

TRANSITIONS
IN
CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY

THE TRANSITIONS FROM PRIMITIVE TO CLASSICAL
AND FROM
CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY

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Scope and Contents: This dissertation has a two-fold aim: (1) to give an accurate analytic account of the transition from primitive Christian eschatology to that which, in the wake of Luke's Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles, became classical Christian eschatology; and (2) to define and resolve, in principle, the problems which the historical consciousness of contemporary man poses for classical Christian eschatology. Specifically, this has been done in two steps: (1) by an analysis of why primitive Christian eschatology became a problem, together with the Lucan solution to that problem; and (2) by an analysis of why the Lucan solution also became a problem to the modern mind. Using the Lucan achievement as a paradigm, the dissertation concludes with an attempt to specify a way toward resolution of the contemporary problem.

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The intention of the present study is to give an accurate analytic account of the transition from primitive Christian eschatology to that which, in the wake of Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles, became classical Christian eschatology. According to primitive Christian eschatology the end of the world was imminent; in classical Christian eschatology God's definitive saving act was dissociated from all suppositions about the imminent end of time. The transition from the first view to the second was a response to an urgent question. No doubt the response took shape 'at sundry times and in divers manners'; it was hardly the work of one Christian mind. It did, however, find a more conscious and finished expression in the work of Luke than in any other New Testament or Early Apostolic writer. Accordingly the ambition to offer an accurate analytic account of the transition is consciously limited to concern with the Lucan achievement.

What Luke does for classical Christian eschatology, the conclusion of the present dissertation proposes to do, in principle and within modest limits, for contemporary Christian eschatology. Therefore, the Lucan opus has a two-fold function in the present study. First it functions

as a source for history. That is, it provides the basic documentation for the change from primitive to classical eschatology. Secondly, it functions as a paradigm for further development in Christian eschatological thought. This paradigmatic function calls for explanation from the outset, as it is the key to the final goal of the present work: namely, to contribute to the current transition in Christian thought from classical to contemporary eschatology.

Luke undertook a work of discernment at once conservative and creative. His advance beyond the letter of Christian tradition bearing on eschatology was conscious and deliberate. At the same time he sought to maintain the most perfect, most flawless fidelity to the Christian heritage. Our study of Luke aims at discovering how he carried out his intention, for it is precisely the two-fold Lucan ideal -- fidelity to the Christian heritage combined with and expressed in advance beyond the letter of tradition -- which we hope to realize in the concluding pages of the present work.

The fact that we consider the transitions from primitive to classical and from classical to contemporary Christian eschatology as projects of discernment indicates an important heuristic principle operative throughout the present work: Christianity, whether of antiquity or of the present time, is characterized by an inalienable core of

belief. That is, Christianity has not been, nor is it now, a mere syncretism, ultimately normless and so open to development in any direction. Without wishing to inaugurate here a full discussion, we can nevertheless define the norm of Christianity in general terms. It is Jesus Christ considered as the revelation of God. Christ himself, then, is the "disclosure basis" of Christian doctrine, specifically including Christian eschatology.

The publication of Hans Conzelmann's The Theology of St. Luke¹ has given fresh impetus to Lucan studies and has made an important contribution to the rise of 'redaction criticism' (redaktionsgeschichte). Prior to its publication studies in Luke-Acts were characterized by a continual depreciation. James M. Robinson says this:

The present depreciation of Luke stems from Franz Overbeck (Christentum und Kultur, 1919, 80-82), who maintained the incompatibility of history and Christianity. His position was thus diametrically opposed to that of Harnack, who attempted to identify history and Christianity, and consequently thought well of Luke and his 'great historical work' (Luke the Physician, I). Therefore the ensuing reaction against Harnack brought with it a depreciation of Luke.²

¹Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Faber and Faber and Harper and Brothers, 1960). This book was first published in German in 1954 with the title, Die Mitte der Zeit.

²James M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1957), p. 18, n. 3.

