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A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php

John Wenham

The Identification of Luke

John Wenham is one of the founding fathers of the contemporary scholarly movement in evangelicalism with a distinguished list of publications to his credit. Many of us know him as the author of that excellent primer, The Elements of New Testament Greek, and of his remarkable piece of 'detective work' in Easter Enigma. The same detective spirit emerges in this essay on the possible identification of Luke which is an offshoot from his new book on Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke.

It is one of the curious (and even tragic) phenomena of the world of biblical scholarship that it is possible for a clever man to give his whole life to the study of the gospels and to finish up with a quite hazy notion of Jesus. Unlike the world of the sciences, which is always gaining new knowledge, biblical scholarship in spite of its supposedly scientific methods seems to come to no agreed conclusions, except in quite peripheral matters. The members of the Synoptic Problem Seminar of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, for instance, after twelve years work had sadly to confess that they were agreed about nothing. Disagreement is partly due to the difficult philosophical problems posed by narratives which relate supernatural happenings. To some they seem self-evidently legendary, to others they seem an essential part of the honest testimony. Conservative scholars make a profound mistake if they pretend to be philosophically neutral and only value arguments which are acceptable to the radicals, for in this way they whittle away their own historical basis. Those who believe in the general soundness of the gospels as history, and even more those who subscribe to the infallibility of scripture, should find themselves on solid ground and able sometimes to make progress just as historians do in other fields.

My book entitled *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem* is shortly to appear. In it I come to the conclusion that the synoptics were all in existence by AD 55 at a time when there were thousands of adult witnesses of Jesus still alive. (This justifies a careful use of harmonistic exegesis, since the individual evangelist may well be aware of much which

he himself does not record). Furthermore, I find the patristic testimony to gospel authorship basically sound. In the case of Luke I am sure that he is the companion of Paul and also the brother of 2 Cor. 8:18 whose praise in the gospel is throughout the churches.

There are four other less well supported patristic notions which seemed to me well worth exploring: (a) that Luke was one of the Seventy,¹ (b) that he was the unnamed disciple of Emmaus, (c) that he was Lucius of Cyrene and one of the Cyrenians who evangelised the Gentiles of Antioch, (d) that he was Paul's kinsman. There seems a good case for believing all four. To some extent they interlock, and if they are in fact sound we have a valuable and impressive addition to our knowledge of Luke. To press this case on those who doubt the existence of the Seventy or distrust Luke's post-resurrection narratives or consider Acts as of little historical value might be counter-productive, since it is quite difficult to bring oneself even to look at arguments against which one is deeply prejudiced. But conservatives can look at the arguments with an open mind. Two of the traditions concern Luke's gospel and two concern Acts and the epistles, but I propose that they should be seen as parts of a single argument which dovetail into one another.

Luke's Sources

The attempts to identify the supposed sources of the material in Luke-Acts have been singularly unsuccessful. It is of course fairly easy to divide up the gospel sources mechanically into Mark, Q and L, but the existence of source-documents Q and L is dubious; and it would be impossible to identify Mark as a source if we did not already possess it for the purpose of comparison (and even then it is questionable!). Everywhere (except perhaps in the infancy narratives) Luke has completely made the material his own.

When it comes to Acts (to quote Hemer) 'the source question . . . is notoriously difficult.' 'It is widely agreed, on any view of authorship, that Luke has made his material his own . . . The classic work of J. Dupont shows the difficulty clearly . . . He concludes with a pessimistic impression: "Despite the most careful and detailed research, it has not been possible to define any of the sources used by the author of Acts in a way which will

¹ I shall use the term 'Seventy' for convenience, though aware that many prefer the reading 'Seventy-two'.

meet with widespread agreement among the critics” (*Sources* 166) . . . The information is not only reported in his own style, in its very substance it generally reflects his personality. *Everything is done as if Luke were at the origin not only of the edited version, but even of the sources on which that version is based.*’ (Italics mine)² The hypothesis, which I present for the consideration of Christian scholars, is that Luke’s source is for the most part his own recollections: he was present for the Galilean ministry, for the mission of the Seventy, for the crucifixion, for the Emmaus encounter, for the establishing of the Antioch church and for much of Paul’s journeyings. In other words he had *literally* ‘followed all things from a long time back’ (Lk. 1:3) and the account is firsthand. If this is true of the mission of the Seventy, it accounts for the Jewish features of his work, it accounts for his special knowledge of the passion and resurrection, the early days of the Jerusalem church and the founding of the church in Antioch. This is intelligent speculation which can be neither proved nor disproved, but has (we hope to show) more to be said in its favour than against it. It has power to unify a number of disparate facts.

One of the Seventy?

There is a tradition, widely held but not traceable earlier than the late third century, that Luke was one of the Seventy. This is found in Adamantius, an anti-Gnostic writer believed to have died c.300, writing probably in Asia Minor or Syria, and in Epiphanius, a native of Palestine writing in the fourth century.³ That there was no generally known tradition to this effect in the early centuries is shown by Eusebius’ account of the Seventy. Although Eusebius was widely read in the literature of the early church, he says that ‘no list of the Seventy is anywhere extant.’⁴ He then produces a meagre (and dubious) collection of those ‘said’ to belong: Barnabas, Sosthenes (ruler of the synagogue in Corinth), Cephas (whom Paul withstood at Antioch, but who was not an apostle), Matthias and Thaddaeus (emissary to King Abgar); but no Luke.

There is one consideration which tells in favour of the tradition. Luke regards the mission of the Twelve as an important part of

² C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989) 206, 167, quoting J. Dupont, *The Sources of Acts. The Present Position ET* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964) from *Les sources du livre des Actes. État de la question* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960).

³ Adamantius, *Dial.*, ed. Bakhuyzen, p. 101.14; Epiphanius, *Haer.* 51.11.

⁴ Eusebius, *HE* 1.12.1.

Jesus' campaign. 'He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases . . . And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere . . . On their return the apostles told him what they had done.' After this Luke tells of the vast crowd of hungry people who came to hear Jesus and to seek his healing. This mission of the Twelve to the villages of Galilee, which is recorded by all three synoptists, is dealt with by Luke in just seven verses (9:1–6, 10). But when he comes in the next chapter to recount the mission of the Seventy, which is not even mentioned by Matthew and Mark and which takes place as Jesus makes his way towards Jerusalem, he not only devotes seventeen verses to it, but he immediately subjoins a further seven verses concerning things which happened on their return. He records the subjective feelings of the missionaries who 'returned with joy', he tells of Jesus' own exultation in the Holy Spirit, and finally he recounts how Jesus turned to the disciples and spoke to them privately (10:1–24).

Unlike the Twelve, the Seventy, as far as we know and as the vagueness of Eusebius seems to suggest, had no position of importance in the post-resurrection church. Why then is so much space devoted to them, and whence come these intimate details concerning their reactions and those of Jesus? The most convincing suggestion known to me is that Luke includes their mission in his story because he himself was one of them, and because he wishes to fill a large gap in Mark's story with material of his own recollection—which we find in his central section. It reads like the account of one closely in touch with the facts. We could postulate some other, unknown member of the Seventy as the source of the account, but why invent an unnecessary entity?

Of course many modern scholars deny altogether the historicity of the mission. Fitzmyer, for instance, says:

Since none of the other Gospels knows of a separate sending out of 'other' disciples than the Twelve and since what is addressed here to the 'others' is already found in part in the charge to the Twelve in Matthew, Luke has clearly created this literary 'doublet' from the 'Q' material that is parallel to Mark 6:6b–13 . . . Luke's reason for this 'doublet' seems to be that the 'mission' will not be restricted to the Twelve; 'others' will share in the testimony.⁵

P. Hoffmann's view, as given by I. H. Marshall, puts the matter more sharply:

⁵ J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV* (Anchor Bible, 1981) 843f.

Luke simply invented the second mission in order to deal with the tension between the call of the Twelve by Jesus and the existence of a larger body of evangelists in the church.⁶

But the assertion that the story of the mission was 'clearly created' or 'simply invented' is gratuitous and unconvincing.

It is gratuitous since the fact that none of the other gospels record an event could as well be a reason for its inclusion as an argument for its invention. Must all Luke's L-material be regarded as unhistorical on these grounds? The fact that the mission charge to the Seventy has a great deal in common with that to the Twelve is surely as much an argument for historicity as for invention. Would not two such missions have required similar directives? The theory is unconvincing since, if the story was known to have been invented by this new author, it would have had no power to achieve its aim. If its invention was not known yet the story came to be believed in spite of its novelty, it would have been an inefficient instrument, at best able to achieve its objective only in the long term. Marshall tries to retain some measure of historicity by suggesting that the mission sayings in Q were addressed to a wider group than merely the Twelve and that Luke combined these with sayings from Mark's mission of the Twelve and by means of 'strong' editing gave them their present framework. But there appears to be no reason why Luke should not be reporting things that actually happened.

Gentile, Proselyte or Hellenistic Jew?

The notion that Luke was one of the Seventy would be laid to rest at once, if it could be shown that Luke was a Gentile. It is true that Jesus took an interest in individual non-Jews (e.g. the Syrophenician woman, Samaritans, Greeks), but there was clearly no mission to the Gentiles until long after Pentecost, and it is unthinkable that an uncircumcised Gentile should be a herald of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during the ministry of Jesus. The fathers appear to have been of two opinions: Luke was either a Jew or a proselyte. N. Lardner, whose famous work *The Credibility of the Gospel History* (14 vols., 1727–57) proved a mine of information to generations of scholars about the views of the fathers, said: 'None of the writers out of whom we have made collections, call him a Gentile. Some in Jerom's (sic) time, whose names we do not know, said, Luke had

⁶ I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 413 referring to P. Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (Münster, 1972) 251 n. 62.

been a Jewish proselyte . . . none that I remember, expressly say that he was converted from Gentilism to Christianity . . . [except Nicephorus Callistus of the fourteenth century]. All our writers, who speak of Luke as a companion and disciple of apostles, must have supposed him to be a Jew.' In fact Jerome says not 'some' but 'most writers teach that Luke the evangelist, as *being a proselyte*, was ignorant of the Hebrew language.'⁷

The belief that Luke was a Gentile stems almost entirely from the reference in Colossians 4,⁸ where three of Paul's companions—Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus—are said to be 'the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers' (vs. 11). After this three other companions are mentioned—Epaphras, Luke and Demas. Does this not mean that the first three are Jews and the other three Gentiles?

A steady stream of scholars, fully aware of the passage, have affirmed the contrary. Lardner, writing in the 18th century, said that 'many learned and judicious moderns',⁹ including Basnage and Fabricius (and the writer himself) believed Luke to be a Jew. A. Plummer, writing in 1896, refers to Hoffmann, Tiele and Wittichen¹⁰ as holding the same opinion. E. E. Ellis, writing in 1966, backs his own belief by detailed references to distinguished scholars who have expressed the same view in this century: W. F. Albright, C. F. Burney, B. S. Easton, A. H. McNeile, B. Reicke, A. Schlatter, E. C. Selwyn.¹¹

There is no doubt that Luke's gospel, in spite of its prologue in polished literary Greek, has an unusually Hebraic tinge to much of its contents. N. Turner (rightly or wrongly) speaks of 'Jewish Greek' as Luke's 'natural speech'.¹² Luke's Hebraisms have long

⁷ N. Lardner, *Works* (London: Hamilton, 1815) III.193; Jerome, *Liber Hebraicarum Quaestionum in Genesim*, ch. 46.

