

NEW COMMENTARY  
ON  
ACTS OF APOSTLES

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LEXINGTON, KY.

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## PREFACE.

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The composition of my first commentary on Acts was begun when I was about thirty years of age, and the work was published about four years later. The greater part of the writing was done amid the distractions of the first two years of our civil war, and the volume was issued in the autumn of 1863, when men's thoughts were turned away from religion to the events of the mighty struggle. The publication of a commentary under such circumstances was considered so hazardous, that it was not undertaken until the demand for it was tested by a call for subscribers in advance. The response to this call was unexpectedly encouraging, and the volume was issued in the inexpensive form which it has since retained.

The sale of the old work, though never very large, has been continuous from the time of its publication till the present hour ; and the author has received from time to time most gratifying assurances of the good it has done, both in furnishing needed instruction to many young preachers, and in teaching many other earnest souls "the way of the Lord more perfectly." Encouraged by these assurances, yet becoming more and more conscious every year of the defects of the work, I have felt a very keen desire to bring it to a higher state of excellence

before my life-work is done. I would be ungrateful indeed were I not very thankful now for the kind providence which has prolonged my life, and given me the strength to accomplish in some degree this desire of my heart.

During the twenty-nine years that have intervened, I flatter myself that I have become far better fitted to write a commentary on this precious book ; for I have not only experienced the mental growth which is common to men of studious habits, but during twenty-seven of those years I have annually given instruction on every verse of the book to the senior class in the College of the Bible. Within the same time questions of vital importance, pertaining both to the trustworthiness of this narrative, and through it to the foundations of the faith itself, have been imported from the rationalistic schools of Germany, and have sprung up in our own country and Great Britain, which were unknown to me thirty years ago. These questions must of necessity be discussed in a commentary on Acts that shall be suited to the wants of present day students. In seeking to meet these new issues, the friends of the Bible have been not less industrious than its foes have been in presenting them, and the result is an extensive literature not in existence when my first commentary was printed. Not only so, but the life-long labors of Tischendorf and Tregelles on the Greek text have been completed, as well as those of Westcott and Hort which were then but fairly begun,

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and we now have for the first time since the early centuries of our era a corrected text in which to read these invaluable writings. The Revised Version has also come to my relief, saving me the necessity of correcting my own revision of the Authorized Version which was the basis of my former work.

In making use of all these new and better facilities, I have produced a work which is much more than a new and improved edition of my first commentary, and which I am constrained to style my New Commentary on Acts. It is new in almost everything except the form. As regards this, I have found the old form, which enables one to read the book, not as you read a dictionary, but continuously as you do other books, so advantageous in many respects, that I have retained it with slight modifications. My advanced age, and the many calls of duty which seem to claim the remnant of my active life, remind me that this is most probably the last effort that I shall make to improve a work which many of my friends have represented as the most useful of all my writings ; and I now commit this labor of my hands and brain to the fate that awaits it in the form in which it will outlive me in this world. The Lord, in whose service I have written it, will deal with it according to its merits.

THE AUTHOR.

LEXINGTON, KY., 1892.



## INTRODUCTION.

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I. Acts of Apostles is a much neglected book. It was so in the days of Chrysostom, who lived in the fifth century, and who says: "There are many who do not even know that this book is in existence, or who can state the name of the author."<sup>1</sup> It is so to the present time; and thousands go to other books of the Bible to find that which is the distinctive teaching of this. The reason is to be found in the fact that before the time of Chrysostom the church had departed from its distinctive teaching, and that to this day they have not returned to it. It was a painful consciousness of this fact which led the present writer, more than thirty years ago, to undertake a popular commentary on the book; and, although it is not now so much neglected as formerly, it still needs to be brought more prominently before the attention of this age. The fresh attention which has been given to it within our own generation, is mainly a result of attacks made upon its credibility by rationalists; and this may prove the providential means of calling men back to that clear understanding of its teachings, and that faithful observance of them, which characterized the primitive church.

II. THE TITLE, "The Acts of the Apostles," is misleading: it leads the uninitiated reader to suppose that it treats of all or nearly all the acts of all the apostles; whereas it actually treats of only a few acts of any of them, and of almost none of the acts of the majority.

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<sup>1</sup> Homily on Acts I.

By omitting the two definite articles we obtain the title, Acts of Apostles, which answers well to the contents, representing some of the acts of some of the apostles, without pointing to the number of either. This is the very title which the book bears in one of the two oldest existing MSS. (B), while in the other (the Sinaitic) it is styled simply, Acts. The title was doubtless given after the book left the hands of its author; for the writers of that age were not accustomed to giving titles to their books; but it would be difficult to invent a better title than the one which we have adopted.

III. ITS AUTHOR. This book comes to us without an external expression of its authorship; but in its opening sentence it is addressed to one Theophilus, and it claims to be from the pen of one who had written a previous treatise concerning the career of Jesus, addressed to the same person. This previous treatise is our third Gospel, and it is credited to Luke. This claim of a common authorship is confirmed by the uniformity of style which pervades the two books.<sup>1</sup> All the evidence, therefore, which tends to prove that Luke wrote our third Gospel has equal force in proof that he wrote the book of Acts. While unbelieving writers in general deny that he wrote either, all admit that the same author wrote both.

In the course of the writing we learn, from the use of the pronoun "we" in connection with large sections of the narrative,<sup>2</sup> that the author claims to have been a

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<sup>1</sup> "Not fewer than fifty words are common to the two books that are not found elsewhere in the New Testament" (Plumptre, *Int.* I.).

<sup>2</sup> Beginning with chap. xvi. 11, when Paul was first at Troas, it occurs at short intervals in the narrative to the end.



traveling companion of the apostle Paul during a large part of his ministry, and to have been with him during his first imprisonment in Rome.<sup>1</sup> These indications point exclusively to him whom Paul styles "Luke the beloved physician;" for he was with Paul in the Roman imprisonment, as appears from salutations sent by him in the epistles to the Colossians, and to Philemon, both written in that imprisonment; and the author is distinguished in Acts from all the other habitual companions of Paul. He is thus distinguished in the account of the company which started with Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (xx. 4-6); for there Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus, are mentioned as going before Paul to Troas, and there waiting for "us," meaning the writer and Paul. As then the writer was none of these, and yet he journeyed with Paul on this visit to Jerusalem, and thence to Rome, we can identify him with no other than Luke. True, some others besides Luke were with Paul when the two epistles just mentioned were written, but none of these journeyed with Paul as did the author.<sup>2</sup>

The internal evidence of the authorship of any written document has a presumption in its favor, like that in favor of a deed or a will when found in proper form; and it stands good before the bar of law and of reason until it is set aside by stronger evidence from external sources. In order to set aside this evidence that Luke is the author of Acts, we should find some writer competent to testify, who contradicts it. Not only so, but, as the book was certainly written by somebody, the

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xxviii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> The persons named are Aristarchus, Jesus called Justus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Demas (Col. iv. 10-14; Philemon, 23, 24).

question of authorship lies between Luke and some other writer; and the adverse testimony, to be conclusive, should name that other writer. But it is not pretended that such evidence is in existence. Not only is the book not credited by name to any other known author, but it is not pretended that there is any external evidence that Luke is not its author. On the contrary, the two earliest writers of antiquity whose works have been preserved, and who mention this book by name, declare that Luke is its author. One of these is Irenæus, who was born in the vicinity of Smyrna in the first half of the second century, became an elder in the church of Lyons, France, in the year 170, and died about the close of that century. In his boyhood he knew Polycarp, who was acquainted with several of the apostles, and therefore he could not well be mistaken in regard to this matter.<sup>1</sup> The other is the author of the Muratorian Canon, written about the same time, who makes the same statement.<sup>2</sup> Such evidence in regard to the authorship of any book of a secular kind would not be doubted by any scholar; for in reality there is less evidence than this for the authorship of almost every secular book of antiquity.

Such being the internal evidence, and the earliest external evidence of the origin of the book, we find, as we should expect to find, traces of its existence all through the period intervening between the time of its composition and the days of the authors just mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup> *Against Heresies*, iii. 14, 1.

<sup>2</sup> The words are, "The acts of all the apostles are written in one book, Luke relates the events of which he was an eye witness to Theophilus." The statement is inaccurate, but it is explicit as to the authorship.

Going backward from the latter date, Acts is found in the two translations of the New Testament made about the year 150, one of them into the Latin language, and the other into the Syriac. The former, the old Latin version, circulated in the Roman province of Africa, and the latter, the Peshito Syriac, in Syria, north of Palestine. That the book was thus translated shows that it had previously existed in Greek long enough to be credited to an inspired source, and this at a time when old men in the churches remembered far back into the days of the apostles. We find, also, that Polycarp, above mentioned as a contemporary of the apostles, makes quotations from Acts.<sup>1</sup> This chain of evidence is too strong to be broken. It has withstood the strain of unbelieving attacks in all the past, and it will doubtless continue to do so in all the future.