Incorporated into the Lucan opus are earlier Christian traditions. These generally appear in single, brief units. Form criticism (formgeschichte) has recognized these separate units, investigated their origins and traced their development into their present form. In so doing it claims to reveal the original state of the Jesus tradition. In a limited way form criticism has incidentally helped to define the redactional work of the Evangelists. Though the form critics tended to underestimate the scope of the gospel redactions, they did prepare the way for the new development of redaction criticism, the beginning of which (in New Testament scholarship) we may date at 1954, when Conzelmann published his work on Luke.

Conzelmann's primary insight bore on the theological density of the work of redaction. Luke, far from being a mere collector and scissors-and-paste editor, was himself an author in the full sense of the term. This pivotal insight, however, was no guarantee that the detailed follow-up would be truly exegesis and not eisegesis. Indeed, the present writer has felt compelled to come to agreement with the severe judgement of Professor F. O. Francis, who says: "Conzelmann . . . and others really start outside the data, knowing in advance what eschatology is and what its relation to history can be -- and, by the way, knowing

what history necessarily is for Luke."³

Conzelmann's Interpretation of Lucan Eschatology

The essential thesis of The Theology of St. Luke is that the main, over-riding motive in Luke's undertaking to write his Gospel and Acts of the Apostles was to resolve the crisis within the Christian community caused by the realization that the parousia or return of Christ was not to be immediately, as Christians had believed it was. The Christian conviction had been that the sequence of events inaugurated by the proclamation of John the Baptist was eschatological; that is, John's proclamation, the proclamation of Jesus and his public career, and, above all, the death and resurrection of Jesus announced God's definitive saving act and the immediate end of time. But the hard fact of the matter was that time passed and the parousia, which would bring history to a close, did not come. Paul had long wrestled with this dilemma, without satisfactorily resolving it. Finally, maintains Conzelmann, Luke resolved the crisis by deliberately "de-eschatologizing" the events which Christians previously had taken to be eschatological. This means that the thrust of the two-part Lucan redaction was (a) to present a reconsidered version of John the Baptist,

³Fred O. Francis, "Eschatology and History in Luke-Acts", Journal of the American Academy of Religion 37, 1969, pp. 49-63.

of Jesus, and of the early Church, according to which each of them belonged to distinct epochs within salvation-history, but none of them to the eschatological moment itself; and (b) accordingly to postpone the eschatological moment to an indefinitely removed future. What had previously been considered as eschatology was now, according to Conzelmann's analysis of Luke, to be considered simply as distinct moments in sacred history. "Since eschatology means end-time and since the end-time is deferred, then according to Conzelmann Luke must de-eschatologize the events he describes as history."⁴ Thus, on-going history replaces eschatology. As Conzelmann puts it, "Luke in fact replaces the early expectation by a comprehensive scheme of a different kind."⁵ That scheme dissociates the Kingdom of God from God's saving act in Jesus and strictly identifies it with the last events bringing an end to time. The Kingdom therefore remains outside of history until there is the final encounter. History and eschatology are mutually exclusive. The Church, however, proclaims the Kingdom of God, as Jesus did. It looks back on the epoch of Jesus and points to it as the ground of 'hope' for the

⁴Erick R. Egertson, John the Baptist in Lucan Theology (an unpublished dissertation presented to the faculty of the Graduate Theological Union and the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California, May 20, 1968), p. 37.

⁵Conzelmann, p. 96.

Kingdom of God.

Luke 16:16 is in Conzelmann's view the pivotal text for Luke's understanding of eschatology: "The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently" (cf. Matt. 11:12-13). The important words are *μέχρι* and *ἀπὸ τότε*. Conzelmann takes the first to mean "up to (and including)". Thus: "up to (and including) John the Baptist there was 'only' the law and the prophets, but 'from now on' (*μέχρι*) there is 'also' the preaching of the Kingdom of God."⁶ On this basis we learn (1) that the preaching of repentance is continued by Jesus but (2) now, precisely as a preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. Conzelmann takes advantage of the light shed backwards and forwards upon the Lucan redaction by this verse to interpret Luke's resolution of the problem of the delayed parousia.

This light does not reach to the Infancy narratives, for Conzelmann treats them as non-Lucan or at least as unassimilated to Luke's overarching redactional scheme. Conzelmann's interpretation of Luke 16:16 and his neglect of the Infancy stories calls for a brief critique.