⁸ I assume the Pauline authorship of Colossians. The case is stated in D. Guthrie *INT: Pauline Epistles 167–171*. In a useful review of M. Kiley, *Colossians as Pseudepigraphy* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986) C. E. Arnold has pointed out that in this work 'there was a conspicuous absence of reference to the works of quite a number of scholars who hold to the Pauline authorship of Colossians, viz. P. T. O'Brien, R. P. Martin, W. G. Kümmel, M. Dibelius, and E. Lohmeyer'. (*EQ* 60 (1988) 71)

⁹ N. Lardner, *Works* III (1815) 194.

¹⁰ A. Plummer, *Gospel according to St. Luke* (ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 4th ed. 1901) xix.

¹¹ E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (New Century Bible, New Jersey: Nelson) 52. Also his 'Luke, Saint' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This list could be extended. See further A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (London: Hodder, ET 1927) 438.

¹² N. Turner, 'The Quality of the Greek of Luke—Acts' in ed. J. K. Elliott, *Studies in New Testament Language and Text* (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 400.

been recognised and the more obvious examples are listed in J. M. Creed's *The Gospel According to St. Luke*.¹³ He says: 'the Hebraic colouring is more pronounced than in any other book of the New Testament.' Then he goes on to say: 'Yet there is no reason to suspect that Luke knew Hebrew. He never goes behind the LXX to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. The Hebraic influence is mediated by the LXX. It is of high significance that the most literary and most Greek of the writers of the New Testament is the writer to show most strongly the influence of the Hebraistic LXX. A genuine and native Hellene is drawing into himself the spirit and style of the Greek-Hebrew Bible.'

But there is something rather implausible about such a sustained archaising kept up throughout a twenty-four chapter scroll, and the Qumran discoveries put the matter in a somewhat different light. W. F. Albright, coming to these discoveries as a Semitist, pointed out that 'they have demonstrated that Hebrew influence was probably greater in general than Aramaic, since Hebrew was then the prevailing language of Jewish religious composition,' and then went on to say, 'Luke's Greek is relatively literary, yet Hebrew-Aramaic influence is in some ways clearer in his Gospel than elsewhere.'¹⁴ R. L. Lindsey had the remarkable experience, when engaged in the translation of the gospels into modern Hebrew, of finding 'that the Lukan text was almost easier to translate to idiomatic Hebrew than was Mark.'¹⁵ This suggests that either the original drafts of Luke's gospel, or the gospel's sources (as J. Carmignac argues¹⁶), were in Hebrew. (Such a suggestion of course raises tremendous issues regarding the supposed dependence of the Greek Luke on the Greek Mark, but I argue in my forthcoming book that the verbal forms of the three synoptists are largely independent of one another.) It is conceivable that Luke was a Gentile and that his source material came to him in Hebraic Greek and that, despite his command of literary Greek, he resisted the temptation to polish it up, thus acting the part of editor, rather than author. But it would be easier to believe that

¹³ London: Macmillan, 1930 lxxixff. The quotations which follow come from p. lxxviii.

¹⁴ W. F. Albright, *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (London: Black, 1965) 37.

¹⁵ R. L. Lindsey, *Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (Jerusalem: Dugith, c. 1970) 12.

¹⁶ J. Carmignac, *La naissance des Évangiles Synoptiques* (Paris: OEIL, 1984) 14. J. de Waard similarly says with regard to Acts, 'Luke could have used a Hebrew vorlage'. (*A Comparative Study of the Old Testament Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament*, Leiden: Brill, 1965, 79).

the author of this masterpiece was entirely at home with his material and that the gospel was truly his. In other words, he had known the scriptures in Hebrew and Greek from childhood and it was natural for him to record their fulfilment in Jesus in a Hebraic idiom. Maybe he was to some extent conscious that he had been commissioned by God to pen scriptures of the New Covenant. It is easier to see a Jew doing this than a Gentile. Further, it is doubtful whether there is any significance in the fact that he adheres to the Septuagint without recourse to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Even if he knew Hebrew, he had not been trained as a rabbi like Paul, but as a doctor. His first language was presumably Greek and this was the language in which he would have been content to operate and Septuagintal Greek was the language in which his readers would have known the Old Testament.

The Interpretation of Colossians 4

But does Colossians 4 really settle the issue for those who believe that the Luke there mentioned is author of the gospel? The passage is somewhat obscure:

Ἀσκάπεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸν Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς δέξασθε αὐτόν), καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουστός, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία. (4:19, 11)

Let us list some of the obscurities:

(1) *The phrase οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς is ambiguous.* There are five other instances of its use in the New Testament:

(a) *Romans 4:12* where the term is used literally: 'those who are circumcised', i.e. Jews in contrast to the uncircumcised heathen; Abraham is said to be the father of those 'who are not merely circumcised but also follow the example' of Abraham's faith.

(b) *Galatians 2:12* where it is used of a particular type of Jewish Christian who insisted on the necessity of circumcision and on the importance of keeping the traditional rules concerning table-fellowship. Paul was displeased with Peter, who 'before certain men came from James, used to eat with the Gentiles' and then later 'separated himself, fearing τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.' Acts 15:1 makes clear that circumcision was a burning issue in Antioch at about this time when 'some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."' This caused Paul

and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem, and while there 'some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up, and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."' The ensuing apostolic council agreed that the Gentiles were not to be bound by the Jewish laws, but they were to refrain from the practices which would have made fellowship with Jewish Christians particularly difficult. Presumably this implied that Jewish Christians for their part were to have no qualms about eating with Gentile Christians. Although Paul and the leaders of the Jerusalem church were agreed that this policy had been taught them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28), its practical implementation was nonetheless difficult and it is unlikely that the one conference entirely stilled the misgivings of those who had objected to Paul's practices. The upshot appears to have been twofold: some of the Jewish-born Christians, while accepting the apostolic doctrine, remained recognisably law-keepers and worked happily with Paul. Others eventually repudiated the Jerusalem agreement and became his fierce opponents—the Judaisers who later dogged his steps, the 'concision', the 'dogs', about whom Paul is so fierce in Philippians 3:2.

(c) *Acts 11:1, 2* shows that the problem of Jewish Christians who insisted on circumcision was simmering at an earlier stage: 'Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς criticized him.' All the apostles and all the brethren of the Jerusalem church were Jews, but the criticism evidently comes from a particular group, rendered by RSV as 'the circumcision party.' F. J. Foakes Jackson commenting on the passage says 'from the first there may have been two parties in the infant church, those who were strict observers both of Law and Tradition, and those who copied Jesus Himself by "eating and drinking with publicans and sinners."' 'Party' is probably too strong a word, but it is intrinsically probable that many Jews would have found it difficult to accept Paul's view that their life-long beliefs concerning the need for ritual separation from Gentiles should be abandoned. Paul himself did not object to Christians behaving as Jews in order to win Jews (1 Cor. 9:20) and he even took the half-Jew Timothy 'and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places.' (Acts 16:3) But to him it was an inviolable principle that circumcision must on no account be regarded as a *condition of salvation*, for to do so would be to 'submit again to a yoke of slavery' and to bind oneself

¹⁷ F. J. Foakes Jackson, *Peter, Prince of the Apostles* (London: Hodder, 1927) 85.

to the keeping of the whole law. (Gal. 5:1-3) However, it seems to have been normal for a Palestinian Jew to continue to practise his traditional religion, as witness James the Just, whose righteousness seems to have been universally recognised when he was head of the Jerusalem church. (Eus. *HE* 2:23) So, here again, 'those of the circumcision' may well refer to Jewish Christians who followed a strict interpretation of the Jewish law.

(d) *Acts 10:45* Luke's knowledge of this conservative element may also have coloured the wording here. 'οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς who were amazed' probably just means the Jewish Christians who went with Peter to Cornelius' house, since there is no reason to think that the Jews from Joppa were particularly strict, seeing Peter stayed for many days with Simon the tanner, who practised a trade which was unclean according to Pharisaic ideas. But there is a continuity between chapters 10 and 11. The conversion of Gentiles which amazed οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοί in *Acts 10:45* was to lead to criticism by οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς in 11:2, in both cases probably strict law-keeping Jewish Christians.

(e) *Titus 1:10* Titus is warned of 'insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers . . . upsetting whole families by teaching for base gain what they have no right to teach,' who, he says, are μάλιστα οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς. It is not obvious that this is a general warning against Jewish Christians. RSV may be paraphrasing correctly when it calls them 'the circumcision party.'³ It could be a warning against a particular group of Jewish Christians whose insistence on circumcision threatened the unity of the church. E. E. Ellis¹⁸ in discussing *Colossians 4:11* brings out, what has become increasingly clear in studies of first century Judaism, that Judaism (then as now) was not at all homogeneous, and that its complexities were carried over into the church. He argues that Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus Justus were Jewish Christians of the stricter type, whereas Luke was a not-so-strict Hellenistic Jew. He sees some difficulty in putting Mark in this strict category and is inclined to think that he is possibly not the same Mark as the one who wrote the gospel. But Mark the evangelist may well have come of a strict group. His parents, whose home became the headquarters of the Jerusalem church (and may have been put at Jesus' disposal for the last supper),¹⁹ were evidently devout Jews. His upbringing probably followed the strict standards of Jerusalem orthodoxy and one may speculate that unease over Paul's

¹⁸ '“Those of the Circumcision” and the Early Christian Mission,' *Studia Evangelica* IV (Berlin 1968) 390-99. See also Ellis, *Gospel of Luke*,² 1974.

¹⁹ See J. W. Wenham, *Easter Enigma* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984) 47f.

radicalism might have lain behind his return to Jerusalem in the middle of the first missionary journey. N. T. Wright considers that Ellis' view merits serious consideration, and suggests a compromise between the notion of a circumcision party of which Paul strenuously disapproved and a circumcision party who were uniquely faithful to him. Rather they may have been 'people of a particular background: having belonged to a branch of Christianity more concerned that Paul with observing the Jewish law, they were by now happy to proclaim God's sovereign rule alongside Paul with his different emphases, and as such "they have proved a comfort to me."²⁰

So then 'those of the circumcision' is used of (a) Jews; (b) Jewish Christians who before the Council of Jerusalem thought circumcision necessary to salvation; (c) Jewish Christians who accepted the decrees of the council, but continued to keep the law strictly themselves; (d) the Judaisers who opposed Paul. One thing is clear: it cannot be just assumed that οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς in Colossians 4:11 is synonymous with Christians of Jewish birth, it could apply to the stricter group among them.

(2) *We don't know the circumstances lying behind Paul's words.* To begin with we don't even know where the epistle was written. The traditional view is that it was sent from Rome during the period of Paul's imprisonment as described in Acts 28. But this is far from certain, as J. A. T. Robinson and others have shown. Caesarea is a live option and the Ephesian possibility is not dead.²¹ What does seem probable from his use of the aorist ἐγενήθησαν (as B. Reicke maintained) is that the words were evoked by some recent happening during which the three men had been a comfort to him. He is not referring to the permanent and exclusive value of their presence.