#### IV. THE AUTHOR'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

While the use of the first person in the passages in which it occurs proves that the author was present in the scenes therein described, it does not imply that he was present in these alone. He may have spoken of Paul's company in the third person when he was himself present. When he was present his source of information was of course his own personal observation, and this covers not only the so-called "we" passages, but, in all probability, some others. For nearly all the rest, including the account of Stephen's speech and martyrdom, he had Paul as an informant; and concerning those events with which Paul had no connection, he had opportunity to converse with those who had—with Philip,

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<sup>1</sup> In the first chapter of his epistle to the Philippians, he quotes from Peter's sermon on Pentecost the words, "whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the bands of hades."

for instance, concerning the latter's labors in Samaria and Philistia; and with Peter and James the Lord's brother, for all in which they participated. The fact that some Hebraisms characterize his earlier chapters has led some scholars to suppose that he employed written documents to some extent, and this is not at all improbable. We must not forget, also, that he almost certainly enjoyed the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of apostolic hands; and this, while it may not have superseded the necessity for careful inquiry, must have guided him in his selections, and guarded him against accepting misinformation.

V. ITS CREDIBILITY. The question of the credibility of the book is resolved by the nature of the subject matter into two—its credibility, first, as to the facts recorded; and second, as to the speeches reported. The former rests upon three substantial grounds. In the first place, the book comes to us from a writer possessed of the first degree of credibility according to the canons of historical criticism; that is, he was a contemporary of the events which he records, and, to the extent that he was not an eye-witness of them, he obtained them from those who were. Such a writer, unimpreached, possesses the highest degree of credibility known to secular history. In the second place, the events which he records correspond in many important particulars with the statements of other competent writers of the age in which he lived, and whose creeds and nationalities were hostile to his own. This adds greatly to the force of the evidence based on the ground first mentioned. In the third place, the book contains many points of incidental agreement with the acknowledged epistles of the apostle Paul, which can not be accounted

for except on the supposition that he and Paul both give a truthful account of these events. For a somewhat elaborate exhibition of the specifications under the last two heads, the reader is referred to Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, the great masterpiece on the subject, and to the author's *Evidences of Christianity*, Part Third, which presents some points of the evidence omitted by Paley. The principle ground on which the credibility of Acts has been called in question is undoubtedly the fact that it contains so many accounts of miracles; but this objection is urged only by rationalists, who reject all such accounts, wherever found, without deeming them worthy of investigation. All special objections, based on particular passages in the book, will be noticed in the course of the commentary.

As to the speeches in Acts, it has been urged that, in the absence of any method of short-hand writing, it was impossible to preserve them as they were delivered; and it has been charged that certain characteristics of Luke's style of writing which they contain prove that he composed them and put them into the mouths of the supposed speakers. But these two objections are met by the consideration in regard to the first, that all of these speeches are obviously only epitomes of the originals, very greatly abbreviated, such as could be remembered and reported by the speakers, or even by their hearers; and that, as respects the marks of Luke's peculiar style, they can be accounted for partly by the part which he took in the abbreviation of them, and partly by the fact that some of them, having been delivered in Aramaic, were translated by Luke, and thus received the impress of his style. Furthermore, it has been clearly demonstrated by scholars who have taken the pains to search

into the phraseology of these speeches, and to compare them with the epistles of the speakers, that in the speeches of every speaker who has left epistles there are found some of the characteristics of his own style.<sup>1</sup> In reality, then, the speeches have precisely the characteristics which we should expect them to have if they originated and came to us as the narrative requires us to suppose.

VI. ITS DIVISIONS. Like all other early historians, Luke goes through his narrative from beginning to end without a mark or note to indicate the divisions of his subject; but while there is nothing addressed to the eye for the purpose of marking the divisions, they are made, and they are unmistakable. No one can read the book through without observing two great divisions, the first of which might be styled a general history of the church up to the death of Herod (xii. 23-25); and the second, extending thence to the end of the book, might be styled an account of the labors of the apostle Paul. Consequently, many writers treat the book as being divided only into these two parts. But each of these contains divisions which are sufficiently distinguished from one another, and of sufficient length to be also styled parts. The career of Paul, for instance, is divided into the account of his preaching tours among the Gentiles, from his being set apart to this work (xiii. 1-3), till his last visit to Jerusalem at the close of his third tour (xxi. 16); and the account of his five years of imprisonment, which occupies the remainder of the book. The general history, too, is divided into two very distinct parts, the first of which, ending with viii. 4, treats exclusively of the

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<sup>1</sup> Numerous specifications are given in Alford's Introduction to Acts, Sec. II., and Canon Cook's Introduction to Acts in the Speaker's Commentary, Sec. 8.

Jerusalem church, and the remainder, from viii. 5 to xii. 25, of the spread of the gospel in Judea, Samaria, and surrounding countries. I prefer, therefore, a distribution into four parts, according to these four large divisions made by the author.

Each of these parts is subdivided into sections, treating each of a special topic under the general head. These should be distinguished by the chapters in our printed New Testaments, and they would be if the division into chapters had been made on scientific principles; but as the chapters are arbitrary, frequently severing natural sections, and thus leading to confusion, I have distributed the text into its natural sections, and have employed the chapter divisions only for convenience of reference. I have also, for the purpose of exhibiting more clearly still to the eye of the reader the author's divisions of his subject matter, separated the text into paragraphs, and appended to each its proper heading. These divisions, with their headings and sub-headings, are really parts of the commentary, as they help to exhibit to the reader the author's plan; and a careful study of them in connection with the remarks made on the details of the narrative, will enable the student to form a much higher opinion than he is otherwise apt to do of the author's literary skill.

VII. ITS DESIGN. Between believing scholars and rationalists there is a radical difference in regard to the chief purpose for which the book of Acts was written. F. C. Baur, in common with all his followers of the Tübingen school, assumes that Peter was the leader of those Judaizers who were in continuous antagonism with Paul, the other apostles being also in full sympathy with Peter; that this antagonism was unremitting throughout

the lives of the apostles; and that Acts was written about the close of the first century, or a little later, for the deliberate purpose of making it appear that no such antagonism had ever existed. Baur says: "We are thus obliged to think that the immediate object for which Acts was written was to draw a parallel between the two apostles, in which Peter should appear in Pauline, and Paul in a Petrine character. Even in respect to the deeds and the fortunes of the two men, we find a remarkable agreement. There is no kind of miracle ascribed to Peter in the first part of the work which does not find its counterpart in the second. It is even more striking to observe how in the doctrine of their discourses, and in their mode of action as apostles, they not only agree with each other, but appear to have actually changed parts."<sup>1</sup> This view of the author's design makes the book entirely untruthful, and a sufficient refutation of it is found in what we have said above as to its authorship and its credibility. We may add here, that the parallel between Paul and Peter, which really exists, fails to support the theory, because it is fully accounted for on the supposition that the whole story is truthful. If Peter and Paul had the power to heal diseases, they must have healed such diseases as they found among the people, and therefore they must have healed some of the same kinds of diseases. If they preached the same gospel, they must have given utterance to many of the same ideas, especially if they preached, as they must have done, to many persons in the same state of mind and needing the same instruction. If they were persecuted, they must have suffered alike the afflictions which men commonly visit on those whom

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<sup>1</sup> *Church History*, i. 133.



they persecute; and if they were guided by the same Spirit, they must have agreed with each other. Both the theory, then, and the reasoning by which it is supported, are fanciful and false.

While believers must of necessity reject the radical theory just stated, they differ very much among themselves as to the chief design of the writer. Opinions on this point are almost as numerous as commentators. We shall not attempt to name them: it is sufficient to say that they nearly all involve the mistake of failing to distinguish between what the author has done, and the design for which he did it. What he has done is to write a very brief account of the origin and progress of the church in Jerusalem, until its dispersion under the persecution which arose about Stephen; of the men and methods by which churches were then established in surrounding districts, including the baptism of Gentiles; of Paul's preaching tours among the districts of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, including the origin and partial settlement of a controversy in regard to the relation of Gentile converts to the law of Moses; and finally, of Paul's imprisonment, which began in Jerusalem, and was terminated in Rome. This is what he has done; and his purpose in doing it is to be ascertained by an inspection of the subject matter which he has introduced into the different parts of his narrative. Doubtless, like other historians, he had more than one purpose in view, one of which may be regarded as chief, and the others as subordinate; and we are to distinguish these by the relative amount of attention which he has given to each. That must be the chief purpose to which the most space is devoted, and to which the statements on other matters sustain a subordinate relation. Now

much the greater part of the book consists in detailed accounts of conversions to Christ, and of unsuccessful attempts at the same. If we extract from the book all accounts of this kind, together with the facts and incidents preparatory to and consequent upon each, we shall have exhausted almost entirely the contents of the book. The first chapter shows us how the apostles were prepared for the work of converting men; the second gives the account of converting the three thousand; the third recounts the conversion of many others, followed by the arrest and trial of Peter and John in consequence of these conversions; the persecutions in the next four chapters all grew out of opposition to these conversions; the eighth, ninth and tenth chapters are devoted to the conversions of the Samaritans, the eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, and Cornelius; the eleventh, mainly to the establishment of the church in Antioch by the baptism of Jews and Gentiles there; the twelfth is an episode, showing the benevolence of the new converts, and another persecution in Jerusalem; the thirteenth and fourteenth give the sermons and conversions on Paul's tour with Barnabas; the fifteenth describes the controversy on circumcision which grew out of the conversions on Paul's first tour; the sixteenth gives mainly the incidents leading to and immediately connected with the conversions of Lydia and the Philippian jailer; the seventeenth, the conversions in Thessalonica and Bœrea, followed by a nearly fruitless effort to the same end in Athens; the eighteenth, the conversions in Corinth, occupying a year and a half; the nineteenth, the many conversions followed by persecution in Ephesus; the twentieth, Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, followed by his arrest and his futile attempts to convert the mob in

Jerusalem, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; and his journey to Rome, where he attempts in vain to convert the leaders of the unbelieving Jews in that city. Undoubtedly, then, the writer's chief design was to set forth to his readers a multitude of cases of conversion under the labors of apostles and apostolic men, so that we may know how this work, the main work for which Jesus died and the apostles were commissioned, was accomplished. The cases recorded represent all the different grades of human society, from idolatrous peasants up to priests, proconsuls and kings. They represent all the degrees of intellectual and religious culture; all the common occupations of life; and all the countries and languages of the then known world; thus showing the adaptation of the one system of life and salvation to all the inhabitants of the earth.