When Luke 16:16 is interpreted within the context

⁶Conzelmann, p. 23.

of that which goes before it (which includes the εὐηγγελίζετο of 3:18) it is much more likely that John is included in the preaching of the Kingdom of God rather than the law and the prophets. Flender says:

Jesus is talking about the external signs of the Kingdom of God. That this is the point is shown by the phrase ἀπο τότε (from that time), a very rare one in Luke. Generally he uses ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν to bring out the qualitative difference between two periods. Luke 16:16 is an exception. Here two similar periods are placed side by side. The words ἀπὸ τότε separate them but at the same time express the continuity between John the Baptist and preaching of the Kingdom of God.⁷

It is hardly possible to deal with the eschatological understanding of Luke without a study of the Infancy narratives. Minear shows in his analysis of them that they are, beyond doubt, a Lucan composition.⁸ "These stories fundamentally relate to the main body of the redaction as the anticipation of events to the reality of events, or prophecy to fulfillment."⁹

According to Conzelmann the main features of the Lucan redaction which point conclusively to his reinterpretation of Christian eschatology in the face of a

⁷Helmut Flender, St. Luke, Theologian of Redemptive History, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 123.

⁸Paul S. Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories", Studies in Luke-Acts, eds. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 111-130.

⁹Egerton, p. 30.

realization that the parousia was not to be immediate are:

1. Luke separates John the Baptist and Jesus both epochally and geographically. John is placed in the epoch of Israel; in so doing the eschatological character of his mission, evident in the other synoptics, is removed.
2. By making the period of Jesus the 'centre of time' and a period free from the power of Satan, Luke uses it as a portrayal of the Kingdom of God. The emphasis is on its nature and not on its presence within history.¹⁰
3. The Christian Church, the present epoch of redemptive history, is related by Luke to the Kingdom of God as its herald. Following his interpretation of Lk. 16:16 it continues to preach, as Jesus himself did, the hope of a future Kingdom but in no sense does it embody that Kingdom. The Kingdom is both outside and beyond time, an ideal metaphysical realm.
4. In addition Luke, unlike Mark and Matthew, adds an Acts of the Apostles to his Gospel. Conzelmann maintains that this too is a Lucan innovation demanded by a

¹⁰Conzelmann interprets Lk. 4:13, "And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time", as the beginning of the repression of Satan, who does not appear again until Lk. 22:3, when he entered into Judas Iscariot at the time of the Passion. The incident of Lk. 11:14-23, which is an account of Jesus' casting out of a devil, is understood by Conzelmann as encouragement to the Church that Jesus possessed power over Satan.

recognition of the delay of the parousia.¹¹

The implication of Conzelmann's thesis is that Luke writes only to resolve the eschatological crisis of the Christian community. He maintains this in spite of Luke's own testimony in 1:4, "that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed."

Each of the above points will be treated critically in the larger context of our own positive statement of the Lucan achievement.

Positive Statement of the Lucan Achievement

It is natural to discover an eschatological self-understanding within the primitive Christian community. Not only was this the community's inheritance from its Judaic roots,¹² it was explicit in the teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus as recorded by Mark and Matthew as well as by Luke. When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Lk. 7:20), his understanding of his own role as the precursor of the Messiah is quite evident. Jesus told the disciples of John to go back and tell him what

¹¹Conzelmann, p. 17, n. 2.

¹²Otto Betz, "The Kerygma of Luke", Interpretation 22, 1968, pp. 131-146. He says that the Qumran texts also disclose the eschatological character of the roots of earliest Christianity. "The teacher of Qumran . . . could not yet proclaim the gospel of the realized reign of God." So the question was raised: "Who will be the messenger of realized eschatology?"

they had witnessed. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news preached to them" (Lk. 7:22). In quoting this Messianic prophecy of Is. 61:1 as being fulfilled in himself, the Lucan Jesus makes explicit his own understanding of himself and his mission. To ears already sensitized to Jewish eschatology, sayings like this one bespeak the actualization of the 'reign' of God. Vindication of this persuasion came with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Consequently the early Christians, having no expectation of an ever lengthening history between the resurrection of Jesus and the parousia, naturally presumed an immediate realization of the Kingdom of God.