But what was the trouble about? Reicke envisages a trial in Caesarea at which these three men, 'though Jews', had stood loyally by Paul, Luke not having been there at the time. J. B. Lightfoot, on the other hand, pictured a very difficult relationship between Paul and the Jewish Christians of Rome. His epistle had been intended to disarm opposition, but some time after he had arrived in the city, he met the determined and virulent antagonism

²⁰ N. T. Wright, *Colossians* (Tyndale NT Comm., Leicester: IVP, 1986) 157.

²¹ For Caesarea, see J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating 60ff*; for Ephesus, N. T. Wright, *Colossians 34ff*. Hemer, *Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History 272*, considers it unlikely that Ephesus 'had the occasion or facility to hold a prisoner for long'.

²² B. Reicke, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: SPCK, 1965) 21.

of the Judaisers of whom he writes in Philippians 3. Lightfoot says that in this situation, 'of all the Jewish Christians in Rome the Apostle can name three only as remaining steadfast in the general desertion'.²³ When one thinks of the fame of the Roman church throughout the world, and of the great number of friends there whom Paul greeted, and of the evident strength of the Jewish element in the church, which are shown to us in his epistle of a few years earlier, this scale of desertion seems most improbable, and Lightfoot himself had to qualify his statement when he came to write his commentary on Colossians. He says at 4:11: 'The words however must not be closely pressed, as if absolutely no Jewish Christian besides had remained friendly; they will only imply that among the more prominent members of the body the Apostle can only name these three.'

This is an arbitrary interpretation and still remains improbable. For one thing we know of the presence of a particularly fine worker whom he has not mentioned. Timothy, the co-author of the epistle, though only a half-Jew was circumcised at this time, and at Philippians 2:20–22 Paul says of him: 'I have no one like him . . . Timothy's work you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.' A wholesale desertion of Jewish Christians is unlikely.

(3) *We don't know whether μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ refers to three out of all the workers in the local church or three out of those engaged in a particular work.* If Luke was writing Acts in Rome at the time when Paul was writing Colossians, it may be significant that Paul chooses the same expression here as Luke uses in Acts 28:23, 31. ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is very common on the lips of Jesus in the gospels of Mark and Luke, but comparatively rare outside the gospels. The same expression may have been chosen because in fact preaching about the kingdom of God was characteristic of Paul's teaching at this time. Paul was confined to his house for two years and it was only there that he was able to work. But people came to him unhindered and he welcomed them all. Some of these visitors would have been Christians who came to assist in the witness (συνεργοί), some would have been enquirers and some doubtless were hostile. It could be that Paul had suffered acutely from

²³ J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1869, 2nd ed.) 17f. In Colossians itself we have what might be taken as echoes of the Judaising trouble: 'In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands' (2:11); 'Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised' (3:11).

Judaising visitors who had made a determined effort to disrupt his work and seduce his converts. If three of his συνεργοί, who were themselves ἐκ περιτομῆς, were particularly valiant in his defence, this would explain his gratitude. And it would have no bearing on the status of those from whom he sent greetings later in the letter. As far as Luke is concerned, it would mean that if he was ἐκ περιτομῆς (in whatever sense Paul meant that term) he was not one of those engaged in the work in Paul's house at the time of the unpleasantness.

Furthermore, it is not obvious that we should regard Epaphras, who comes in the same group as Luke, as a Gentile. We know that Epaphras was the first missionary to Colossae, for Paul speaks of 'the gospel which . . . is bearing fruit . . . from the day you heard and understood the grace of God in truth, as you learned it from Epaphras.' (1:5-7) He was apparently Paul's envoy to the cities of the Lycus Valley (including Laodicea and Hierapolis: 4:13). It was Paul's policy to go to the Jews first, so it seems unlikely that he would have chosen a Gentile for this important role.²⁴ C. F. D. Moule considers that in Colossae 'the majority of Christians addressed were Gentiles;' but this seems to be based mainly on a circular argument: Col. 4:12 shows Epaphras to be a Gentile, so 'one would expect' most of the church to be Gentile.²⁵ That some were Gentiles is shown as applicable to Jewish converts as it is to Gentile. The pressure of Jewish ideas is evident in the Colossian heresy, of which F. F. Bruce says, 'Basically the heresy was Jewish. This seems obvious from the part played in it by legal ordinances, circumcision, food regulations, new moon and other prescriptions of the Jewish calendar.'²⁶ N. T. Wright thinks that it is Judaism itself which is being proclaimed as the way to Christian completeness.²⁷ In any case there is no evidence that the church lacked the usual nucleus of Jewish converts, the natural firstfruits of evangelism in Paul's mission area.

²⁴ J. Jervell has argued that the church continued to be primarily Jewish right up to the end of Acts (and beyond). In Acts there is not a single Gentile Christian missionary. We have to go to Gal. 2:3 to find one: Titus. ('The Acts of the Apostles and the History of Early Christianity', *Studia Theologica* 37 (1983) 17-32.)

²⁵ C. F. D. Moule, *Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge UP, 1958) 29.

²⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Comm. on Epistles to Ephesians to the Colossians* (London: Marshall, 1957) 166. See also his *Colossians-Philemon-Ephesians* (NICNT, 1984) 17-26.

²⁷ N. T. Wright, *Colossians* 24.

The difficulty of seeing Epaphras fulfilling his role if he was a Gentile applies also to some extent to Luke himself. Before taking the half-Jew Timothy on his missionary journeys Paul takes the precaution of circumcising him (Acts 16:3). When Luke accompanies Paul to Jerusalem, it is the presence of the Gentile Trophimus that nearly causes the apostle's assassination (Acts 21:27-36); there is no hint of trouble over Luke. It is easier to see him acting as Paul's aide if he was a Jew by birth or a circumcised proselyte, than if he were a mere Gentile convert.

Thus the passage has many uncertainties of interpretation and we can summarise our conclusions in the words of R. P. Martin: It is 'doubtful . . . if we should conclude from this verse . . . that he was a Gentile Christian, as is popularly thought, mainly on the basis of this verse. There is considerable evidence to argue the case that he was a Hellenistic Jew.'²⁸ So we are free to entertain the possibility that Luke was one of the Seventy as far as Colossians 4 is concerned.

The Evidence of the Prologue

But many have understood the prologue to Luke's gospel to be asserting that Luke himself was not an eyewitness of the events he records. The common view is that the prologue speaks of three parties: (1) the original eyewitnesses of the things which were accomplished in the ministry of Jesus; (2) those who were not eyewitnesses but who had received their message from the original eyewitness; and (3) the author who had followed closely these and other reliable sources of information.

Let us look at the prologue as a whole. The text, which is in polished Greek, has all the appearance of a straightforward and positive intent;

Ἐπειδήπερ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, ἔδοξε

²⁸ R. P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church's Lord and the Christian's Liberty* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1972) 146.

²⁹ This point is made by W. C. van Unnik: 'He tried to explain himself quite clearly and give ἀσφάλεια—certainty, and yet [to the modern scholar] what he wrote bristles with uncertainties. Or is something amiss with this conclusion? . . . his words did not arouse the suspicion of ambiguity, for in contrast with the rest of his Gospel and Acts there are no textual variants of any importance' ('Once More St. Luke's Prologue', *Neotestamentica* 7.9.) This applies to deliberate alterations; the paucity of accidental alterations might be accounted for by the relative freshness of scribes when beginning a MS.

κάμοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

Its straightforwardness to its early readers may perhaps account for the tiny number of variant readings thrown up in the process of copying. Yet modern interpreters find the passage full of ambiguities. Does ἐπεχείρησαν indicate unsuccessful attempts to write, or is the word quite neutral with no disparagement implied? Does παρέδοσαν refer to oral traditions or to matter in writing (as in Acts 6:14) or to both? Does the second ἡμῖν imply a transmission by eyewitnesses to non-witnesses, or does it refer to instruction by apostolic teachers to the church in general? Does παρηκολουθηκότι mean having investigated, or having followed personally? Does καθεξῆς claim for the book chronological (or other) order, or merely an orderly, systematic arrangement? Is Θεόφιλε an individual name, or is its use a mode of address to each believing reader beloved of God? Such questions can be multiplied indefinitely. It is of course true that most individual words can have a wide range of meaning, and to those who do not know the precise situation and thought-processes of the author there may be a considerable number of possible overall interpretations.³⁰ This does not mean, however, either that the writer was intentionally ambiguous or that his words properly understood may not express quite clearly what he intended to say.

Cadbury's Views

Perhaps the most interesting way of examining this matter is by tracing the debate inaugurated by H. J. Cadbury. His standing as a scholar in this field is indicated by E. Haenchen's description of him as 'the doyen of Anglo-Saxon research on Acts'³¹ and by his dedication of his famous commentary to him. He was a major contributor to the great work edited by Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*. In volume 2, published in 1922, he wrote an appendix: 'Commentary on the Preface of Luke', which was characterised by a careful fresh enquiry into the lexicography of the words. Particular interest

³⁰ It is indeed W. C. van Unnik's complaint about Cadbury's treatment of the prologue (see next section) that he sticks too much to individual words and has not taken sufficiently into account the whole structure of the sentence (*Neotestamentica* 7.11).

³¹ E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Blackwell, E.T., 1971) 43.

centres on his treatment of παρακολουθῆω, which he also dealt with more fully in an article published later in the same year: 'The Knowledge Claimed in Luke's Preface' (*Expositor*, Dec. 1922). This article gives his definitive treatment of παρακολουθῆω, but his Commentary has a number of interesting observations.

In the commentary he makes three general points about the prologue. (1) In comparing the preface with other contemporary prefaces he detects a flavour of conventionality in what Luke wrote and considers that it should not be taken too seriously as a guide to an understanding of the work as a whole. (2) He argues that Luke-Acts was one work with a general and a secondary preface; and suggests that the former was possibly written after the second volume was completed and when its contents were particularly in mind. (3) Though it seems at first sight as though the author is excluding himself from the category of eyewitness, παρακολουθηκότι may mean precisely that he was one.

He makes four particular points about the expression οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου. (1) He compares οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται with the qualifications of the witnesses of the resurrection in Acts 1:21f. The twelfth apostle, who was to replace Judas, had to be one who had 'accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἧς ἀνελήμφθη.³² (The Johannine description of the eleven is even closer in verbal form: ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔστε (Jn. 15:27).) (2) He calls attention to the description of Mark in Acts 13:5 who is ὑπηρέτης to Paul and Barnabas in their proclaiming τὸν λόγον. (3) He shows the close connection between the αὐτόπται and the ὑπηρέται, linked by the one article οἱ and the one participle γενόμενοι, suggesting that they formed one group. He inclines (less convincingly) to apply the ἀπ' ἀρχῆς to both eyewitnesses and ministers. But (as the reference to Mark in Acts 13 shows and as Foakes Jackson suggested³³) it would be equally acceptable to take it as one group having two sections within it: from-the-beginning-eyewitnesses (the apostles) and ministers of the word (their assistants). (4) He maintains that the aorist γενόμενοι should not be pressed, as though indicating that the eyewitnesses were already

³² Jesus' ministry, beginning from the termination of John's baptism traced through to the resurrection appearances, is also the theme of Peter's address in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:34-43.