The history of a case of conversion embraces two distinct classes of facts; first, the agencies and instrumentalities employed in effecting it; and second, the changes wrought in the subject of it. In the pursuit of his main design, therefore, the author was led to designate specifically all these agencies, instrumentalities, and changes. He does so that his readers may know what agents are employed, and how they work; what instrumentalities are used, and how they are applied; and what changes take place in a Scriptural conversion. Men are taught more successfully and moved more easily by example than by precept; and in accordance with this well known characteristic of our nature, many religious teachers depend much more, in their efforts at the conversion of sinners, on well told "experiences," than on the direct preaching of the word. This method was anticipated by the Lord in giving us the book of Acts.

The cases herein recorded have this superiority over all that now occur, in that they were directed by infallible teaching, and that they were selected by infallible wisdom from among the thousands which had occurred, because of their peculiar fitness for a place in the inspired record. If, then, modern conversions accord with these, they must be right; if they do not, they must be to that extent wrong. The man who proposes to guide others in the way of salvation is in duty bound to guide them by these models; and the man who supposes himself to be a genuine convert to Christ may test his experience by comparing it with these.

If it be asked, why may we not as well take as our model the conversions which occurred under the old dispensations, or under the personal ministry of Jesus, the answer is, that we do not live under the law of Moses, or under the personal ministry of Jesus, but under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Forasmuch as Jesus, just previous to his ascension, committed all the affairs of his kingdom on earth into the hands of twelve men, to be guided by the Holy Spirit, who descended shortly after he ascended, all that we can know of the present terms of pardon must be learned through the teaching and the example of these men. If the conditions of pardon, therefore, under any preceding dispensation, differ in any particular from those laid down and exemplified in Acts, in all the points of difference we are bound by the latter and released from the former. To study the book of Acts aright is to study it with supreme reference to this subject; and for this reason this topic is never lost sight of in the following pages.

If this book has been neglected in the past, it has been neglected most of all, as we have intimated above,

in reference to this its most distinctive teaching. Through ignorance of this, thousands of evangelists are accustomed to referring sinners for instruction on the subject of conversion more frequently to the book of Psalms, than to Acts of Apostles. It is therefore a demand of this age, an intensely missionary age, that we understand better this one book of all in the Bible which is devoted to this transcendently important subject.

The principal agent in bringing about these conversions, and in directing all the labors of the apostles, was the Holy Spirit; and it is undoubtedly a secondary, if not a coördinate purpose of the author, to show how this divine power was exerted in compliance with the oft repeated promise of our Lord. The book has its starting point in the apostolic commission (i. 2); but the apostles were instructed not to begin their appointed work until the Holy Spirit should come upon them (i. 4); and so the main body of the book opens with an account of the descent of the Spirit, and from beginning to end it sets forth the labors of the apostles and evangelists as being constantly directed by the Spirit who dwelt within them. Our Lord had said to his disciples, before his departure, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (Jno. xvi. 7). "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye can not bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (*ib.* 22, 23). The account of the departure of the first of these heavenly guides is found in the introduction to Acts (i. 9-11), and the body of the book sets forth the promised work of the second. If, then, we may properly style the combined accounts of the four evangelists the Gospel of

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Christ, we may with equal propriety, as Plumptre suggests,<sup>1</sup> style Acts the Gospel of the Holy Spirit.

In carrying out his main purpose in regard to conversions and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it was necessary for Luke to make selections from the multitudinous events which occurred in the thirty years covered by his narrative, and the plan on which these selections were made brings to view another of his subordinate designs. He evidently designed to set forth the labors of Paul more fully than those of all other men ; probably because, while they would serve his main purpose as well, he at the same time had a better personal acquaintance with them. But to set these forth alone would have been to present them without their historical connection in the past, and consequently he was constrained to begin with those events which preceded Paul's ministry and prepared the way for it. As Peter was the leader in all these preceding events, it was but natural that he should figure most prominently in that part of the narrative ; and inasmuch as there were many Judaizers at the time of the composition of the book, who were busily propagating the report that Paul's teaching was in some respects antagonistic to that of Peter, it was a wise expedient to refute this false and injurious report by selecting such actions and words of the two as would prove their perfect agreement. This further accounts for that phase of the narrative mentioned above which has been seized upon by rationalists as a ground for denying the credibility of the book.

When we inquire into the special character of the selections made in connection with Peter's work, we discover another subordinate design, that of giving in brief

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<sup>1</sup> Handy Commentary, *Introduction*, IV.

the fortunes of the mother church in Jerusalem, and then the secondary agencies by which the gospel was carried to the peoples living adjacent to Palestine. At the same time, both in this part and in that with Paul as the central figure, the writer accomplishes another very important purpose, that of setting forth the apostolic method of organizing the individual congregations of the believers. Other subordinate purposes might be pointed out if we were disposed to exhaust this topic; but these are sufficient to show that the author's plan was systematic, well studied, and far-reaching. No book in the Bible gives finer proofs of a thorough forecasting of its method and matter with reference to the purposes in the mind of the writer.

VIII. ITS DATE. F. C. Baur, and all the rationalists of the Tübingen school, fix the composition of the Book of Acts at a date too late for Luke to have been its author. For this they have no reason except the demands of their theory respecting the design of the author, which we have briefly stated above (VII).; but as the theory is unquestionably false, the conclusion based on it is unworthy of serious consideration. Some writers who are more conservative, but who are to some extent under rationalistic influence, date it not earlier than A. D. 70.<sup>1</sup> The controlling reason for assigning it this late date is the assumed fact that Luke's gospel was written after the fall of Jerusalem; and the ground of this assumption is the further assumption that the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, quoted from Jesus in xxi. 20-25, was written after the event. But as such assumptions can have no weight at all with men

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Introduction*, Sec. III.; Lechler, *Introduction*, Sec. II.; Weiss, *Life of Christ*, i. 88.

who believe in the reality of miraculous prediction, we are justified in laying aside without further notice the conclusion which is based upon it.

Conservative writers in general, guided by the indications found in the book itself, unite in assigning it the date of the last circumstance mentioned in it.<sup>1</sup> This circumstance is the continuance of Paul's imprisonment in Rome for "two whole years." That the narrative here closes without telling the reader whether Paul was liberated or put to death, is held to be conclusive proof that neither had taken place when the last word of the book was written. This proof is greatly strengthened when we consider it in connection with the course of the narrative in the last four chapters. In chapter xxv., the writer gives the account of Paul's appeal to Cæsar, which broke off his trial before Festus, and which led to all the subsequent proceedings. It was in consequence of this appeal that Festus, being puzzled as to what report he should send to the Emperor with the prisoner, brought his case to the attention of Agrippa, and also brought Paul himself before this young king (xxv. 12, 26, 27). He was sent upon the voyage described in the twenty-seventh chapter in compliance with the law governing the right of appeal; he was cheered when life was despaired of in the storm by the divine message, "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar" (xxvii. 24); his appeal to Cæsar was the topic of the first conversation which he held with the Jews in the city of Rome (xxviii. 17-19); and he was kept in prison two whole years awaiting his trial. Now, if his trial before Cæsar had taken place when this book was completed, whether

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<sup>1</sup> Gloag, *Int.*, Sec. V.; Canon Cook, *Speaker's Commentary*, *Int. to Acts*, Sec. X.: Aiford, *Int.*, Sec. IV.: Hackett, *Int.*, Sec. V.



it resulted in acquittal or conviction, it is unaccountable that the book was closed without a word on the subject. This would have been, not a mere omission like many others which we know to have occurred in the course of the narrative—the omission of matters the mention of which was not required by the historical context—but the omission of the culminating fact to which a long series of events previously mentioned led forward, and concerning which the writer had deliberately awakened the curiosity of his reader. It would be like a drama in which the deepest interest in the sequel of the plot is excited, but which closes just at the point when the sequel would have been the next and the last thing to be witnessed. Or, more pointedly still, it would be like the story of a noted trial, which would give the arrest of the prisoner, his transportation from a distant country to the place of trial, the incidents of a long imprisonment leading up to the very day of the trial, and then closing without a word about the trial itself. Such a narrative was never written, unless it were some fictitious story thus closing for the very purpose of tantalizing its readers. Such a close to a serious and truthful history is unheard of. Our only rational inference, then, is that Luke wrote the last sentence of this book just at the close of the two whole years which he mentions, and before Paul's case had yet been adjudged by the emperor.