The realization of the Kingdom of God meant the actualization of the absolute rule of Christ. Jesus whom they had known personally or through the apostolic preaching would be 'completely' victorious over all forces and powers in heaven or on earth or under the earth. The decisive event in the ongoing eschatological struggle had already been accomplished in the resurrection of Jesus. Christians, proclaiming this decisive victory, were engaged in the struggle against the already broken power of evil.

Under certain circumstances it is said proverbially that 'one cannot see the forest for the trees'. The study

of a particular aspect of an issue often blinds the unwary person to the whole context which gives that aspect its full meaning. In this way it was the resurrection, and not the whole life and teachings of Jesus, that the first Christians proclaimed to the world. It would have been anti-climactic, indeed impossible, to introduce any statement of parousia to the early Christians after they had experienced the resurrection victory. It was the resurrection that vindicated Jesus' messianic claims.

That the delay of the end of time was a real problem for the early Christians is certain. Again, with even a very minimal knowledge of human nature, it is reasonable to assume that as time continued to unfold between the resurrection and the Christian community a slackening of fervour began to impose itself in Christian life. The problem of the delayed parousia doubtless showed itself in pastoral problems. It is clear (from Acts 3:19-22 and Rom. 11:25-27 among other texts) that the leaders of the community did their best to make positive sense of the delay. For a time the old hope of the immediate 'end-of-time' and the new realization that the end was not to be immediate existed side by side. The search for an explanation solicited theological reflection on the sayings of Jesus, now in process of being committed to writing as eyewitnesses to his life passed on.

Luke was not the first Christian writer to take cognizance of the delay of the parousia.¹³ Of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians (50-51), Kümmel says: "Paul, in view of the overheated eschatological expectation on the part of some Christians in Thessalonica, had occasion to point out that the parousia would be delayed, in spite of the fact that he still held fast to the expectation of the parousia."¹⁴ In I Cor. 15:51 Paul says, "We shall not all sleep . . .". The implication of this is that some have and others will. Though he never relinquishes the immediacy of the parousia, Paul expresses an awareness of the on-goingness of time. In Eph. 1:10 the writer describes God's purpose set forth in Christ "as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth". He thus allows

¹³John A.T. Robinson, Jesus and His Coming, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1957), p. 15⁴. Robinson maintains that there is ambiguity in Luke's writing on the parousia. On the basis of Acts 2 and 3 it appears as if the expectation of a parousia was a later development in Christianity. "The powers of the age to come are already at work. The situation no longer requires repentance so that the Messiah may come (a typically Jewish conception) but because the Messiah has come. There is still a waiting, a 'not yet'; but it is a waiting till all is reduced to the reign of Christ. No more than in Acts, chapter 3, is there a second messianic event: such an idea had not yet been entertained."

¹⁴Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. A.J. Mattill, Jr. (14th ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 188.

"the perspective of an imminent parousia to widen out on its further side to reveal the full extent of the wonder of the consummation of all things in Christ."¹⁵ Mark, too, has coloured almost the whole of his little apocalypse (13:5-37) with a reinterpretation regarding the immediacy of the end of time. Mk. 13:7, ". . . but the end is not yet"; 13:22, "False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the elect"; 13:32, "But of that day or hour no-one knows . . .". Wilckens concludes that "one cannot say, for example, that Luke received a tradition entirely oriented toward imminent eschatology, and then, being faced with a delay of the parousia reinterpreted it in an original way by means of his view of redemptive history . The traditions which he worked into his writings are obviously far more varied than such a simple picture would lead us to believe."¹⁶

It would be simplistic to say that Luke writes only to resolve the eschatological crisis to which the delay of

¹⁵J.E. Fison, The Christian Hope, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1954), p. 152. Since the problem here concerns the resolution of the crisis caused by the delay of the parousia, this remark is relevant even should Ephesians not have had Paul for its author.

¹⁶Ulrich Wilckens, "Interpreting Luke-Acts in a Period of Existentialist Theology", Studies in Luke-Acts, eds. Leander E. Leck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 65.

the parousia had given rise. Luke himself reflects both sides of the issue. Lk. 18:8, "I tell you that he (God) will avenge them (the elect) speedily; 21:32, This generation will not pass away till all has taken place; 19:11b, . . . because they supposed the kingdom of God was to appear immediately; Acts 1:7, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority."