³³ F. J. F. Jackson, *Peter, Prince of the Apostles* 138 on Lk. 1:2: 'possibly . . . the Apostles . . . and their assistants'.

dead. (He might have gone further and seen it as redundant, as commonly in Hellenistic Greek.)³⁴

Once one has recognised that the-from-the-beginning-eyewitnesses are probably not eyewitnesses in general but the apostles, there is no reason to infer that 'the many' and the author were not eyewitnesses. The preface seems to be telling us that the apostles and their assistants have handed on an authoritative account of the gospel story with which all other accounts, whether of the author or 'the many' must accord, if they are to be believed. This surely is the force of *καθώς* or *καθ' ὅ*; it does not mean that the writers simply offered parrot-like repetition 'just as' (RSV) or 'exactly as' (JB) the earliest preachers taught, but that their work was congruous with that of the primary authorities. None of them would have been likely to compose books unless they had something fresh to add. Being an eyewitness would be an obvious qualification for attempting to draw up a trustworthy account. And, if Cadbury is right, this could be implied in what Luke is claiming. He does not claim to have been a witness *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, but he has followed everything (*πᾶσιν*) from a long time back (*ἄνωθεν*)³⁵ with close and careful attention (*ἀκριβῶς*) and so is in a position to write an orderly account (*καθεξῆς*) which Theophilus can regard as entirely trustworthy (*ἀσφάλειαν*). It is difficult to exaggerate the force of Luke's claim: it is tantamount to saying that his book is as trustworthy as the apostles' own teaching.

ΠΑΡΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΩ

But is Cadbury right about this crucial word? In the *Expositor* article he refers to some seventy-five passages and explores six possible meanings:

(a) To follow, literally . . . The author then speaks of himself as a

³⁴ See J. Palm, *Über Sprache und Stil des Diodoros von Sizilien* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1955) 176ff.

³⁵ The inseparable particle *-θεν* denotes *motion from*, so *ἄνωθεν* refers to a point in the past *from* which Luke began to follow the events he records. *ἄνωθεν* can of course mean 'from the beginning' too, but it seems best to infer a deliberate distinction from *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* both here and in Acts 26:4f. In the latter passage (*pace* Kümmel and Haenchen) there is a difference between the knowledge which the Jerusalem Jews had had of Paul's manner of life 'for a long time' while he was among them and the inferred knowledge that this way of life went back to 'the beginning'—to his upbringing and youth before he came to Jerusalem. In both passages Luke's terminology seems to reflect the different lengths of time. (See Kümmel, *INT* 127; Haenchen, *Comm.* ad loc.).

disciple or follower of the first Christians. This interpretation . . . seems to find little support in modern times.

(b) To follow with attention and understanding what is told or written; hence, in a sense, to read . . . its antecedent is the contents of earlier writings . . . This interpretation appears to have no advocates.

(c) To follow events through direct contemporary knowledge, especially as an eyewitness or participant.

(d) To follow a rule . . . or conform to a standard (as in 1 Timothy 4:6) . . .

(e) To ensue, result, occur afterwards or at the same time (Mk. 16:17) . . .

There is no support for another meaning often attributed to the verb:

(f) To examine into, investigate, to apply research. Perhaps the second meaning (b) given above comes the closest to it, but it is very doubtful if that is meant here. For in the hellenistic writers who use the word in discussing their works it invariably applies not to the writer but to the reader. [He so writes that the reader may be able to follow what is written.] At most it would mean only the intelligent and attentive understanding of what is read or told, not deliberate enquiry . . . If we were not aware of the longevity of untested exegetical tradition we should be surprised that a meaning so little supported should be so emphatically and universally accepted . . . we seem to be forced to adopt the third meaning (c) given above and to understand the writer is claiming first-hand contemporary knowledge . . . The perfect tense . . . implies that at that time through continuous contact (hence the metaphor of following) with the events . . . It has the true perfect sense of information as a result of earlier continuous association. In the same way ἄνωθεν must be understood, not of the early point in the history to which the author carried back, but rather of that early time in his own life at which his touch with events began . . . so much seems certain.³⁶

Cadbury's ideas had a mixed reception. G. Milligan, J. H. Ropes and others³⁷ accepted his position. A. T. Robertson³⁸ commended the study, but put in a plea for meaning (b). He considered Cadbury's sharp distinction between 'investigating' and 'intelligent

³⁶ The principal passages discussed by Cadbury in his refutation of the supposed meaning 'investigate' are: Arrian, *Epictetus* 1.6.13; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.10; Demosthenes, *De Corona* 53.172; P. Par. 46, 19; PSI 411. 3ff.; P. Lond. 23. 54ff. The principal passages indicating contemporary information: Philo, *De Decalogo* 88; Josephus, *Vita* 65; *Contra Apionem* 1.10.53; Lucian, *Symposium* 1; Demosthenes (as above).

³⁷ J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*: παρακολουθέω. J. H. Ropes, *JTS* 25.70: 'It is, in fact, hard to escape the force of the philological argument'. W. G. Kümmel, *INT* 127 refers to J. Dupont, A. D. Nock, E. Trocmé as favourable.

³⁸ A. T. Robertson, *Studies in the Text of the New Testament* (London: Hodder, 1926) 186ff.

and attentive understanding of what is read or told' to be unreal. He took him to task for suggesting that the perfect tense conveys the idea that Luke's information came to him as the events took place, whereas it in fact shows merely that he had the material in his possession before he began to write. (He seems here to be misunderstanding Cadbury. Cadbury's 'as the events took place' is derived from the meaning of the verb, not from the force of the tense: Luke had been *following* everything from a long time back; but this process was now over, so (perfect tense) 'the information *had* come to him.' Furthermore, this plea for meaning (b), 'to follow with attention and understanding what is read or told; hence in a sense, to read,' is hardly convincing. The author is evidently claiming through his following of all things to offer something more than his predecessors, something more than just reading the earlier διηγήσεις.) Robertson, however, like so many other translators, proceeds to argue from Luke's supposedly known use of Mark and Q and from his supposed use of other sources that Luke is describing a process of deliberate investigation.

But on the whole Cadbury's reception by both conservatives and radicals was unfavourable. He seems to have been particularly irked by N. B. Stonehouse, who devoted half a chapter of *The Witness of Luke to Christ*³⁹ to a refutation of his views. Stonehouse rejected the notion that the preface was 'largely conventional', 'more rhetorical than factual', believing rather that Luke 'was in dead earnest in establishing his qualifications to provide certainty.' He quotes at length from F. H. Colson who repudiates the idea that the claim to be an eyewitness had become a rhetorical commonplace among historians:

I fail to see what purpose a 'conventional' claim to eyewitnessship in what purports to be sober history can serve. If it ceases to insure credence, it has no *raison d'être*. If I am told that it had no purpose—that writer after writer inserted it because it was the fashion, as we begin letters by 'Dear'—then I think it is an unsupported libel on both the seriousness and the literary ability of the age.⁴⁰

He also quotes J. M. Creed who puts the same point more tersely:

An ancient writer would no more claim the authority of eyewitness without expecting his statement to be believed than a modern.⁴¹

³⁹ N. B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Luke to Christ* (London: Tyndale, 1951) 34–43.

⁴⁰ 'Notes on St. Luke's Preface', *JTS* 24 (1923) 309.

⁴¹ *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930) 4.

It was in response to Stonehouse's 'elaborate criticism' that Cadbury reaffirmed his own developed assurance in the matter in 1957, and that he further said:

Surely nothing would suit the conservative position about the author of Luke-Acts better than the discovery of his explicit claim in his early 'I' passage to have been an eyewitness . . . Yet so far as I know no conservative scholar has accepted the evidence I proffer. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes* may be their feeling . . . Nowhere however does Stonehouse bring forth any lexical evidence either in favour of his view that the verb means enquiry or against my view that it means observation or participation. In ignoring that well-attested meaning he has many predecessors and few exceptions. So continuous does a conventional critical view become when once it is promulgated.⁴²

In 1963 W. G. Kümmel entered the lists with a firm repudiation of Cadbury, declaring his translation

doubtless incorrect . . . One cannot participate in events 'accurately' . . . above all παρακολουθέω can by all means mean 'to investigate a thing' (see Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 624, and the examples cited there from Demosthenes; thus the *vetus Latina* also understood it: 'having investigated all things accurately from the beginning.')

Kümmel's line has been widely followed, particularly by conservatives, who like to emphasise the careful research which lies behind Luke's work. I. H. Marshall, for instance, says:

(Cadbury's) claim that the word *cannot* mean 'to investigate' is not compelling, and this is the better meaning here (cf. Arndt-Gingrich). Luke means that he has thoroughly investigated all the facts.⁴⁴

Similarly W. Hendriksen: 'I (Luke) have thoroughly investigated all essential matters'⁴⁵; and the New International Version: 'I have carefully investigated everything from the beginning.'

C. J. Hemer is much more cautious and comments on the suggestion that παρακολουθηκότι implies a personal eyewitness claim thus:

The idea is attractive and well grounded in the appeal to usage. But

⁴² Cadbury enunciated his views on παρακολουθέω four times. He followed his 1922 publications with *The Making of Luke-Acts* in 1927 and '“We” and “I” Passages in Luke-Acts', *NTS* 3 (1957). The quotation is from pp. 131f. of the latter.

⁴³ *INT* 127.

⁴⁴ *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 42.

⁴⁵ *The Gospel of Luke* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978) 54. So also N. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (London: Marshall, 1950) 53.

this view depends on too rigid an interpretation of the words and assumes that the preface to the first book focuses the reader's attention mainly on the writer's qualification to write the latter half of the second.⁴⁶

This latter point is indeed true. Underlying all that Cadbury says is the recognition that his interpretation of παρακολουθέω can be made to fit Acts quite well, but that it really does not fit what we know about the gospel—assuming, of course, that Luke was not a participant in the events of Jesus' ministry.

The most significant recent discussion is to be found in L. C. A. Alexander's still unpublished dissertation, *Luke-Acts in its Contemporary Setting*. This is a completely fresh exploration of the genre of the prologue, which comes to the important conclusion that it does not belong to the category of literary or historical prefaces, but rather in the 'scientific', academic, specialist, professional category. She holds, like Cadbury, that prefaces tend to formality and that Luke is 'drawn to clichés', as for instance in the use of ἀκριβῶς, which is 'something of a value-word, used not so much for any specific idea it conveyed as for the "aura" it imparted.' αὐτόπται is also seen 'as a value-word rather than as a precise term.' Just as Cadbury in attempting a translation of the preface gives a 'paraphrase, with all its imitated obscurity,' so Alexander thinks it best 'to accept the ambiguity and imprecision of Luke's expression.' 'Luke carries the normal obliquity of the scientific preface to extremes.'⁴⁷

In her treatment of παρακολουθέω she repudiates in turn the patristic view of physical accompaniment as a disciple, Cadbury's view of witnessing or participating in the events and Kümmel's view of investigating. She says that Cadbury's interpretation

can be discounted purely on semantic grounds, quite apart from the exegetical problems raised. In all the passages which Cadbury cites . . . the verb can be sufficiently understood . . . as a mental activity: 'being acquainted with the course of events' is an adequate translation.

