

1 Pet. iv. 16; but it was, doubtless, henceforward the common name of the disciples of the Lord. A fresh interest gathers round it when it is recognized as neither self-assumed, nor given by enemies, but regarded by the disciples themselves as given to them under the divine direction.

ARTICLE VIII.

DOES THE PREFACE TO LUKE'S GOSPEL BELONG ALSO TO THE ACTS?

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THE following is the Preface to the Gospel of Luke :

Ἐπειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, ἔδοξε καὶ μοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσι ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

Quoniam quidem multi conati sunt ordinare narrationem quae in nobis completae sunt rerum, sicut tradiderunt nobis, qui ab initio ipsi viderunt et ministri fuerunt sermonis, visum est et mihi, assecuto omnia a principio diligenter, ex ordine tibi scribere, optime Theophile, ut cognoscas eorum verborum, de quibus eruditus es, veritatem. (Vulgate.)

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.”

Reading this preface with our question in mind, one notices,

1. That there is no express limitation confining the coming narrative to the life of Christ. Such a limitation would be very natural, if it were intended to write the Gospel only. The very language required may be found in the first verse of the Acts; and we might expect Luke to write, "It seemed good to me also to relate all that Jesus began both to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up." Such is not his statement. Even the name of Jesus is not found. This cannot be due to brevity, for the preface, though but a single sentence, is not concise, but somewhat ample in style. It is true that if we take it for granted that it belongs to the Gospel only, it is appropriate enough, but it is much more appropriate if not confined to that. It is hardly necessary to add that on this point no account should be made of the order of the books in the Canon. The matter should be viewed precisely as if the book of the Acts followed immediately after the Gospel of Luke with the intervention of no more than a few blank lines and a title. Doubtless Luke himself issued the two together after both had been written.

2. Some of the expressions in the preface foreshadow a longer period than is covered by the Gospel. The connected narrative (*διήγησις*) is to be (like that of "many"), "concerning those things which have become matters of full conviction among us." Theophilus is to know the certainty of the instructions he has received; and Luke is to write "in order," because he has made careful investigation of "all things from the beginning (*ἀνωθεν*)." The promise, then, is to go over all the facts embraced in the Christian faith, and to confirm all the usual instructions given to converts. Could this promise be fulfilled without saying even a word about the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost? Would one writing more than twenty years after that Pentecost, promise an account of all essential Christian facts, and yet not mean to say anything of those glorious years which were the crown and fulfilment of Christ's earthly life? Further, his prom-

ise is based on knowing "all things from the beginning." Does not this suggest that he will bring the history down from the beginning to about the time of writing? The moment we cease to take it for granted that this preface applies to the Gospel only, its expressions look towards a larger purpose. If there were no subsequent book by the same writer, we could, indeed, interpret these expressions in a narrower sense, or, with Meyer, in a philosophical sense, as indicating that the gospel-history is the sure foundation of Christianity. But is it not better to say that the writer of these large promises, after fulfilling a part, laid down his pen for a short time, and then took it up again and fulfilled the rest?

One thing seems, at first view, to oppose what we have now urged. Luke appears to disclaim the character of eye-witness, and to depend for his authority on those who were "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word"; and yet in the latter part of the Acts he writes as an eye-witness of the life of Paul. In regard to this, these points should be noted: (1) The largest part of the Acts is as dependent on the testimony of others as the Gospel. (2) Even the original portions — the nine chapters at the close, and a part of the sixteenth — are largely made up of the testimony of Paul, a "minister of the word." (3) It would seem to be pressing the language unduly to insist that nothing whatever should be added from personal observation. (4) If the preface were written beforehand — and it may well have been — the author may not have known precisely at what point his narrative would stop.

3. The introduction to the Acts harmonizes with the idea that the book is a continuation originally intended, and not an afterthought. The first two verses are as follows: *Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιήσαμην περὶ πάντων, ὃ Θεόφιλε, ὡν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντεῖλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὗς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη.*

We notice here the absence of any proper preface, like that which is prefixed to the Gospel. The introductory mat-

ter is simply a statement of the ground already gone over in the Gospel, followed by a re-statement (ver. 3-12), with additions, of the account of the parting words and the ascension, found in the closing verses of the Gospel. This is what we should expect if the Acts were Part II. of a continuous history. This impression is confirmed by the opening words, which refer to the Gospel as *τὸν πρῶτον λόγον*. The word *λόγος* itself favors this view somewhat, but is not decisive. Those who have not wholly forgotten their "Anabasis" will recall that in the opening sentence of each book after Book I., with a single exception, Xenophon gives a summary of the events gone over *ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν λόγῳ*. The *λόγος* referred to in the opening of the second book is Book I. In the other cases it means the narrative contained in all the preceding books; but in no case does it designate a work other than the Anabasis. So Herodotus in his second book (38) says of matters afterwards mentioned in Book III. *τὰ ἐγὼ ἐν ἄλλῳ λόγῳ ἐρέω*; and in referring (v. 86) to certain offerings of Croesus mentioned in Book I. 92, he says, *ὡς δεδήλωται μοι ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τῶν λόγων*. Here the usage is just like that of the Latin *liber*. There is the same usage in Greek later than New Testament times. We are not aware of any such usage in the New Testament or in the Greek of that period, unless this in the Acts be a case of it. We do not urge this. The whole phrase, however, *τὸν πρῶτον λόγον*, seems like the numbering of distinct portions of a work. If Luke had meant "In a former (or the former) work I gave an account" etc., we should expect *πρότερον* instead of *πρῶτον*. The distinction between these two words, often disregarded in later Greek (as with "first" and "former" in English), would be observed here because the difference is significant. *Ὁ πρῶτος* would be inappropriate to designate a separate work, unless it meant "the first" work the author ever wrote, a meaning here out of the question. Or we might have had, as leaving the question fully open, *ἄλλον*, or (as in Acts xiii. 35, Heb. v. 6) *ἕτερον*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who died B.C. 7, says (Ant. 1. 74),

in speaking of a book previously written, ἐν ἑτέρῳ δεδήλωται μοι λόγῳ. The entire impression seems to us to be that this second λόγος is not an independent διήγησις, but Part II. of the διήγησις promised in the preface.

4. It is generally agreed that Luke did actually write the Acts shortly after the Gospel. It is therefore very improbable that he did not have in mind doing so when he began the Gospel. Is it not, indeed, likely that his familiarity with the later events led him to follow back to its sources (παρακολουθεῖν) the whole history? Thus the Acts, while yet unwritten, would give rise to the Gospel. Alford thinks (Proleg. Luke, sec. iv.) that at least five years intervened between the publication of the Gospel and the Acts; and his principal reason is that the account of the ascension is much fuller in the latter, indicating access to additional information. But how long can we assume that it would take a historian to get new information? It might be five years or five days. A very diligent and careful investigator, like Luke, would be quite as likely to find it soon as late. We can see no good ground for questioning the common opinion that the Gospel was written but a short time before the Acts; say, during the two years of Paul's first imprisonment. If this is so, the preface can hardly be divorced from the Acts.

If the question before us were as to the time of the composition of the Gospel we should reverse this argument, and infer from the preface that the Gospel was written but a very short time before the Acts.

Our general conclusion, then, is that the preface to the Gospel is not such a one as would be written after both works were completed, but that it was written with both in mind. Whatever may have been the interval of publication, the whole work might be entitled, The history of the establishment of the Christian faith. — Vol. I. The life of Jesus; Vol. II. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and the founding of the church.