Nonetheless the problem of the delayed parousia which had gradually come to be realized by the early Christians, and is reflected throughout the whole New Testament, finds its solution most clearly articulated in Luke-Acts. The main features of the Lucan solution are:

1. Luke eschatologizes the whole of history since John the Baptist and Jesus so that it is no longer a self-contained realm. The Kingdom of God has broken into it. History is now being shaped by eschatology.
2. The Church, the spirit-filled community of believers, is affirmed by the event of Pentecost to be charged with that saving power which is an anticipation of the Kingdom yet to come. Its role in salvation history is emphasized in the Acts of the Apostles as the Church is portrayed as the authentic "restoration" of Israel.
3. Luke removes the immediacy from the parousia. However, in so doing, he does not place it at some time in a

distant future. He simply remains agnostic as far as the 'time of the end' is concerned.

4. Luke, in effecting the transition from that which has since been described as primitive Christian eschatology to classical Christian eschatology, has maintained fidelity to the Christian Gospel as it had been passed on by Paul and the other synoptics.

These features are discussed separately and in detail in the succeeding sections of this dissertation.

Luke Eschatologizes History

from the Time of John the Baptist and Jesus

It has already been stated that Luke as he wrote his Gospel and Acts of the Apostles was both aware of, and part of, the crisis within the primitive Christian community caused by the realization of the delay of the parousia. They had believed it was to be immediate. Luke, in response to the on-goingness of time, realizes the events of which he is writing are historical and locates them at a definite point in time: Lk. 2:2, "This was the first enrolment when Quirinius was governor of Syria; 19:44b, . . . because you did not know the time of your visitation". However he is not writing primarily as a historian but as an evangelist to proclaim the 'good news', a term he uses many times in the Gospel and Acts. The good news bears witness to the fact that God working within history had

established a new covenant with mankind in Jesus. The events of which he writes are decisive, affecting not only the course of history but its meaning. These acts can never be undone; never can there be a return to the previous state of affairs.

"Historization", as the term is currently used, is thus defined by Flender: "arranging events into a clearly organized system of cause and effect."¹⁷ It refers, then, to an immanentist view of history. Flender adds, "Luke never treats history in this objective sort of way."¹⁸ History could never of itself have brought forth the Kingdom of God; God himself has taken the initiative and approached man. The history which Luke writes has 'salvation' as its subject, a salvation which is actualized according to the plan of God. Thus history since these events has had an eschatological meaning.

To say that Luke has eschatologized history is to say that he believes that the Kingdom of God has been and continues to be operative within it. In this sense the eschaton has arrived.

The Lucan Infancy narratives cast John the Baptist in the role of Elijah, filled with the Holy Spirit, "to

¹⁷Flender, p.36

¹⁸Ibid., p.36

make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (1:17b). Jesus is "the Son of God" (1:35b) whose conception is unique:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (1:35).¹⁹ The role of the 'Spirit' is important throughout Luke-Acts, as well as in the Infancy narratives. It points to the Messianic and eschatological character of the birth of Jesus.

Luke, recording the geneology of Jesus, offers an order which is the reverse of that in Matthew's Gospel (Lk. 3:23-38; Matt. 1:1-16). He also has two important differences from Matthew's account: (1) "Jesus . . . the son, as people thought, of Joseph" (3:23) and (2) he traces the lineage of Jesus to "son of God" (3:38). The implication of (1) is that though people supposed Jesus to be the son of Joseph, they were mistaken for he was, as v. 38 makes clear, the son of God, the new Adam. He emphasizes

¹⁹Luke uses the Greek *δύναμις* in this context (see also Lk. 4:14; 5:17; 24:49; Acts 3:12; 8:10). Other places as Lk. 4:6; 10:19; 22:53; Acts 1:8; 5:4; 8:19 he uses *ἐξουσία*. It is clear that he uses *δύναμις* whenever he refers directly to the 'power' from God; when there is the idea of power being received, even by Satan, he uses *ἐξουσία*. For a discussion of the significance of his use of these words see Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, D-h, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 300. Kittel says: "Luke perceives the beginning of the existence as a special and unique act of Divine Power which makes Jesus 'ἑὸς θεοῦ' ". The resurrection confirms this unique relationship (Acts 13:33-34).