But she supports Cadbury against Kümmel's argument that παρακολουθέω means 'investigate'. Although Bauer's *Lexicon* gives the meaning 'investigate'

the examples cited from Demosthenes do not support this interpretation

⁴⁶ *BJRL* 60 (1977) 33 n. 1.

⁴⁷ L. C. A. Alexander, *Luke-Acts in its Contemporary Setting*. Quotations are taken from pp. 22, 113, 114, 101 (twice), 85. H. J. Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts*, 347.

. . . The Vulgate *assecuto* provides little assistance either way, since the verb *assequi* has much the same range as παρακολουθεῖν.⁴⁸

What are we to make of this clash of scholarly opinion? To deal with the lexical side first: it is easy to be over-subtle in our distinctions between the various uses. The simple verb ἀκολουθέω contains no intrinsic notion of following behind someone. It just means 'go along with'. The addition of παρά 'beside' gives a slight extra emphasis to the continuing close association of the two parties.

We can confidently make the following positive assertions: (1) It can have the literal meaning of accompanying a person, e.g. as a disciple. Papias says, 'if ever any came who had followed the presbyters.' Eusebius comments that Papias 'has received the words of the apostles from their followers.'⁴⁹ The anti-Marcionite prologue says of Luke that he was a disciple of apostles and later 'followed Paul till his martyrdom.' The early commentators favoured this interpretation that took πᾶσιν to be masculine, meaning 'having followed all the eyewitnesses and ministers.' This does not seem a likely claim, seeing it is scarcely possible for one man to have accompanied so many, though it might be taken as hyperbolic: 'having had contacts with many eyewitnesses and ministers.'⁵⁰ (2) It can also be used literally of things, e.g. of signs accompanying preaching (Mk. 16:17). (3) Its most characteristic use, however, (as Alexander insists), is of mental activity, of following (i.e. letting the mind go along with) what is told or written or observed.

We can confidently make the following negative assertion: It does not mean 'investigate'. 'Investigate', 'enquire into', 'undertake research' belong to a different world of concepts from that of 'follow, go along with, understand'. The former would be represented by such words as ἐραυνάω, ζητέω, ἐξετάζω. Liddell-Scott-Jones gives no hint of this meaning for παρακολουθέω. The understanding might well be the *result* of investigation but 'investigate' is not its *meaning*. It would be over-literal, however, to insist that 'having followed *all* things' must imply such complete, contemporary knowledge that the author did not take

⁴⁸ pp. 109; 325 n. 76.

⁴⁹ Eusebius, *HIE* 3.39.4 and 7.

⁵⁰ It also necessitates taking ἀκριβῶς with καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, since one cannot accompany people accurately. This gives a clumsy form of words—one would expect καί linking the two adverbs if one wished to say that the writing was both accurate and orderly. J. W. Scott in a Ph.D dissertation for St Andrews University in 1986: *Luke's Preface and the Synoptic Problem* vigorously and learnedly defends the view that πᾶσιν refers to the apostles. He argues that there is no literary dependence of one synoptist upon another.

the trouble to refresh his memory or to fill the gaps in his information. But in itself παρακολουθέω says nothing about research or investigation.

On the question whether Cadbury is right to think that some element of literal participation is contained in the meaning of the word in the prologue, it is difficult to be certain. A literal use does not accord readily with ἀκριβῶς, which means properly 'accurately'.⁵¹ One does not physically follow accurately, but one may well do so mentally: to follow accurately mentally is to note accurately what is seen or heard at the time of seeing or hearing.

The passages on which Cadbury principally relies are in contexts where the mental and physical are closely associated. Lucian (*Symposium* 1) refers to one who brought a report about a quarrel who had not been there at the beginning, but only arrived late in the day when the conflict was almost over. 'So', he says, 'I marvel if he is able to say anything certain, not having followed those events.' Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.10.53) says: 'It is the duty of one who promises to present his readers with actual facts to obtain an exact knowledge of them himself, either παρακολουθηκότα [Thackeray: through having been in close touch with; Whiston: having been concerned in them himself], or by enquiry from those who knew them.' (Note here the contrast between the firsthand knowledge of παρακολουθέω and knowledge gained by enquiry.) At another point (*Life* 357) he speaks of the impudence of one who considered his narrative should be preferred to his own, 'When you neither knew what happened in Galilee—for you were then at Berytus with the king—nor followed all that the Romans endured or inflicted upon us at the siege of Jotapata; nor was it in your power to ascertain the part which I myself played in the siege.' Philo (*Decalogue* 88) says to the perjurer: 'will you dare accost any of your acquaintance and say, "Come, sir, and testify for me that you have seen and heard and been in touch throughout (ὡς παρακολουθηκῶς ἄσαιν) with thing which you did not see nor hear."' (Loeb translation)

It is a fine point as to whether (as Alexander believes) these uses, where the following with the mind was made possible through bodily participation in the events, can be taken as expressing mental activity only. It is certainly possible that something of the literal sense of participation may have spilled over into the figurative use. In any case Cadbury is right in sensing that Luke is make a great claim, piling up words to emphasise the entire reliability of what he writes: ἀσφάλεια,

⁵¹ Cf. Cadbury, *Making of Luke-Acts* 346: 'implies exact detail'.

ἐπιγινώσκω, καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται, all of which is possible because παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς.

But though it remains doubtful whether παρηκολουθηκότι ἀκριβῶς can be said to *mean* participation, it could well *imply* participation. For, if the mental activity of following everything from a point in the distant past is given its full natural weight and is not treated as merely conventional, it raises the question of how such would have been possible. To have followed the major part of what is recorded in Luke's gospel, when there were no newspapers, no radio, no television, would have required at least residence in Palestine with opportunities to hear full and regular reports of what Jesus was doing; and anyone as interested as this author, if he lived close at hand, could not but have gone to hear and watch him as well. But if the author lived a thousand miles away in Macedonia or even two or three hundred miles away at Antioch, his knowledge would have been far too fragmentary to warrant the description 'having followed everything'. Obviously the most complete way of following everything would be by participating, and this could well have been what Luke was referring to, even though participating is neither a necessary implication of παρακολουθέω nor a satisfactory translation of it. Van Unnik⁵² declares that it is one of the unusual features of Luke's preface that he does not tell the circumstances of the collecting of his material. But perhaps he does. Perhaps it is all said by παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν. Theophilus would have known the author's credentials and presumably to him the meaning would have been quite clear.

Thus, although the prologue is usually read as a denial of the author's status as an eyewitness, this is by no means necessarily so. He himself and the 'many' are not indeed of 'the-from-the-beginning-eyewitnesses', nor were they mere repeaters of what the apostles said. They wrote according to the norms given them by the apostles and their ὑπηρέται. How we are to conceive of them obtaining the extra material which justified them in their attempts to draw up their διηγήσεις depends very much on the date at which they wrote. Consider two scenarios, one which places the gospel in the post-80 era and one which places it in 62 or earlier, as argued by A. Harnack, Bo Reicke, J. Munck, J. A. T. Robinson and others.

If the gospel was written in the eighties (the date favoured by

⁵² *Neotestamentica* 7.8.

the greater number of scholars), there were few eyewitnesses left. There would have been a few septuagenarian (and older) Christians in Palestine who might have followed the events of Jesus' ministry in their teens or early adulthood. Outside Palestine such would have been rareties. So at this stage traditions about Jesus was coming mostly at second, third or later hand. The πολλοί who had been drawing up accounts of what had happened would presumably have been Papiases, diligent collectors of material which they believed to have come by trustworthy routes from the original eyewitnesses.

If, on the other hand, the gospel was written in the fifties or early sixties, the situation was that of 1 Corinthians 15. At that stage more than half the 500 brethren to whom Christ is said to have appeared after his resurrection were still alive. There was a well defined tradition from the apostles and their assistants and there were many around with precious memories to add to what was currently taught. Luke is claiming that he too has reliable information to contribute which accords entirely with the apostolic teaching, because, though not a witness ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, he had followed everything ἄνωθεν—from a long time back.

Corresponding to these two dates are two ways of taking the preface as a whole. It is undoubtedly possible to take it as a conventional statement, the words of which are not intended to be taken with any precision, yielding the sense merely of 'being acquainted with the course of events.' Cadbury himself went some way in this direction in saying that prefaces were 'liable to exaggeration' and that he himself was quite prepared to take Luke's claim 'with a grain of salt'. Nonetheless, though this is possible, it seems to devalue the great polysyllabic word which the author has chosen to express his meaning.

It is possible, on the other hand, to accept Luke's claim in all seriousness as Stonehouse does, and to believe that his amassing of words expressing dependability was intended to be taken at its face value. It is true that Luke's preface conforms more closely to the style of scientific and academic prefaces than to historical and literary ones and that such prefaces tended to be somewhat conventional in character; but the fact is that the gospel genre is like nothing else in the world, and our gospel preface is not very like any other known preface, as Alexander's assembly of texts shows. The gospel is a work of enormous moral energy, extolling the highest qualities of integrity, and it seems best to assume the preface to be written in the same spirit. Luke (although he is speaking with weight and solemnity) is saying quite straightforwardly what he means to say: he had followed all the events

from a point a long time past and was in a position to write with accuracy and authority.

Of course Cadbury himself was not prepared to go this far, and it may be due partly to his inconsistencies that, for all his lexicographical brilliance and thoroughness, his work has failed to gain the consent of the scholarly world. It needs to be remembered that (a) the whole debate was conducted on the basis of Luke-Acts being a single work. Although this has been widely accepted as an almost indubitable fact, in reality it is an entirely open question as to whether the two rolls were published together or at an interval. As I argue in my book, there is good evidence in favour of the latter. And (b) it was conducted on the assumption that the claim to contemporaneity in the preface to the first volume applied only to the latter half of the second. Yet it seems a trifle unfair to a deceased author to assume that his preface does not refer to the work to which it is attached. It is possible that Cadbury's work may still have great value if we conserve its strengths and discard its weaknesses.

I would suggest:

(1) He is basically on firm ground in his lexical analysis of *παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν*. The verb does not mean investigate, it means to follow, either physically or mentally. It means going along with people or with events or with a line or argument. In the context it may well imply participation, it may even possibly be claiming it. The perfect tense means that the process took place in the past. *ἄνωθεν* means that the process began a long time back.

(2) He is on weak ground in making the preface inappropriate to the gospel to which it is immediately attached.

(3) He is on weak ground in making a seemingly clear and forceful preface into something obscure and conventional. There is indeed a conventional element in Luke's form of words, but the use of somewhat conventional forms does not necessarily imply that the author expected his words to be denied their full value.

(4) He is on weak ground in implying that Luke made claims which he knew were not true.

If, however, Luke was actually present at much of what he records, Cadbury's strong points are conserved and his weak points eliminated. Luke's language may be taken as clear, precise and sincere, and need not be written off as obscure, merely conventional or untrue. This, it seems to me, gives excellent sense, if we have other reasons for believing that Luke was present during the ministry and that his gospel was written quite early.