An attempt has been made to break the force of this reasoning by supposing that Luke may have intended to write another book, and that, as he left the account of the ascension of Jesus incomplete at the close of his Gospel, and then completed it by giving other particulars in the beginning of Acts, so he intended to do with

the account of Paul's trial.<sup>1</sup> But there is not the least foundation for the supposition that Luke had any such intention. It is invented to explain a fact which admits of explanation without it. Moreover, the supposed case is not a parallel; for in Luke's Gospel he did mention the ascension, of which he gave a fuller account in his next book; but here he says not a word about the result of Paul's trial, although he could have done so in a single line. He disposes of the death of the apostle James in seven words in the Greek (xii. 2), and he could certainly have added that many to tell us that Paul was acquitted, or that he was convicted; and then, if he had another book in contemplation, he could have reserved for it a fuller account.

It is proper to say, before we leave this subject, that Irenæus, who wrote in the latter half of the second century, says that Luke wrote his Gospel after the death of the apostles Peter and Paul;<sup>2</sup> but the internal evidence adduced above outweighs this traditional evidence, and it acquires a still greater weight when we consider that on this supposition the author not only omitted to tell the result of Paul's appeal to Cæsar, but also failed to mention two events immediately connected with his story, which were the most alarming and distressing of all the calamities that befell the apostolic church, the execution in Rome of these two prominent apostles.

IX. ITS CHRONOLOGY. With the exception of some sections in Part Second, in which the author starts from the dispersion of the Jerusalem church to follow the preacher or preachers who carried the gospel to a

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<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Int.*, Sec. III., following several rationalistic German critics.

<sup>2</sup> *Against Heresies*, iii. 1.

## INTRODUCTION.

certain district, and then returns to the same point to follow another, all the matter in Acts is arranged in chronological order, and yet the author gives no connected notes of time from which we can make out either the whole time occupied by the events, or the time covered by any one part of the book except the last. In this last part he is explicit as to time, stating that Paul was arrested in Jerusalem at a feast of Pentecost; that he was held in prison from that time two years till the accession of Festus; that in the following autumn he was sent by Festus to Rome, reaching that city in the spring following; and that he remained a prisoner in Rome two whole years.<sup>1</sup> Thus we have nearly five years occupied with this portion of the history, and as it is a well established fact that Festus was sent to Judea in the year 60,<sup>2</sup> we see that Paul's arrest two years previous was at Pentecost 58; that his departure to Rome was in the fall of 60; that he reached Rome in the spring of 61; and that the narrative closes in the spring of 63. As the epistles entitled Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon and Philippians, were written during this imprisonment,<sup>3</sup> they bear date 61-62.

If we start from Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, Pentecost 58, and count backward, we can go a certain distance by the light of Luke's statements alone, and still farther by the aid of Paul's. On the journey by which he reached Rome he spent at Philippi the preceding days of

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<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 16, cf. xxiv. 27; xxvii. 1; 9; xxviii. 11-16; 30.

<sup>2</sup> This I think is clearly established by the evidence in Conybeare and Howson, Appendix II., note (C), against the views of Meyer, *Int. to Acts*, Sec. IV.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; Phil. i. 12, 13; iv. 22; Col. iv. 10, 18; Phil. 1, 9, 10, 23.

unleavened bread (xx. 6), and he came thither directly from Greece, where he had remained three months (xx. 1-6). These must have been the three winter months, as they were followed by the trip to Philippi in the early spring. Here, then, we have reached the winter of 57-58; and as *Romans* was written on the eve of leaving Greece on the same journey (Rom. xv. 25, 26, *cf.* Acts xxiv. 17), its date is the beginning of 58. *Galatians* shows internal evidence of having been written about the same time.<sup>1</sup>

As Paul went directly from Macedonia into Greece, he must have spent the autumn in the former country; and as he tells the Corinthians that he intended to abide in Ephesus till Pentecost, and spend at Corinth the next winter, he must also have spent the summer in Macedonia (I. Cor. xvi. 5-8). This was the summer of 57, and as he wrote *Second Corinthians* in Macedonia (II. Cor. i. 12; vii. 5), this must be the date of that epistle. But he wrote *First Corinthians* in Ephesus not long before Pentecost the same year (I. Cor. xvi. 8), and consequently this is the date of that epistle, and it is also the year in which his labors in Ephesus ended. He had been there two years and three months (xix. 8-10), and therefore he commenced his work there in the beginning of 54. From this point backward we have no connecting figures, but we can feel our way by conjecture a short distance with a good degree of probability. As Paul, on his last homeward journey to Antioch left an appointment at Ephesus, and left there Priscilla and

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<sup>1</sup> This is seen in the sameness of subject matter making up the principal argument of the two epistles, that is, justification by faith, together with Paul's allusion (Gal. i. 6) to the shortness of time since he had been in Galatia, a little over three years.

Aquila with the purpose of thus securing their aid on his return (xviii. 19-21), it is almost certain that on his return he passed very rapidly over the districts lying between Antioch and Ephesus, giving to the journey much less than a year. If so, he commenced his third tour in 53, having closed his second tour about the middle, or in the first half of that year. But in closing the second tour he came direct from Corinth, a journey of a week or two; and in Corinth he had stayed eighteen months (xviii. 11). This takes us back to about the beginning of the year 52, or late in 51, for the beginning of his labors in Corinth. About this time he wrote the two epistles to the Thessalonians.<sup>1</sup> If, now, we allow a little less than two years for the events of the second tour as far as to Corinth, we fix the beginning of that tour early in 50; and as that tour was begun almost immediately after the conference in Jerusalem on circumcision, we fix the beginning of the year 50 as the probable date of that event.

At this point some of Paul's figures come to our assistance. He states in Galatians (i. 18) that three years after his conversion he went from Damascus to Jerusalem, and that after fourteen years (ii. 1) he went there again with Barnabas to the conference. Now if these two periods are to be understood as consecutive,

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<sup>1</sup> This is ascertained by comparing what is said of the arrival of Timothy and Silas in Corinth, Acts xviii. 5, with I. Thess. iii. 3-6, which shows that Timothy had been sent back to Thessalonica from Athens, and had returned to Paul at Corinth when the first epistle was written; and the sameness of the condition of the Thessalonian church, together with the continued presence of Silas with Paul, who was not with him after he left Corinth, shows that Second Thessalonians was written soon afterward. See II. Thess. 1-4.

making it seventeen years from his conversion to the conference, the conference could not have been in 50 without throwing Paul's conversion into 33, the year previous to the founding of the church.<sup>1</sup> But if we

<sup>1</sup> The majority of chronologists date the death of our Lord and the founding of the church in the year 33; but I am constrained, after much reflection, to believe that it occurred in 34. Jesus was baptized, according to Luke (iii. 24), when he was about thirty years of age, and consequently he entered almost immediately upon his thirty-first year. If he died in his thirty-third year, his ministry can have lasted only a little over two years. Our only means of ascertaining how long it lasted is by observing the number of passovers that occurred during his ministry according to the statements of John, the only writer who pays attention to this matter. The one mentioned in the second chapter of John is the first of these, and it probably occurred nearly or quite six months after the baptism of Jesus. If the feast mentioned, but not named, in v. 1 was a passover, the whole time of the ministry from the first passover was three years; for he certainly passed the time of one other mentioned in vi. 4, which would make two years, and he lived till the next, mentioned in xii. 1, which makes three years. The only debatable question, if we rely upon John's testimony, is as to whether the feast of v. 1 was a passover, or some other feast. If we argue that it can not be a passover because John calls it a mere feast without naming it, we may as well argue from the same fact that it can not have been the feast of pentecost, or that of tabernacles, or that of dedication; for he names all three of these feasts in other places. But it must have been one of the four, for the Jews had no others. If it was either the pentecost, the tabernacles, or the dedication following the supposed passover, this would make no difference as to the whole length of the ministry; for we would have the passover in question passed by in silence, and the space between the passover of chap. ii. and that of chap. vi. would still be two whole years. The supposition adopted by those who make the whole ministry last but two years after the first passover is, that the feast of v. 1 was the feast of dedication following next after the passover of chap. ii. But this requires a forced interpretation of the remark of Jesus to his disciples in John iv. 35: "Say ye not, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?"

count the three years and the fourteen as both beginning from his conversion, which best agrees with the argument of the first chapter of Galatians, then fourteen years back from 50 fixes his conversion in the year 36, the second year after the founding of the church, and this is quite harmonious with the course of events in the first eight chapters of Acts.

