sailors (Acts 27:35)⁴⁷

Jeremias has however given this position some support. He argues that the four phrases in pairs in Acts 2:42 are all dependent on the participle προσκαρτεροῦντες, a word which can have cultic significance.⁴⁸ The four phrases, he says, recall the sequence of an early Christian service. First the teaching of the apostles, then table fellowship (an *agape* feast), then the Eucharist (here called 'the breaking of bread') and then prayers.⁴⁹ However, it is by no means certain that an early Christian service is being described here. As Haenchen has pointed out, the summaries in Acts 'attempt to depict the whole of the Christian's way of life, hence the activities paired with καί probably present detached and self-contained units'.⁵⁰ And, furthermore, there is no agreement as to what these four items refer to. Jeremias first determines their meaning mainly by appeal to post-New Testament liturgical practice,⁵¹ and then reads Acts 2:42 on the basis of this evidence. If, however, we consider these matters in terms of Luke's own writings, then other interpretations of them seem more likely. The apostles' teaching is normally given in public, often in the temple,⁵² while 'prayers' can refer to private devotions⁵³ or public petitions.⁵⁴ The meaning of the term κοινωνία is the most difficult to determine, as it is used only this once by Luke, but

⁴⁶ *Apostolic and Post Apostolic Times*, London, 1970, 45-46.

⁴⁷ Thus H. J. Cadbury and K. Lake, *Beginnings*, IV, 336 comment on Acts 27:35: 'It would be absurd to see in this passage any reference to the Eucharist'. So also F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, London, 1965, 517 and n. 59; Haenchen, *op. cit.*, 707. Nevertheless some have found in Acts 27:35 a reference to the Eucharist. See Haenchen, *ibid.*, 707, n. 3 who lists some who do, and especially J. Wanke, *Beobachtungen zum Eucharistieverständnis des Lukas auf Grund der lukanischen Mahlberichte*, Leipzig, 1973, 29.

⁴⁸ *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Oxford, 1966, 118.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, 191.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, 119.

⁵² Acts 4:2, 18; 5:21, 28; but 5:42 mentions both the temple and the home.

⁵³ Lk. 22:45; Acts 10:4, 31.

⁵⁴ Acts 1:14; 12:5.

of all the possible meanings⁵⁵ there is little that can be said in support for the view that it was a specific term for an *agape* feast. The word means to share in something or someone.⁵⁶ It seems most likely therefore, if we take into consideration the context in which the term is here used, that Luke is either alluding to the disciples common participation in the Spirit — a matter that dominates Acts 2,⁵⁷ or to the disciples concern to share what they have with their brethren in need (*cf.* Acts 4:32-37). We are thus left with 'the breaking of bread'. But as I have said, it is most unlikely that this refers to the Eucharist. Luke nowhere mentions anything that would approximate to the Pauline Eucharist with its allusions to the death of Christ and its symbolism surrounding the cup, and he can use the expression of an ordinary meal (27:35).

If we can find nothing to support the view that the expression 'the breaking of bread' is but another way to refer to the Eucharist, as described by Paul, then it is best, on the basis of Luke's overall usage, to see it as referring simply to an ordinary meal, the character of which was determined by the context. Here we remember, as Jeremias has stressed, that for 'the oriental every table fellowship is a guarantee of peace, of trust, of brotherhood. Table fellowship is a fellowship of life.'⁵⁸ Thus when the early disciples gathered together for a meal, it was a religious event by definition, but especially so as some of them recalled the meals they had had with the historic Jesus, and all of them experienced the reality of his Spirit with them then and there, an experience which filled them with exuberance and joy (2:46).⁵⁹

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⁵⁵ For an older list of possible meanings see R. Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, London, 1945, 109ff.

⁵⁶ Important discussions on the meaning of the word include A. R. George, *Communion with God in the New Testament*, London, 1953, 132ff. and J. M. McDermott, 'The Biblical Doctrine of Koinonia', *Bib. Zeit.*, 19, 1975, 219-233.

⁵⁷ So Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, London, 1975, 183.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, 203. Furthermore, it is important to note that in the Gospel Luke develops the theme of table fellowship with Jesus as a prefigurement of the eschatological banquet. So H. Flender, *St. Luke: Theologian, of Redemptive History*, London, 1967, 80ff.; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas*, Berlin, 1971, 290 and especially Wanke, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁵⁹ For a similar view see Bultmann, *op. cit.*, I, 58; J. Behm, *TDNT*, III, 729; Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 185. On the parallels with the Qumran communal meals see K. G. Kuhn, 'The Lord's Supper and the Communal Meal at Qumran', *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, (ed.) K. Stendahl, London, 1958, 65-93.

This interpretation raises the much debated matter as to whether or not there were two forms of Christian communal meals in the primitive Church.⁶⁰ But whatever answer is given to the question, it is obvious that the simplest and least cultic representation of such meals is found in the Lukan writings. This, we suggest, is no accident but rather reflects Luke's own understanding. The gathering together of the disciples for a common meal is nothing more than a fellowship meal in which their oneness with each other and their ever present Lord is affirmed.

(To be continued)

⁶⁰ H. Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper*, ET, Leiden, 1953, 332ff. argued that in Acts we find the earliest form of the Lord's Supper which was simply a fellowship meal continuing the disciples' table fellowship with Jesus and had as its motif not the death of Christ but the invisible presence of the exalted Lord. E. Lohmeyer, 'Vom urchristlichen Abendmahl', *Theol. Rund.*, 9, 1937, 168-227, 273-312; 10, 1938, 81-99, developed this thesis by linking the more complex Pauline form with Galilee and the less developed form seen in Acts with Jerusalem. More recently W. Marxsen, *The Lord's Supper as a Christological Problem*, Philadelphia, 1970, 26-27, has postulated a Palestinian type celebrating table fellowship with Jesus and a Hellenistic type based on the sacramental importance of the elements themselves. Several scholars have, however, denied that two forms of the Eucharist existed or maintained that the two forms simply reflect one original prototype. Significant in this last case is the essay by O. Cullmann, 'La signification de la Sainte-Cène dans le Christianisme primitif', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 1936, 1-22. His thesis is discussed and endorsed by A. J. B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, London 1960, 61ff.