All this shows that the rather weak patristic testimony to Luke's

membership of the Seventy ought nonetheless to be taken seriously, since it agrees with important internal evidence. Not only does it provide an explanation of Luke's unique interest in the Seventy, but it gives full weight to his apparent claim in the opening sentence of his book. Such a conclusion has wide ranging implications both backwards and forwards. The mission of the Seventy stands at the beginning of Luke's long central section (9:52–18:18), which seems to be intended as an account of happenings between Jesus' final departure from Galilee and his last approach to Jerusalem. If Luke was selected as one of the Seventy he must already have shown his worth, which means that his 'following' of Jesus' ministry must go back into the Galilee period.

Equally, if Luke was present at the mission of the Seventy which began Jesus' final evangelistic thrust, it is natural to suppose that he was also there at the end and that he was therefore 'following' Jesus throughout the period of the central section. Further, although Luke resumes the general outline of Mark when he has completed his central section, his passion story and resurrection narratives are notorious for their large measure of independence from Mark and for their amount of entirely new material. If the claim of the prologue is to be taken at its face value, we should be justified in supposing that much of this was Luke's firsthand observation.

The Unnamed Disciple of Emmaus?

Some fathers think Luke to have been the unnamed disciple to whom Jesus appeared on the way to Emmaus. It is commonly held that the first scholar to have expressed this view was Theophylact, eleventh century Archbishop of Achrida in the country of the Bulgarians. He is famous for his biblical commentaries which 'are marked by lucidity of thought and expression and closely follow the Scriptural text.'⁵³ He took Chrysostom as his model. The interesting thing about his identification of Cleopas' companion is that the idea was not original to him, for he says: 'some have thought the other to be Luke the Evangelist.'⁵⁴ That this is a tradition considerably older than Theophylact is clear, since it is found in the account of the life of Luke in the *Menologion* compiled by Symeon Metaphrastes in the tenth century. This is an important and widely used liturgical text, which was based of course on earlier collections of

⁵³ This account follows mainly the article on Theophylact in *ODCC*.

⁵⁴ N. Lardner, *Works* (1815) II. 87.

the lives of the saints, presumably on those considered the most authoritative. In the *Menologion* the identification of Luke with the companion of Cleopas is not discussed, it is assumed.⁵⁵ In the *Synaxarion*, still used in the monasteries of the Greek Orthodox Church, St. Luke's Day has a short piece of verse which implies that Luke was present at Emmaus.⁵⁶

How far the tradition goes back in the Byzantine church we have no means of knowing, and as it stands its value as history is almost negligible. Since, however, a number of distinguished scholars down the centuries have adopted the same view, it must at least have a certain plausibility. It is important to allow the possibility that plausible conjectures based solely on a careful study of the text *may* be true. We cannot rule them out simply because the evidence is indirect. To do so would be to undervalue the use of imagination in the understanding of history. Lardner himself and a good many others rejected the idea on the questionable ground that Luke denies eyewitnessship in the prologue, but he cites as in favour of the identification the Byzantine historian of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Nicephorus Callistus, and the Jesuit Dionysius Petavius of the seventeenth century, who is quite explicit that there is nothing in Luke's introduction to make us think that Luke was not a disciple of Christ, or that he had not seen a large part of the things related by him, but rather the contrary. The same view was held by the Calvinist S. Basnage a century later.⁵⁷ The case was argued in some detail at the beginning of the nineteenth century by C. Dunster and G. Gleig. Towards the end of the century F. Godet and A. Edersheim showed themselves inclined to believe similarly.⁵⁸

Those who favour this view are very willing to agree that Luke was not an eyewitness from the beginning, but they deny that the prologue says that he was not an eyewitness at all. Indeed they are inclined to say that the Emmaus story preeminently shows the marks of an eyewitness account. Dunster, for instance, thinks that ἐκρατοῦντο 'held' does not read like a secondhand expression, nor 'did not our hearts burn?' nor 'O fools and slow of

⁵⁵ Migne, *Patrologia Graeco-Latina* 114, *Symeonis Logothetae* II: Ὑπόμνημα εἰς Λουκᾶν τὸν ἅγιον ἀπόστολον καὶ εὐαγγελιστὴν.

⁵⁶ I owe this information to Bishop Kallistos Ware.

⁵⁷ Lardner, III. 195–97.

⁵⁸ C. Dunster, *Tracts on St. Luke's Gospel* (London: Rivington, 1812) 106–69; G. Gleig, *Directions for the Study of Theology* (London, 1827) 366–77; A. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (London: Longmans, 3rd ed., 1886) II. 638, who refers to Godet in n. 2.

heart to believe'; προσεποήσατο 'made as if' suggests some little undescribable circumstance; προσεποτήσατο 'constrained' conveys the effect, but not the manner of their persuasion.⁵⁹ C. S. Lewis calls such writing 'reportage pretty close up to the facts'.⁶⁰ The narrative seems to come hot from either Cleopas or his companion. But if it came from Cleopas one would have expected him to name the other person who shared with him the privilege of this first appearance of the risen Christ to a male disciple. If it came from the other person one would not expect Luke to leave out the name of the informant to whom he was particularly indebted. But if the self-effacing Luke (the Luke who was present at all the events of the we-passages, yet never refers to his own part in them) was the other man all is explained.⁶¹ Of course it is possible to hold that the story is just legend presented to us by a consummate literary artist. But the legend-making and the adherence of such a brilliant writer itself requires a historical cause of great magnitude. The Christian may think that the literal truth of Luke's story provides a simpler and more satisfying explanation of the narrative's origin.⁶²

If Luke was the second man, another anomaly is explained. As we have seen, Luke appears in the prologue to be claiming for his writing an authority equal to that of the teaching of the apostles. But if his gospel is all secondhand and (unlike the 500 brethren who met him in Galilee)⁶³ he never even once saw the risen Lord, how could he make such a claim? Yet the companion of Cleopas has a remarkable place in the appearances of Jesus. If we tabulate the approximate number of accounts of

⁵⁹ pp. 106–12.

⁶⁰ C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections* (London: Bles, 1967) 155. A. T. Robertson, *The Minister and his Greek NT* (London: Hodder, 1923) 88f. remarks on the beauty of the use of tenses in this passage.

⁶¹ Amongst those who accept the Emmaus narrative as sober history, there have been a number of other attempts to identify the unnamed companion, e.g. the wife of Cleopas, Cleopas' son Simeon, who later became head of the church in Jerusalem, or Philip the evangelist, but to all these suggestions there are grave objections—see my *Easter Enigma* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984) 156 n. 8.

⁶² Incidentally the reference to 'our chief priests' in Luke 24:20 suggests that both Cleopas and his companion were Jews.

⁶³ For a discussion of this event, see *Easter Enigma* 112ff. It is noteworthy that Luke says nothing about any appearance in Galilee. This is understandable if his home was near Jerusalem. The twelve had every reason to return to their homes up there. He confines his record to the events which he personally 'followed'.

appearances to the different followers of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, we get:

Peter	6
John, James, Nathanael/Bartholomew	5
Thomas and other apostles	4
Cleopas (the senior man of Jesus' family) ⁶⁴	2
The companion of Cleopas	2
James, the Lord's brother	2 or 1
The inner circle of women	1
500 brethren	1

It is very strange if the privilege of being the first man to see the risen Christ and the privilege of seeing him twice on the first Sunday should have been given to a nonentity whom Luke does not bother to name. But if Luke was in due course to be the most prolific writer of the New Testament and the author of the only gospel which could not claim direct apostolic authority, how fitting that he should receive such authorisation.

One further point. Many think of Luke as a diligent compiler of other people's records, but his resurrection narratives do not look quite like that. Take, for instance, the Emmaus story. It is rich in its theological themes (e.g. the presence of Christ made known in the breaking of bread and the fulfilment of scripture), yet it is strange that Luke should give so much space to Cleopas and his companion and almost none to Peter. But it would not be so strange if the author realised that it was this appearance of the risen Christ which qualified him, a man with a burning heart, for his work as Christian witness and apostolic writer.

Lucius of Cyrene?

Another identification which merits consideration is that which regards Luke (Λουκᾶς) as the same person as Lucius (Λούκιος) of Cyrene, who is named among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch in Acts 13:1. Lucius is mentioned alongside Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger, Manaen σύντροφος of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. The name Lucius is also found in Romans 16:21, where he is a companion of Paul who sends greetings to the church at Rome: 'Timothy, my fellow worker greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, οἱ συγγενεῖς μου.' Lucius was a common Latin praenomen, which was adopted by Greek-speakers as Λούκιος and used fairly freely

⁶⁴ See *Easter Enigma* 37ff.

amongst the pagans, eventually becoming very popular among Christians who named their sons after the evangelist.⁶⁵ So it is not obvious that these two are the same man. Indeed F. F. Bruce goes so far as to say, 'There is no evidence to connect him with the Lucius of Romans 16:21.'⁶⁶ There is, however, a presumption in favour of this identification. Lucius of Cyrene was a fellow-worker of Paul in Antioch and the Lucius who was with Paul in Corinth as he penned his epistle to the church in Rome was evidently a fellow-worker also. Given such a coincidence of names and functions it is better not to multiply nonentities unnecessarily. And of course, if we should find that we have grounds for identifying Lucius with Luke, his presence in Corinth fits in with our knowledge that Luke travelled the Mediterranean world with Paul.

But what is the relation between Lucius and Luke? There are seven reasons, none of them compelling but cumulatively of considerable weight, for identifying the two.

(1) *The names Luke and Lucius are found on inscriptions referring to one and the same person.* Luke is a familiar version of some more formal name. Until archaeology entered the arena, this was usually held to be Λουκανός and the identification of Luke with Lucius was often strenuously opposed,⁶⁷ but the discovery of inscriptions at the Men Askaenos sanctuary at Pisidian Antioch which identify Luke and Lucius put the possibility beyond all doubt.⁶⁸ But it is more than a possibility as W. M. Calder pointed out:

The two inscriptions from the *Hieron* near Antioch, which prove that in one case the forms Λούκιος and Λουκάς were applied to a single individual, ought not to be adduced . . . as a proof that St. Luke's formal name was Lucius. It is highly probable that it was . . . The real argument for Lucius as against Lucanus as the formal name of the Evangelist is the frequency of the former and the rarity of the latter name in the Greek East at this period.⁶⁹

Now the equation is seen to be so natural that Bo Reicke feels

⁶⁵ Ed. W. M. Calder, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (Manchester UP 1928) I. xxi.

⁶⁶ F. F. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles* (London: Tyndale, 1951) 252.

⁶⁷ Early this century T. Zahn was arguing against the identification of either the names or the persons (*INT* 3.5). Similarly A. C. Headlam, 'Lucius' (*HDB*, 1900) wrote: 'The suggestion that he was the same as St. Luke has nothing in its favour'.

⁶⁸ For a full account see W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London: Hodder, 1915) 370–84.