With Paul's conversion in 36 as a new starting point, his first visit to Jerusalem thereafter, three years later, and his departure to Tarsus, are fixed in 39, and the labors of Philip in Samaria, together with his baptism of the eunuch, in the interval between 36 and 39.<sup>1</sup>

Next in advance of these figures we have a date fixed by Josephus. From him we learn that Agrippa died in 44,<sup>2</sup> and this was while Barnabas and Paul were

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The natural implication in this question is that at the time it was propounded the next harvest was four months in the future; and as the harvest in Palestine begins late in April, the remark was made in the last of December, or the first of January. If so, the feast of dedication for that year was most probably already past, for it occurred on the fifteenth of the tenth month, which was never later than the fifth of our January, nor earlier than the fifth of December. Even if that was one of the years in which this feast fell late in our calendar, it is scarcely possible that it was the feast of John v. 1; for if it was, Jesus made this journey into Galilee only to return immediately to Jerusalem, and this in the dead of winter. For these reasons I think that the feast of v. 1 was a passover, and that therefore the ministry of Jesus lasted more than three years, and terminated in the year 34.

<sup>1</sup>By describing these labors between his account of the dispersion of the church and the return of Paul to Jerusalem, Luke evidently means that they occurred in this interval.

<sup>2</sup>He informs us (*Ant.* xix. ; iv. 4, *cf.* v. 1; viii. 2) that soon after Claudius came to the throne he gave to Agrippa all the dominions of his grandfather Herod, and that Agrippa reigned over this enlarged kingdom three years. But Claudius came to

engaged in their visit of charity to the churches in Judea (xi. 29; xii. 25). But previous to starting on this visit, these two brethren had spent a whole year in Antioch (xi. 26), and this fixes both the arrival of Paul in that city in the year 43, and the duration of his stay in Syria and Cilicia from 39 to 43, a period of about four years. During this period occurred the labors of Peter recorded in the ninth and tenth chapters of Acts, and the founding of the Antioch church. We can trace the chronology of these with a good degree of probability. We are told that after Paul was sent away from Jerusalem the church throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee had peace, and that Peter went "throughout all parts," meaning all parts of these three districts, until he finally came down to Lydda, whence he was called to Joppa; and that there he tarried "many days" (ix. 32-43). Now it would appear quite unreasonable to suppose that all these labors and journeys of Peter occupied less than one year, and it is more probable that they occupied two. If we adopt the former estimate, his call from Joppa to Cæsarea to baptize the Gentiles was in the year 40; and if the latter, it was in 41. The latter has been adopted as the correct date by the majority of commentators. It can not be far from correct; and it shows that the apostles continued to confine their preaching to the circumcised for seven years, from 34 to 41.

The date of founding the church of Antioch can be approximated by a similar calculation. As soon as the brethren in Jerusalem heard of the baptism of Greeks there, they sent Barnabas thither (xi. 22). This can not have been many weeks after the event, and Barnabas re-

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the throne A. D. 41, and therefore Agrippa's death, three years later, must have been in 44.



mained there apparently but a short time before he went to Tarsus, and brought Paul to Antioch. But this last event, as we have seen above, was in 43; and consequently the founding of the church could not have been earlier than some time in 42. Thus we see that the baptism of Greeks in Antioch was begun some months after the baptism of the house of Cornelius, just as the course of the narrative in Acts would naturally lead us to suppose.

The results obtained by this zigzag line of research, the only kind of line which our detached figures permit us to follow, may be arranged for convenience in the following form, an interrogation point being placed after those dates which depend largely on conjecture:

1. The first Pentecost, May 34.
2. The dispersion of the Jerusalem church, and the conversion of Saul, 36.
3. The return of Paul to Jerusalem after his conversion, 39.
4. Philip's labors in Samaria, and the baptism of the eunuch, between 36 and 39.
5. The baptism of the house of Cornelius, 41?
6. Founding the Antioch church, 42?
7. First labors of Barnabas and Saul together in Antioch, 43.
8. Barnabas and Saul sent to Judea with alms, death of James, imprisonment of Peter, and death of Herod, 44.
9. The conference on circumcision, 50?
10. Paul's first tour among the Gentiles, between 44 and 50, five years lacking a stay in Antioch before he started, and a stay in Antioch just before the conference. The tour probably occupied nearly four years.

## INTRODUCTION.

11. Paul's second tour, 50 to 53, including eighteen months, near about half the time, in Corinth. There he wrote I. and II. Thessalonians.

12. Paul's third tour, 53-58, including two years and three months in Ephesus, his longest stay in any one place. On this tour he wrote I. and II. Corinthians in 57, and Galatians and Romans in the beginning of 58.

13. From 58 to 63, his imprisonment, beginning in Jerusalem in 58, continuing in Cæsarea from 58 to 60, on the voyage to Rome from the fall of 60 to the spring of 61, and in Rome from 61 to 63. In the last two years, the writing of Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, and also Hebrews, if he wrote the last at all (Heb. xiii. 18, 19).

Meyer, in his *Commentary on Acts* (Introduction), gives a table presenting the chronologies of thirty-three authors, ancient and modern, including only one of the many English authors who have written on the subject. No two of these fully agree with each other, yet so nearly do they all approximate agreement that very few of them differ more than two years at any one point from the figures given above. This is therefore a sufficiently near approach to the exact truth in the case to answer all practical purposes, especially as Luke shows by his almost total disregard of chronology that he did not base upon it the value of his facts.

X. LITERATURE. It would be easy to copy a list of all the books, ancient and modern, which have been written for the elucidation of Acts; but I think it sufficient here to name those which I have found most useful in my own studies.

When I wrote my old commentary, I had constantly in hand only Bloomfield's, Olshausen's and Hackett's

commentaries on the original text, and the popular commentaries of J. A. Alexander, Albert Barnes, and a few of the older English works which are now obsolete. I also made constant use of Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of Paul*, which was then a new work, and, being the first of its kind, was like a fresh revelation to all who had never studied Acts in the light of Paul's Epistles.

In preparing the present commentary, I have had the additional assistance of the following works:

1. **COMMENTARIES:** Alford's, Meyer's, Gloag's, Lechler's (in Lange's Bible Work), Jacobson's (in Speaker's Commentary), Plumptre's (a volume of the Handy Commentary), Stokes' (a volume of Expositor's Bible), and Lumby's (a volume of the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges). Of these, I have found Meyer's the most elaborate and instructive in grammatical exegesis; while Alford's and Plumptre's have proved the most helpful in other particulars.

2. **LIVES OF PAUL.** Farrar's *Life and Works of Paul* has vivified the picture drawn with so much precision by Conybeare and Howson, while the infidel works of C. F. Baur and Ernest Renan, have been of service in pointing out the approaches of the enemy, so that we may guard the student more securely against him.

3. **OTHER WORKS.** I have found a similar utility to that last mentioned, in the infidel work of Baur on the *History of the Christian Church in the first three Centuries*, in Zeller's work on Acts, and in the anonymous English work entitled *Supernatural Religion*.

In addition to the information derived from such books as I have mentioned, I also made the tour of

Palestine in the year 1879, and visited points of Biblical interest in Asia Minor and Greece. I traveled more extensively in Palestine, and saw more of its out-of-the-way places, than any other American with whose writings I am acquainted; and I did so for the distinct purpose of better qualifying myself to speak and to write on such topics as are illuminated by an exact knowledge of the country.

# COMMENTARY ON ACTS.

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## PART FIRST.

### *THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND DISPERSION OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.*

(I. 1—VIII. 4.)

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#### SEC. I.—INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS.

(I. 1-26.)

##### 1. THE STARTING POINT OF THE NARRATIVE.

Vv. 1, 2. Luke fixes the starting point of this narrative on the day in which his account of Jesus terminated: (1) The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began<sup>1</sup> both to do and to teach, (2) until the day in which, having given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up.<sup>2</sup> This is the proper starting point chronologically, because the present treatise is a continuation of the history begun in the former; and

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<sup>1</sup> "Began both to do and teach" is an idiomatic expression in which "began" is superfluous in English. We would say, *both did and taught*. For other examples of this idiom, see Mark vi. 2; xiii. 5; Luke iii. 8; xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 9, 29; John xiii. 5. It is a mistake to suppose that there is an allusion in this expression to the personal acts and teaching of Christ as a mere beginning of that which he continued to do and teach after his ascension.

<sup>2</sup> In this rendering of verse 2 the exact order of the clauses in the Greek is followed, and the connection between the day of the

the commandment given "on the day in which he was taken up," which can be no other than the Apostolic Commission, is the proper starting point logically, because from it the apostles derived their authority for the acts about to be recorded. During the personal ministry of Jesus, he authorized no one to preach him as the Christ; on the contrary, he forbade his apostles to do so.<sup>1</sup> He was doubtless moved to this by consideration of their inadequate conceptions of the Messiahship, their misunderstanding of the nature of his kingdom, and their imperfect apprehension of much that he had taught them. They were as yet incapable of setting forth his claims correctly. On the night of the betrayal he informed them that in a short time the Holy Spirit would be given to them to guide them into all the truth, and that then this restriction would be removed. Finally, "on the day in which he was taken up," he said, as Luke had written before, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem;"<sup>2</sup> and as Mark had written, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."<sup>3</sup> We shall find that this commission is the key to the whole narrative before us; that the acts

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ascension and the commandment given on that day is expressed as in the original. At the same time the words "after that" used in A. V. and R. V., but not represented by corresponding words in the original, are avoided, and the participle, *ἐντεταλμενος*, has its proper rendering.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 20; xvii. 9. <sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 46, 47. <sup>3</sup> Mark xvi. 15, 16.

of the apostles here recorded are the counterpart of its terms, and the best exposition of its meaning.

VER. 3. As the apostles are soon to appear in the narrative testifying to the resurrection of Jesus, our author next gives a compendious statement of their qualifications for this testimony: (3) to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: In the concluding chapter of the former narrative a number of these proofs had been given, and they are not here repeated. We learn here, however, a fact not there related, that the time from the resurrection to the ascension was forty days. This statement has been treated by unfriendly critics as an after-thought on Luke's part, it being held that in his former narrative he represents Jesus as ascending to heaven on the same day on which he arose from the dead.<sup>1</sup> The truth is, that in the former account he describes an interview which occurred on the day of the resurrection, and one on the day of the ascension, without noting the fact that there was an interval between them;<sup>2</sup> while here he distinctly states that there was an interval of forty days. The latter statement serves the purpose of an explanation; but it is not a contradiction.

Vv. 4, 5. To account for the delay of the apostles in Jerusalem after receiving their commission, and also to fix more definitely the time at which they were to begin their work, the historian next quotes a part of the conversation which took place on the day of the ascension: (4) and being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but

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<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Apostles*, 20; Meyer *in loco*. <sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 43, 44-51.

to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: (5) for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence. This commandment has been mistaken by commentators for the command referred to above (2); but, as we have seen, that commandment is the commission, while this is but a limitation of the commission as to its time and place of beginning. The "promise of the Father," which they had heard from him, is the promise of the Holy Spirit which he had made them on the night of the betrayal.<sup>1</sup> On the meaning of the expression, "baptized in the Holy Spirit," see forward under ii. 4. The allusion to John's baptism was probably suggested by the well remembered remark of John: "I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire" (Luke iii. 16).

## 2. THE FINAL PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, 6-8.

VER. 6. When Jesus died, all hope that he would set up the expected kingdom expired for a time; but since his resurrection he had spoken much to the disciples concerning the kingdom (verse 3), and he had said, as reported by Matthew, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (xxviii. 18); and from such remarks the apostles had begun to believe that the kingdom which he had failed to establish before his death he would yet establish after his resurrection. Luke reveals this revival of hope by his next statement: (6) They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time

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<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 26; xv. 26, 27; xvi. 12, 13.



restore the kingdom to Israel? The form of the question, "restore the kingdom to Israel," shows that they still retained their former misconception, that Christ's kingdom was to be a restoration of the old kingdom of David, and not a new and different institution. The question also shows unmistakably that his kingdom had not yet been inaugurated; for if it had been, it is inconceivable that these men, who were its chief executive officers on earth, knew nothing of the fact; and it is equally inconceivable that, if it had been, Jesus would not have promptly corrected so egregious a blunder on the part of the disciples. Nothing, indeed, but a misconception almost as gross as that of the twelve concerning the nature of the kingdom could have originated the thought entertained by some in modern times, that Christ's kingdom had been set up previous to this time. All the arguments in support of this idea, and all the interpretations of special passages in its favor, plausible as they may be, are set aside by the one decisive consideration, that this kingdom could not be inaugurated until the King was crowned in heaven. This occurred after the ascension,<sup>1</sup> and his first administrative act on earth was that of sending the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the next Pentecost.<sup>2</sup>

Vv. 7, 8. We now take up the answer to the question which we have just considered: (7) And he said to them, It is not for you to know times and seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. (8) But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The answer suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 8-11; Heb. ii. 9. <sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 32, 33.

the times and seasons of God's purposes are kept more in reserve than the purposes themselves; and this is in harmony with the known characteristic of prophecy, that it deals more in facts and the succession of events than in dates or definite periods. It was not important for them to know the time at which the kingdom would be established; but it was all-important that they should receive the power necessary to the part which they were to take in its inception and progress; so the answer is concerned chiefly with the latter. The power promised, and their work as witnesses, are so connected together as to indicate that the power to be effective witnesses is meant. This, as we learn from the testimony which they afterward gave, was not merely to tell what they had seen and heard, which they could have done by their unaided powers; but it included ability to recall all that he had said to them in his years of ministry; and to testify as to his exaltation in heaven, his will concerning all spiritual affairs on earth, and his future dealings with both men and angels. This power was to be conferred as he had previously promised,<sup>1</sup> and as he now once more assures them, by the Holy Spirit which they were to receive "not many days hence." The order of localities in which he tells them to bear witness was not the result of partiality for the Jews and Samaritans over the Gentiles; nor yet was it merely to fulfill the prediction that thus it must be; for it had been predicted because there were good reasons that it should be so. One reason, suggested by the commentators in general, for beginning in Jerusalem, was that he might be vindicated in the same city in which he was condemned; but the controlling reason was doubtless this:

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 48.

the most devout portion of the Jewish people, that portion which had been most favorably impressed by the preparatory preaching of John and Jesus, were always collected in Jerusalem at the great annual festivals, and hence a beginning could be made there with greater success than elsewhere. Next to these, the inhabitants of the rural districts of Judea were best prepared by the previous preaching; then the Samaritans, who had seen some of the miracles of Jesus; and last of all, the Gentiles. Thus the rule of success was made their guide from place to place, and it became the custom, even in heathen lands, to preach "first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile." The result justified the rule, for the most signal triumph which the gospel ever achieved was in Jerusalem, and the most successful approach to the Gentiles in every country was through the Jewish synagogue.

### 3. THE ASCENSION OF JESUS, 9-11.

VER. 9. Having now completed his brief account of the last interview between Jesus and his disciples, Luke says: (9) And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. We learn from Luke's former account of the ascension, to which this is a supplement, that Jesus was in the act of blessing them with uplifted hands, when he was parted from them and borne aloft into heaven.<sup>1</sup> The cloud formed a background which rendered the outline of his person very distinct while in view, and suddenly shut him off from view as he entered its bosom. Thus all the circumstances of this most fitting departure are calculated to

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

preclude the suspicion of deception, or of optical illusion.

It has been urged by some skeptical writers that the silence of Matthew and John in reference to the ascension, who were eye-witnesses of it if it really occurred, while it is mentioned only by Luke and Mark, who were not present, is ground for suspicion that the latter derived their information from impure sources. That the testimony of Mark and Luke, however, is credible, is made apparent to all who believe in the resurrection of Jesus by simply inquiring, What became of the body after it was raised? Even if none of the historians had described the ascension, we should still conclude that at some time and in some manner it did take place. It should be observed, too, that while John does not mention it, he quotes a conversation between Jesus and Mary Magdalene which implies it. He said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was omitted by Matthew and John because they both close their narratives with scenes in Galilee, far removed from Jerusalem; and mentioned by Mark and Luke because they conclude the previous part of their narratives in Jerusalem and on the day the ascension took place. Thus the association of thought, which so often governs insertions and omissions, may have had its natural influence on them. Finally, as to Luke, there was a special reason why he should mention it, found in the fact that the speeches and discussions which he is about to record had constant reference to Christ ascended and glorified, and it was most fitting that his introduction should mention the fact of the ascension.

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<sup>1</sup> John xx. 17.

Vv. 10, 11. Not only the ascension of Jesus to heaven, but also his future coming to judgment, was to be a prominent topic in the coming narrative, hence the introduction here of another fact which Luke had omitted in his former account: (10) And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven. The sudden coming, the appearance, and the words of these "two men in white," combined to show that they were angels, as the author would have us to believe. They state not merely that Jesus shall come again, but that he shall come in like manner as the apostles had seen him go; that is, visibly and bodily.

#### 4. THE WAITING IN JERUSALEM, 12-14.

VER. 12. At the rebuke of the angels the disciples withdrew their gaze from the cloud, and left the spot: (12) Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. The ascension took place near Bethany,<sup>1</sup> which was nearly two miles from Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> and on the eastern slope of the mount. It is the nearer side of the mount, or rather the summit of it, which is a Sabbath day's journey, or seven-eighths of a mile from the city. We learn from Luke's former narrative that they returned to Jerusalem "with great joy;"<sup>3</sup> their sorrow at parting from the Lord being turned into joy at the thought of meeting him again.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 50. <sup>2</sup> John xi. 18. <sup>3</sup> Luke xxiv. 52.

**VER. 13. (13)** And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. This fresh enumeration of the eleven very appropriately finds place here, because it shows that all of those to whom the commission was given were at their post, ready to begin their appointed work, and waiting only for the promised power from on high.