⁶⁹ W. M. Calder, *Classical Review* 38 (1924) 30.

justified in saying: 'the author of the Lucan writings may be assumed to have borne the name Lucius on the more formal occasions and Luke on the more familiar ones.'⁷⁰ So, if we adopt this equation, we find Paul using Luke when he writes to Philemon and Timothy and to the church of Colossae, for which he felt a personal responsibility, but in his rather more formal epistle to the renowned church in the capital he uses Lucius.⁷¹

(2) *Luke was probably a member of the church at Antioch.* This is asserted by the anti-Marcionite prologue which introduces him as Ἀντιοχεύς Σύροϛ and by Eusebius who says that Luke was 'by race (γένος) an Antiochian and a physician by profession.'⁷² Eusebius goes a little beyond the prologue, since Ἀντιοχεύς Σύροϛ need not imply that Luke was an Antiochian by race. It was doubtless a natural assumption on the part of Eusebius and the many later writers who followed him to suppose that Luke was born in Antioch, but the ancient prologue does not say so and could as well signify a lengthy domicile in that city, which leaves us free to consider Cyrene, Macedonia or any other locality as his place of birth. Where Eusebius got his information from we do not know. It could conceivably be an inference from the mention of Lucius of Cyrene in Acts 13:1,⁷³ but in that case it is strange that he should use the form Luke without explanation and that he should call the man from Cyrene a native of Antioch. It seems more likely that it came from some other source or that it was a matter of general belief that Luke was intimately connected with Antioch.

Luke shows a quite detailed knowledge of the church in Antioch. He knows about one of the very early disciples from there (Acts 6:5). He knows it as the first city where there were many Gentile conversions; he knows the surprising origin of those who did the evangelising—men from Cyrene and Cyprus; he knows about the coming of Barnabas and his departure to look for Saul; he knows that believers were first called Christians in Antioch; he knows about the Agabus prophecy and the relief sent to Jerusalem; he knows about the coming of John Mark. He gives the names of the leaders at Antioch in a detail unparalleled for any church except Jerusalem. He describes the preparations for

⁷⁰ B. Reicke, *Gospel of Luke* (London: SPCK, 1965) 13.

⁷¹ Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11; Col. 4:14; Rom. 16:21.

⁷² *HE* 3.4.6.

⁷³ John Lightfoot the Elder, *Works* (London: Rivington, 1822) III. 211 says of Lucius of Cyrene: 'held by some, and that not without some ground, to be Luke the evangelist; which, it is like, hath been the reason, why antiquity hath so generally held Luke to be an Antiochian'.

the first missionary journey and of the reporting back to the gathered church (14:27)—this report doubtless covered the account of the journey given in chapters 13 and 14. On this point R. Glover notes that the first missionary journey

is unique among Paul's journeys in being both devoid of 'we-passages' and described in Acts. Yet there should be no mystery about its inclusion, if we were but permitted to believe that Luke was a man of Antioch. For that journey ended in Antioch; and Paul and Barnabas 'when they were come [home to Antioch] and had gathered the church together . . . rehearsed all that God had done with them' (14:27). So no member of the Antiochene church had any reason for not being informed of that journey.⁷⁴

Acts 15 tells of the Antioch representatives at the council in Jerusalem and of further work in the home church before the dissension between Barnabas and Paul and the second journey. The first part of this journey is outlined in 16:1-9 with great brevity, then at verse 10 Luke appears on the scene at Troas for the first we-passage. From then on (apart from one passing reference in 18:22) Antioch entirely disappears from the story.

This of course does not prove Luke an Antiochene, but it fits the supposition well. Glover makes another observation:

It is pertinent to ask why Luke should be so particular about Antioch when he has not a word to say of how Christianity reached the at least equally important city of Alexandria, and when he is no less silent about the founding even of the Roman church which was already a going concern when Paul first strode into the Forum of Appius (28:15). Such notable omissions at these (and there are plenty more) stamp Acts as being not the history of the early Church, but merely that portion of the Church's history with which Luke happened to be acquainted. (p.98)

(3) *Codex Bezae* implies that Luke was present at Antioch as early as Acts 11:28. The readings of D must always be treated with respect in Acts as they often appear to contain genuine historical reminiscences. D at this point introduces a little 'we' passage. Certain prophets arrive in Antioch from Jerusalem, at which D relates: 'There was much rejoicing; and when we were gathered together . . .' Even if D is not transmitting reliable information at this point, its evidence is still important, as the commentators in *the Beginnings of Christianity* point out: 'The reviser who inserted it clearly thought Acts belonged to Antioch. He probably lived in the middle of the second century. Is there

⁷⁴ R. Glover, "Luke the Antiochene" and Acts', *NTS* 11 (1964) 102.

anywhere else as early evidence for the connexion of Acts or its author with Antioch?⁷⁵

(4) *We must therefore either identify Luke and Lucius, or posit two leaders of the same name in the Antioch church.* At this early stage the leaders would probably have been Jews and there is no reason to think that Luke was a common name among them. That two out of six (the five named in Acts 13:1 and Luke) should have the same not very common name is of course possible, but it is much against statistical probability.⁷⁶ It is better not to posit two Lukes if one will do.⁷⁷

(5) *Lucius at Corinth fits neatly into a slot in Luke's life at a point where otherwise we know little of his movements.* From the we-passages of Acts we know that Luke came to Philippi with Paul in about 49 and that they left there for Jerusalem in about 57 (Acts 16:12; 20:6). Immediately prior to their departure, Paul had spent three months in Greece (20:2f) and had written his Epistle to the Romans (which included the greeting of Lucius), evidently from Corinth. He had then determined to return through Macedonia accompanied by various fellow-workers (including Sopater and Timothy), some of whom went on ahead to Troas,

⁷⁵ BC IV, 130.

⁷⁶ This is difficult to quantify, but it can be verified by a simple test. Take a random list of first names and eliminate the very common ones, then see how often the fairly common names recur. They will recur within six places of each other *very* rarely. I tried this with the church to which I belong in Oxford. Its list had 94 men. I adjudged the 4 very common names in these parts to be David, John, Michael, Peter. I reckoned the fairly common names which came on our list to be: Albert, Andrew, Anthony, Brian, Charles, Christopher, Donald, Douglas, Edward, George, Gerald, Gordon, Graham, Henry, Hugh, Ian, James, Jonathan, Joseph, Keith, Kenneth, Mark, Nicholas, Nigel, Paul, Philip, Robert, Roger, Simon, Stephen, Thomas, Wilfrid, William—33 in all. In this list the surnames are in alphabetical order, but the order of the first names is quite arbitrary. The question is, how often will we find within 6 consecutive names one of the fairly common first names repeated? The answer is that 3 names (George, Simon and William) were so repeated, but none of the other 30. So with us it was 10 to 1 against an arbitrarily chosen group of 6 men having 2 with the same fairly common name. And I very much doubt whether Luke in Antioch was anything like so common as George, Simon and William are with us.

⁷⁷ It is of course possible that the descriptions *Lucius of Cyrene* and *Luke the physician* were used to distinguish them from one another. But Symeon and Manaen have descriptions added, as does Barnabas on his first mention (4:36), but Manaen and Barnabas have no known namesakes from which to be distinguished. And anyhow it is necessary to establish a *prima facie* case for the existence of two men before the suggestion of distinguishing epithets has plausibility.

where they awaited 'us' (209:3-5). The narrative is quite imprecise as to where Luke and the others joined Paul, whether at Corinth or somewhere en route in Macedonia. But (as Cadbury points out),⁷⁸ since Paul when writing from Corinth sends greetings from Timothy, Lucius and Sosipater (Rom. 16:21) it is natural to infer that they started their journey from there and not from Macedonia. The probability that Luke did not spend the whole of his eight years in the city of Philippi is reinforced if we accept the identification of Luke with the brother 'whose praise is in the gospel' who carried Paul's second letter to Corinth.⁷⁹ If we do so, the whole sequence from Romans, 2 Corinthians and Acts provides a remarkable case of 'undesigned coincidence' which has considerable evidential value.⁸⁰

(6) *The patristic witness to this view is far from negligible.* Origen in the earlier part of the third century says that the Lucius of Romans 16:21 was held by some to be Luke, an opinion which he does not reject.⁸¹ The fourth century writer Ephrem, himself a Syrian, in a comment on Acts 12:25 (the verse immediately preceding 13:1) is quite explicit that 'Luke of Cyrene' was an evangelist: 'But Saul and Barnabas, who carried food for the saints in Jerusalem, returned with John who was called Mark and so did Luke of Cyrene. But both these are evangelists and wrote before the discipleship of Paul, and therefore he used to repeat everywhere from their gospel.'⁸² The testimony of these two men, both famed for their biblical learning, cannot be lightly dismissed,⁸³ nor can the testimony of the anti-Marcionite prologue that Luke was an Antiochene. All three point in the same direction.

(7) *It would be true to character if Luke were to point to his part in the history in this unobtrusive way.* Luke is amazingly self-effacing even in the narratives which announce his presence by a

⁷⁸ BC V, 491.

⁷⁹ This identification is confidently argued in my forthcoming book.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of the argument from undesigned coincidence, first developed by W. Paley, see *Easter Enigma*, 62, 95, 152.

⁸¹ Origen in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* says at 16:21 that some hold the Loukios mentioned there to be the Loukas who wrote the gospel. This view he neither rejects nor explicitly approves. (*Omnia Opera*, Paris, 1759, IV. 686a.)

⁸² This is Cadbury's translation of Conybeare's literal Latin translation of the literal Armenian translation of Ephrem's Syriac! BC V, 494.

⁸³ Cadbury concedes that Ephrem's identification of Luke with the Cyrenian may have been made on the basis of tradition (BC V, 494). A further witness (from the African church of the early fourth century) is adduced by T. Zahn and discussed by F. F. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, (London: Tyndale, 1941) 253 n. 1.

'we' (never saying anything about himself) in spite of his self-confident first preface. At Acts 13:1 he wishes to name the leaders of the Antioch church who initiated the Gentile mission. He, it seems, was one of them, but he doesn't use 'I', preferring to slip in his own name alongside the others. As Bo Reicke remarks, 'it was possible for him in this way to have emphasized his part in the earliest history of the church without boasting of his own contribution.'⁸⁴

Those seven arguments are not overwhelming, but they add up to a substantial case. When linked with our earlier conclusions concerning the evangelist's participation in the events of Jesus' ministry, it would suggest that Luke left the Jerusalem area and established himself as a doctor in Antioch, probably earning his living and working for the church in his spare time.⁸⁵ If this is so, he fits precisely the description of Acts 11:19f. which says that the Christians of Jerusalem 'were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen' and 'some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene . . . on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks'.⁸⁶ This means that Luke was partly instrumental in starting a movement of the church towards the Gentiles which was as important as Peter's baptism of Cornelius, and his claim to have followed all things was no idle boast.

Lucius, Paul's kinsman?

We have argued that Luke was bearer of the Second Epistle to Corinth. In the year after his arrival we find Paul there also, despatching his epistle to Rome. He knows a large number of church members in Rome, including Prisca and Aquila, Jewish Christians who had been expelled from the capital under the edict of Claudius and who had worked with Paul at Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 18:1-3; 18f.). It is likely that a large company of displaced Jewish Christians had found a home in Corinth and

⁸⁴ B. Reicke, *Gospel of Luke* (London: SPCK, 1965) 14.

⁸⁵ This might be confirmed by the fact that it was Barnabas (not Lucius) who went to Tarsus to look for Saul (Acts 11:25) and it was Barnabas and Saul who were sent up to Jerusalem (11:30) and who were set apart for the missionary journey (13:2). It could be that during this period Luke was tied by his medical practice in a way that tent-making did not tie Paul.