**VER. 14.** The manner in which these men spent the time of their waiting, an interval of ten days,<sup>1</sup> was such as we should expect: **(14)** These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. The place of this prayer and supplication was not chiefly the "upper chamber where they were abiding," but the temple; for we learn from Luke's former narrative that they "were continually in the temple blessing God."<sup>2</sup> This is the last time that the mother of Jesus appears in New Testament history. The fact that she had returned with the disciples to Jerusalem, and remained with them instead of resuming her residence in Nazareth, indicates that John was faithful to the dying request of Jesus, and was caring for her as his own mother, though his natural mother was still living.<sup>3</sup> Though the prominence here given to her name shows that she was regarded with great respect by the apostles, yet the manner in which Luke speaks of her shows that he had no thought

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<sup>1</sup> From the "morrow a'ter the Sabbath" of the passover week until Pentecost was fifty days (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16), and forty of these had passed when the ascension took place.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 53. <sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvii. 56.

of the homage that was to be paid her in later ages by an idolatrous church. Those styled "the women," who were also in this company of worshipers, were those who had come with Jesus from Galilee;<sup>1</sup> and they are mentioned in this informal way because they would be remembered by one who, like Theophilus, had read the former treatise. They, too, had returned from their Galilee homes to await with the twelve the coming "promise of the Father." The fact that the brethren of Jesus were of the company is proof that a great change had come over them since their divine brother had closed his labors in Galilee: for then they did not believe in him,<sup>2</sup> but now they do, and they are closely identified with the apostles. What special evidence had brought about this change, or just when it had taken place, we have no means of ascertaining.

#### 5. THE PLACE OF JUDAS FILLED, 15-26.

VV. 15-19. The next incident is introduced in these terms: (15) And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said, (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty, (16) Brethren, it was needful that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them who took Jesus. (17) For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry. (18) (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (19) And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was

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<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 49. <sup>2</sup> John vii. 1-5.

called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.) The parenthetical statement that the number together was about one hundred and twenty, is not to be understood as meaning that these were all the disciples Jesus then had, but only those then and there assembled; for Paul says that Jesus was seen after his resurrection by more than five hundred brethren at once.<sup>1</sup> The hundred and twenty were probably all who at that time resided in Jerusalem.

The latter part of the parenthesis which describes the fate of Judas is unquestionably the language of Luke, and it is so closely connected with the former part as to indicate the same authorship for both. The certainty that it is Luke's arises from the use of the expression, "their language;" whereas Peter would have said, "our language;" and from the translating of the Hebrew word Akeldama into Greek, which Peter would not have done in addressing, as he did, an audience of Hebrews. The parenthesis was inserted to make intelligible to Luke's readers Peter's allusions to Judas, which, though perfectly intelligible without the parenthesis to Peter's hearers, would not be to Luke's readers.

But while this parenthesis serves very well its obvious purpose, it presents three points of apparent conflict with Matthew's account of the fate of Judas. First, it says that he fell headlong and burst asunder, whereas Matthew says that he hung himself; second, it represents him as obtaining a field with the reward of iniquity, whereas Matthew represents the chief priests as buying the field with the same money; third, it derives the name Akeldama from the circumstance of Judas having fallen there and burst asunder, whereas Matthew

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<sup>1</sup> I. Cor. xv. 6.



derives it from the circumstance that the field was bought with the blood money.<sup>1</sup> As to the first, the two accounts are in perfect harmony : for if he hung himself, he was either taken down, or he fell ; and Luke says he fell. If he fell and burst asunder, he must have fallen a considerable distance ; or when he fell his abdomen must have been in a somewhat decayed condition ; or both may have been true. His hanging himself, and remaining suspended till he fell, supplies both conditions, and fully accounts for his bursting asunder. Furthermore, if we attempt to account for his bursting asunder on any other hypothesis, we find it very difficult to imagine one that is adequate. The two accounts, then, are not only harmonious, but Luke's is supported by Matthew's. As to the second point, if Judas returned the money as described by Matthew, and if the priests bought with it the potter's field, then that field was really the property of Judas, and could have been claimed by his heirs ; for it was bought with money that belonged to him ; and it could be truthfully said by Luke that Judas obtained the field. Thirdly, if the field was bought with the blood money, or if Judas fell there and burst asunder, the field could have derived its name from either circumstance, and much more might it have derived it from both. The probability is that the piece of land had been rendered comparatively worthless by the excavations which the potter had made in search of potter's clay ; and when, in addition to this, it was found spattered with the contents of the putrefied bowels of a traitor who had hung himself there, it was so horrible a place that the owner was glad to sell it for a trifle, and this enabled the priests to buy it for the thirty

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 3-8.

pieces of silver, amounting probably to about sixteen dollars. No other piece of land large enough for a small burying ground could have been purchased near the wall of Jerusalem for so small a sum. It was intended for the burial of foreigners too poor to afford a rock-hewn sepulcher. The poor, whether Jews or Gentiles, were buried in the ground.

VER. 20. The historian now resumes the report of Peter's speech, which he had interrupted with a parenthesis. In the remarks already quoted, Peter had based the action which he was about to propose on a prediction uttered by David, and he had stated, as the ground of the application about to be made, the fact that Judas had been numbered with them, and had "received his portion in this ministry." He now quotes the prediction alluded to: (20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be made desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His office<sup>1</sup> let another take. These two passages, the former from Psalm lxxix. 25, and the latter from Psalm cix. 8, have no specific reference to Judas in their original context. They occur in the midst of curses pronounced, not by David, but, as Peter

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<sup>1</sup>The word *ἐπισκοπήν*, here rendered "office" in the R. V., and "bishoprick" in the A. V., is quoted from the Septuagint, and its exact etymological equivalent in English is *overseership*. What particular kind of overseership is meant in the Psalm from which it is quoted, the context there does not indicate; but that it had not in the days of the Psalmist the meaning now attached to the word bishoprick in English, is absolutely certain, for no such office then existed. In the absence of definite knowledge as to the overseership originally referred to, it is probable that the generic term office is here the best representative of the word, especially as it is so rendered in the Psalm from which the quotation is made. See more on the N. T. use of the word, under xx. 28.

explicitly states, by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David (16), concerning wicked men in general who persecute the servants of God. But if it be proper that the habitations of such men in general should be made desolate, and that any office they held should be given to others, it was preëminently so in the case of Judas; and it was proper to say that these words were written of him as one among many. This was unquestionably Peter's meaning, for he could see as plainly as we can the general aim of the denunciation.

Vv. 21, 22. It is of some moment to observe here that the question on which Peter is discoursing is not the original appointment of an apostle, but the selection of a man to succeed an apostle. The qualifications, therefore, which are declared necessary to an election are those which must be possessed by any one who aspires to be a successor to an apostle. He states them in the next sentence: (21) Of the men therefore who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, (22) beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection. There being no other instance in the New Testament of the selection of a successor to an apostle, this is our only scriptural guide on the subject; and we must conclude that all those who have since claimed to be successors to the apostles, but were not with the Lord in his personal ministry, lack an essential qualification for the office. The obvious reason for confining the choice to such as had been with the apostles from the beginning is that only such would be thoroughly competent witnesses of the identity of Jesus when they saw him after his resurrection. Thus Peter,

like Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians (ix. 1), makes it an essential characteristic of an apostle that he be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus.

Vv. 23-26. (23) And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed, and said, Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, (25) to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. (26) And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

It should be observed that the disciples did not themselves select Matthias, but, having first put forward the two persons between whom the choice was to be made, they prayed the Lord to show which one *he* had chosen, and then they cast lots, understanding that the one on whom the lot fell was the Lord's choice. This shows that they believed in a providence of God so especial that it includes, in the things that it determines, even the casting of lots—of all things apparently the most accidental. If it be inquired why they confined the Lord's choice to two persons, the obvious answer is, that these were the only two who possessed all of the qualifications laid down by Peter.

The prayer offered on this occasion is a model of its kind. The petitioners had a single object for which they bowed before the Lord, and to the proper presentation of this they confine their words. They do not repeat a thought, nor do they elaborate one beyond the point of perspicuity. Their petition having reference to the spiritual as well as the intellectual qualifications of two persons, they most appropriately address the Lord as

*καρδιογνώστα, the heart knower.* They do not pray, Show us which thou *wilt* choose, or *dost* choose; as though there was need of reflection with the Lord; but, "show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen." They describe the office which they desire the Lord to fill, as "the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place." He had been in a place of which he had proved unworthy, and now they have no hesitation in saying that he has gone to his *own* place, the place to which hypocrites go after death. So brief a prayer on so important an occasion would in this voluble age be scarcely regarded as a prayer at all; and one expressing so plainly the fate of a dead man would be regarded as uncharitable; for who dares to hint, at this day, that any dead sinner has gone to his own place?

Forasmuch as this transaction occurred before the inspiration of the apostles, and forasmuch as Peter bases his authority for it, not on any command of Jesus, but on what some critics regard as irrelevant citations from the Psalms, it has been held by some that it was totally unauthorized, and that Matthias was not therefore a real apostle. But the statement of Luke, "he was numbered with the eleven apostles," was written long after the inspiration of the twelve, and it expresses their final judgment in the case. Moreover, from this time on the company of the apostles is styled no longer "the eleven," but "the twelve,"<sup>1</sup> indicating that from the time of the appointment Matthias was held to be one of the number. Let it be observed, too, that Peter's omission to cite the authority of Jesus for the appointment is by no means proof that they did not have his authority.