⁸⁶ Presumably another Cyrenian who initiated the Gentile evangelism and stayed on as a leader of the Antioch church was Symeon Niger, for Simon of Cyrene is given honourable mention in all three Synoptists, and it is not surprising that he should receive a nickname, if he was a dark-skinned man from N. Africa.

that many of them had returned to Rome when the ban was lifted. Not only does Paul send them greetings in chapter 16, but he also sends greetings from the church and from certain individuals, including Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, οἱ συγγενεῖς μου. That this Lucius was probably Luke we have already argued, and the strong case for believing that he had borne Paul's second letter to Corinth not many months before, confirms that identification.⁸⁷

The interesting question remains, what does Paul mean by συγγενής? Used substantively it means 'kinsman'. It is used seven times in other parts of the New Testament. Elizabeth's kinsfolk rejoiced at the birth of her son (Lk. 1:58). Joseph and Mary sought for Jesus among their kinsfolk (2:44). Jesus said to his Pharisee host, Do not invite your kinsmen (14:12). He warned of betrayal by parents, brothers and kinsfolk (21:16). In the high priest's house was 'a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off' (Jn. 18:26). Cornelius called together his kinsmen (Acts 10:24). Paul earlier in Romans writes of his anguish of heart concerning his Israelite brethren, τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα (9:3). It is quite a general word for those who are related to one another by blood. The last case is rather exceptional, in that it embraces the whole company of Israelites descended from their common forefather Jacob. Normally it is used in an undefined way of members of an extended family.

When Paul writes Romans 16 he is far away from his home town Tarsus, yet he mentions six kinsmen, three in Rome and three in Corinth. This has led some to think that Paul is using the word here in the broad sense of fellow-Jew. But such a view has difficulties. Firstly, when it is remembered that the early preaching was exclusively to Jews and that the Gentile mission, which had begun at the other end of the empire, had only been in operation for a decade, it seems unlikely at this stage in the development of the church that only six of the thirty-five who are mentioned by name should be Jewish. Secondly, some of those to whom he has not attached the label συγγενής are certainly or almost certainly Jews, e.g. Prisca and Aquila (Acts 18:2), Epaenetus (the first convert of Asia), Rufus (presumably son of Simon of Cyrene, who at the time of the crucifixion lived in the

⁸⁷ In the case of his kinsman Jason we may have a minor 'undesigned coincidence'. If he is the same person as the Jason of Acts 17:5-9, his kinship would explain why Paul lodged with him during his turbulent stay in Thessalonica. In view of Jason's willingness to suffer for the cause of the gospel on that occasion, it would not be surprising to find him some years later working alongside Paul in Corinth.

Jerusalem region: Mark 15:21), Mary (though it is not unknown among Romans, this was the commonest of all Jewish girl's names). Of τῶν ἐκ τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου, Sanday and Headlam write: 'The younger Aristobulus was a grandson of Herod the Great, who apparently lived and died in Rome . . . His household would naturally be οἱ Ἀριστοβούλου, and would presumably contain a considerable number of Jews.'⁸⁸ Thirdly, it is difficult to see, in a situation where the Jew/Gentile question was as delicate as it was in Rome, what purpose would be served by Paul gratuitously calling attention to the fact that particular people were fellow-Jews. And why did he not mention it in the case of the others?

It seems best therefore to recall both the great mobility of the Jews scattered far and wide about the world and also their great sense of family, and to take συγγενής in its most natural meaning, and see these six people, not necessarily as close relatives of Paul, but as those who have some family connection with him. There is nothing incredible about a Jew in Tarsus having a relative in Cyrene and other relatives living in Rome and Macedonia. If Luke was a kinsman of Paul, the question of whether he was a proselyte or a Hellenistic Jew has its answer: He was a Jew, steeped in the traditions of his fathers, having the fullest entre'e into the institutions of the Jewish faith.

The rest of the story of Luke can be briefly told. Luke and Paul are together again that same year in Philippi after the days of unleavened bread (Acts 20:6) and from there they travel to Jerusalem with the collection (21:15f.). Paul's doings in Jerusalem and his two-year detention in Caesarea are described in the third person, and we are again uncertain about Luke's movements. He was evidently not far away and it may well be that he took the opportunity while he was there of checking his recollections of the earliest days of the church. At any rate, after Paul's appeal to Caesar, he is right at hand and he sets sail with him to the imperial city (27:1-28:16). While in Rome it would seem that he put together and published his second book, both for the instruction of the church and also possibly for the enlightenment of those who might have some influence on the outcome of Paul's trial. If the traditional dates and provenance of these epistles are correct, his presence in Rome about this time is confirmed by the references to him in Colossians, Philemon and 2 Timothy. There

⁸⁸ W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans* (ICC, Edinburgh, 1900) 425. As F. F. Bruce points out, Apelles is also a typical Jewish name (*Romans*, London: Tyndale, 1963, 272).

is nothing to suggest that Luke was still there when the Neronian persecution overtook the church. Presumably he went elsewhere to continue the work of the kingdom till he died at a ripe old age, as the anti-Marcionite prologue says.

Objections

Our identifications dovetail together in an unforced and impressive way, giving a fourfold tie considerably stronger than the individual strands. There are, however, certain objections to be faced. Over against the pieces of evidence which affirm or suggest Luke's presence during the lifetime of Jesus need to be set those which affirm or suggest the opposite. Of first importance is the Muratorian Canon which is preserved in a mutilated form in Latin in an eighth-century MS. It is usually dated 170–180, because in it Hermas, Pius (the First), Valentinus, Marcion and Basilides are said to be contemporaries of the author.⁸⁹ It is the earliest known list of the writings accepted by the church as belonging to a New Testament canon. It appears to have been a collection of extracts from a larger work.⁹⁰ It contains an astonishing number of orthographical and grammatical errors (B. F. Westcott pointed out that 'in thirty lines there are thirty unquestionable clerical blunders') and the uninitiated need to be wary of the 'heavily emended'⁹¹ text of Lietzmann printed in the Aland *Synopsis* 538 without warning of its conjectural nature. In addition, it may itself be a translation from the Greek.⁹² In spite of its deficiencies, it is nonetheless a document of first importance the general drift of which is usually clear. Of Luke it says:

The third book of the gospel: According to Luke. This Luke was a physician. After the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him along with him *quasi ut iuris studiosum secundum adsumsisset numeni suo ex opinione concriset (conscripsit), dnm (dominum) tamen nec ipse uidit in carne.*

⁸⁹ See lines 75, 76, 81, 83, 84. The complete unemended text may be seen in B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the N.T.* (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 5th ed. 1881) App. C. An emended text with the lines numbered may be seen in A. Souter, *The Text and Canon of the N.T.* (London: Duckworth, 1913) 208ff.

⁹⁰ Westcott 213.

⁹¹ Westcott 530. J. A. Fitzmyer, *Luke* 37 calls attention to some of the major emendations, e.g. 'The phrase *nomine suo*, "under his own name", is emended from the text's *numeni suo*, "at his own inspiration" [?], and the phrase "from hearsay" is an attempt to render the obscure *ex opinione*'.

⁹² Westcott 213.

In the first part of the Latin there are several obscurities which have led to conjectural emendations, but the second part is clear: 'For he himself had not seen the Lord in the flesh.'

Because of its date this is a most important statement. It could represent a sound tradition. It could possibly, on the other hand, have suffered corruption in the process of transmission. If it had been a gospel text coming down to us in such a shocking state, it would have been an object of merciless criticism! But there is no reason to doubt the final clause. Much more likely, it could have been derived from a faulty interpretation of Luke's prologue (such as many have made since) which sees there a denial of the author as an eyewitness, which we dealt with at length in the first section of the article. Or, an even simpler explanation, it could have arisen from someone's faulty inference that being a companion of Paul implied not being a companion of Jesus, a precarious assumption.

Similarly, the description of Luke in the Anti-Marcionite prologue does not preclude him from being an eyewitness. It does not call him a disciple of Jesus, but 'a disciple of the apostles' who 'later accompanied Paul'. This implies that he was a follower of the apostles at quite an early date,⁹³ but it is silent as to when his discipleship began. Christian writers are at pains to stress that he had apostolic authority, but to support this they tend to look to his known association with Paul, rather than to an association with any of the Twelve, for which there is no clear scriptural authority. These testimonies which are either against or are silent about Luke's presence during the ministry of Jesus seem (to me at least) rather slimmer than the evidences which we marshalled above on the other side.

Another objection to this eyewitness notion springs at once to mind. If Luke used 'we' in sections of Acts where he was present, why did he not do so in the gospel, particularly in a narrative like the Emmaus story? Four things need to be said:

- (1) We cannot insist on an author's literary consistency. Author's can and do change their way of writing either consciously or unconsciously for a variety of reasons which may or may not be discernible.
- (2) We do not know even in Acts that Luke always used 'we' when present. Though the point is self-evident, it is frequently

⁹³ This view is found also in the Old Latin and in the Monarchian prologues. See Orchard, *Order of Synoptics* 144, 146, 208. Eus. *He* 3.4.6. and 3.24.15 also mention Luke's converse with the other apostles.

overlooked that, *though 'we' passages show the author's presence, 'they' passages do not necessarily show his absence.*

(3) There may have been a utilitarian reason for the form of the 'we' passages, which happened not to apply to the rest of Acts: Luke seems to have used extracts from his diary at these three points. A writer is always pleased to have ready to hand something which he has written earlier which just suits his purpose. Sometimes, however, particularly with a writer like Luke who was always so hard pressed for space, he may have had to cut down and adapt what he had written. At other times in his chequered and roving life he probably kept no records at all. So reversion to his normal use of the third person does not prove his absence.

(4) After introducing himself in the gospel prologue, Luke may have adopted a policy of excluding himself from the picture. What would be appropriate in Acts for the recording of doings of colleagues in a joint enterprise, might not have seemed so appropriate for recording gospel events where he was primarily an observer. This would be specially so where the author's aim was to present the one whom he had come to worship as Lord. Even when he wished to present activities of disciples in which he was involved, he would normally have focussed attention on their doings rather than his own. The third person form is particularly suited to giving a sense of objectivity to what is written. When writing of the Seventy he could obviously have used the first person if he was one of them, but (if he had no account of the events in diary form, but only records of Jesus' teaching with the barest references to time and place) he could well have preferred to stay in the background and maintain the same objective approach.

When it comes to the Emmaus story there is some internal evidence to suggest that Luke was the unnamed disciple. The tradition to this effect in the eastern church may itself have arisen from a study of such internal evidence, but it is possible that it derives from historical knowledge passed on in certain parts of the church which happens to have left no documentation in the earliest centuries.

In these days when we are trained to exercise maximum doubt, it demands much heart-searching before accepting these identifications as probabilities of history, but I have come to believe that the balance of probability is in favour of Luke being one of the Seventy, the Emmaus disciple, Lucius of Cyrene and Paul's kinsman. If this is so, not only is our knowledge of the New Testament's most prolific writer greatly increased, but many

aspects of the history of the early church are enriched. I make no pretence to have proved my case, but to me it is a substantial one. I should value the considered comments of scholars who hold a high view of the inspiration of scripture.