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<sup>1</sup>Chap. ii. 14; vi. 2.

Among the things concerning the kingdom of which he had spoken during the forty days (3), this may have been one, for aught we know; and Peter may have omitted to mention it because it was already well known to all the disciples, while they had failed to observe the predictions which also made it proper. Finally, the promise that the twelve apostles should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes,<sup>1</sup> required that the vacant place be filled; and even this may have been spoken of on some previous occasion, and was therefore omitted now. Paul's apostolate was a special one to the Gentiles.

The author has now completed his introductory statements. He has shown that his narrative starts from the commission given on the day of the ascension; that the apostles were assured on that day of a speedy baptism in the Holy Spirit, which would give them full power to testify for Jesus; that they witnessed his ascension to heaven whence he was to send the promised Spirit; that the original eleven were all at their post after the ascension, awaiting the promise; and that they had filled the vacant place of the traitor with a suitable successor. All was now in readiness, and the next section of the story opens with the advent of the expected Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

## SEC. II.—THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM ESTABLISHED.

(II. 1-47).

### 1. THE APOSTLES ARE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, 1-4.

Vv. 1-4. The author now enters upon the main body of his work by describing the promised advent of the Holy Spirit: (1) And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The day of Pentecost was the fiftieth day after the sabbath of the passover week; and as the count commenced on the day after the sabbath, it also ended on the same day of the week, or our Sunday.<sup>1</sup> On account of

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<sup>1</sup>The commentators in general, misled by Josephus, represent the fifty days as being counted from "the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month" (Ant. iii. 10. 5). If this were correct, the first of the fifty, and consequently the last, might fall on any day of the week. But the enacting clause in the law reads as follows: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal offering unto the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.) This language is not easily misunderstood; for if even in the first clause, the words "from the morrow after the sabbath" could be construed as meaning from

the seven weeks which intervened between it and the passover sabbath, it was called in the Old Testament "the feast of weeks;"<sup>1</sup> on account of the wheat harvest having occurred in that interval, it was called "the feast of harvest;"<sup>2</sup> and on account of the offering peculiar to it, it was called "the day of first fruits."<sup>3</sup> But after the Greek language become known in Palestine, in consequence of Alexander's conquest of Asia, it acquired the name Pentecost (fiftieth), because it was the fiftieth day. It was celebrated, according to the Mosaic ritual, by the special service of offering the first fruits of the wheat harvest in the form of two loaves of bread.<sup>4</sup> This was one of the three annual festivals at which all of the male Jews were required to be present. The condemnation and death of Jesus had occurred during one of these,

the morrow after the first day of unleavened bread, the latter part of the sentence precludes such a construction; for the count was to be "unto the morrow after the *seventh sabbath*," and the word sabbath here unquestionably means a weekly sabbath; and if the fiftieth day was the morrow after a weekly sabbath, then the first must also have been the morrow after a weekly sabbath. That it was is further proved by the terms of the law, fixing the day of offering the sheaf of the wave offering: "And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it" (Lev. xxiii. 11.) The first day of unleavened bread, although in it "no servile work" was to be done, is never called a sabbath. As to the testimony of Josephus on the subject, we must remember that, although he claims to have been of priestly ancestry, he was never consecrated as a priest, he wrote his antiquities many years after the fall of the temple and the cessation of its solemnities, and he depended for his knowledge of such topics on his readings of the Old Testament, in which he had no advantage over modern scholars. He has here, as in many other places, misinterpreted the text.

<sup>1</sup> Dent. xvi. 10. <sup>2</sup> Ex. xxiii. 16. <sup>3</sup> Num. xxviii. 26. <sup>4</sup> Lev. xxiii. 15-21; Num. xxviii. 26-31.



and the next was most appropriately chosen as the occasion for his vindication, and for the inauguration of his kingdom on earth. The day was also appropriate from its being the day of the week on which he arose from the dead.

The persons thus assembled together and filled with the Holy Spirit were not, as many have supposed, the one hundred and twenty disciples mentioned in a parenthesis in the previous chapter, but the twelve apostles. This is made certain by the grammatical connection between the first verse of this chapter and the last of the preceding. Taken together they read as follows: "And they gave lots for them, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place."<sup>1</sup>

The house in which the apostles were sitting when the Spirit came upon them was not the upper chamber in which they were abiding, but some apartment of the temple; for, as we learn from Luke's former treatise, the apostles during these days of waiting were "contin-

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<sup>1</sup> The supposition first advanced by Chrysostom, and adopted very generally by more recent commentators, that all the one hundred and twenty were included, and the view advanced in modern times (see Alford *in loco*), that all the disciples of Jesus who had come to the feast were included, are entirely without support in the context; and the only plausible reason given for either is the universal language employed in the quotation made below from Joel: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," etc. But it is obvious at a glance that these words were not all fulfilled on that occasion. Nobody then present was seeing visions, or dreaming dreams. There was here only the beginning of a fulfillment which afterward was extended until all was done which Joel predicted.

ually in the temple praising God ;" that is, continually there through the hours in which the temple was open. The upper chamber was their place of lodging.<sup>1</sup>

The firelike and forked tongues which were visible above the heads of the apostles were symbols of the audible tongues in which they immediately began to speak; and they added much to the splendor of the scene, which soon riveted the attention of the gathering throng. The statement that the tongues "appeared to them" is not intended to exclude as witnesses of it those who were drawn together, but it points to the fact that the apostles were alone when the phenomenon first made its appearance.

When the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance, the promise of a baptism in the Holy Spirit and of power from on high was fulfilled. The power took effect on their minds, and its presence was manifested outwardly by their speaking in languages which they had never learned.<sup>2</sup> The inner and mental miracle was demon-

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<sup>1</sup> In opposition to this conclusion, Alford says: "Certainly Luke would not have used this word ('all the house') of a chamber in the temple, or of the temple itself, without further explanation." (See also Meyer *in loco*). But explanation sufficient had already been given by the statement that the apostles were "continually in the temple;" and, although Alford says that this statement can not apply here, he gives no good reason for the assertion, and we insist that it can and does. An upper room in a private house could not possibly have afforded space for the assembly which witnessed this phenomenon; while one of the many apartments in the temple court, with one side open to the whole area of the court, would have been perfectly suited to the occasion.

<sup>2</sup> In regard to the author's meaning here, the following emphatic statement of Alford is to be heartily adopted: "There can be no question in any unprejudiced mind, that the fact which

strated by the outward and physical. The promise, "It shall not be ye that speak, but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you," was fulfilled in its most literal sense; for the very words which they uttered were supplied to them immediately by the Spirit. They were not anxious how or what they should say, neither did they premeditate. It was literally given them in that hour what they should speak. Such power had never before been bestowed on men. It was the baptism in the Holy Spirit; not of their bodies, like John's baptism in water, but of their spirits. It was not a literal baptism, for this act is not to be affirmed of the connection between spirit and spirit; but the word baptism is used metaphorically. As the body, when baptized in water, is sunk beneath its surface and completely overwhelmed, so their spirits were completely under the control of the Holy Spirit, their very words being his and not theirs. The metaphor is justified by the absolute power which the divine Spirit exerted upon their spirits. Such is not the case with the ordinary influences of the

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this narrative sets before us is that the disciples began to *speak in various languages, viz: the languages of the nations below enumerated, and perhaps others*. All attempts to evade this are connected with some forcing of the text, or some far-fetched and indefensible explanation." To admit with Meyer (*Com. in loco*), that this is the author's meaning, and then to say, "The sudden communication of a facility of speaking foreign languages is neither logically possible nor psychologically and morally conceivable," is not only to deny the reliability of the author, and thus to throw discredit on all of his accounts of miracles, but it is to deny that the Spirit can act miraculously upon the minds of men. The reader who is curious to know the many preposterous attempts which have been made to explain away this miracle, will find a sufficient account of them in Meyer's *Commentary on this passage*.

Spirit, consequently these are not styled baptisms in the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. THE EFFECT ON THE MULTITUDE, 5-13.

Vv. 5-13. If we attempt to conceive some method by which the miraculous inspiration of a company of men could be immediately demonstrated to an audience, we shall doubtless be at a loss to think of any other than the one employed on this occasion—that of speaking intelligibly the wonderful works of God in a variety of tongues unknown to the speakers. This shows the appropriateness of the particular miracle here wrought, and even the necessity for it in order to the immediate conviction of the hearers. Such an exhibition could be available for its purpose only in the presence of persons acquainted with the languages spoken; but the present occasion supplied this condition, and to this the author next addresses himself: (5) Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (6) And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying, Are not all these who speak Galileans? (8) And how hear we every man in our own language, wherein we were born? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, (10) in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, (11) both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our own tongues the mighty works of God. (12) And

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<sup>1</sup> See further remarks on this subject under chap. x. 44-46.