Conzelmann's 'adoptionistic' Christology does not take into account the Infancy narratives of Luke.

that through Jesus God enters directly into the movement of history. No longer is it a self-contained realm. Jesus is God's Son, not because God chose to anoint and equip him with the authority to achieve man's salvation, but by virtue of his metaphysical union with the being of God. That this is Luke's understanding is evident from his account of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. John was to be the son of Zechariah (1:13); Jesus was to be conceived through the power of the Most High (1:35). This is further substantiated by Luke's addition to the description of the Transfiguration (9:28-36). Luke refers to the content of the conversation of Jesus with Moses and Elijah and also that "Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep but kept awake, and they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him" (9:32). The reference to "his glory" points towards his union with God (cf. John 1:14b).

Jesus begins his ministry, according to the Lucan redaction, in the synagogue at Nazareth proclaiming that in him the prophecy of Is. 61:1-2 is fulfilled. The reaction of his hearers to his claim and his call to repentance indicates that he was not saying the kingdom of God was coming but rather that in some sense it has already come. Knowing who he was, the son of Mary and Joseph, they were infuriated by his claim. In 10:23-24 Jesus says to his disciples: "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see!".

To the people who witnessed one of his miracles he says in 11:20: "But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you."²⁰

The parables of the 'mustard seed' and the 'leaven' of 13:18-21 also point to the present nature of the kingdom; while acknowledging that it still has to grow. Zacchaeus' repentance in 19:1-9 resulted in Jesus saying to him:

"Today salvation has come to this house . . ." (see also 23:43). In 17:20 Jesus says: ". . . for behold the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."²¹ For Luke the kingdom

²⁰Conzelmann maintains that Luke, in his redaction, places this saying here to assure the young Church that even though it had not yet been exercised, Jesus indeed had power over Satan. This is in keeping with his scheme of redemptive history. Vincent Taylor, The Life and Ministry of Jesus, (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1954), p. 76, says: "Jesus proclaims that the Kingdom is . . . present in a true sense in his mighty works."

²¹There is much discussion about the 'ἐν τῷ ὑμῶν ἐστίν.' It is noteworthy that the New English Bible translates it 'among you'. C.H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 62, n. 2, discusses the translation at length. Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke, p. 122ff argues that this phrase can only be understood in the context of passages like Lk. 9:11 and therefore means "it is the message of the Kingdom that is present, which in Luke is distinguished from the Kingdom itself. He knows nothing of an imminent development on the basis of the preaching of the Kingdom." To maintain this is to impose an interpretation on the text and to refuse to permit it to speak on its own terms.

This saying of Jesus is peculiar to Luke's Gospel and as such is of extreme importance in understanding his concept of the presence of the Kingdom here and now. The verb is in the present tense and would make no contextual sense otherwise.

of God is not a completely future realm; it is present by anticipation within history now.

In discussing Luke's eschatologizing of history by the entrance of Jesus into it, and thereby of the Kingdom of God, his references to Satan cannot be overlooked. Otto Betz observes that the Qumran texts indicate that "the coming of the Kingdom of God and the realization of God's reign on earth presupposed the condemnation of Satan and his demons in heaven."²² This belief sheds light on the incident associated with the mission of the seventy-two (10:17-18). They jubilantly tell Jesus upon their return that "the demons are subject to us in your name!" Jesus replied: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Peter, in Acts 10:38, testifies to Jesus' healing of all "that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (underlining mine). This can only be understood as evidence of the decisive defeat of Satan and the beginning of the 'eschaton'.

That the Kingdom of God is present and by its presence imposes upon history an eschatological dimension is the explicit understanding of Luke. Nonetheless Luke has many references that point towards the future realization of the Kingdom of God. Among the sayings in which the

²²Betz, Otto, "The Kerygma of Luke", Interpretation, 22, 1968, p. 136.

emphasis is future are: 11:2, "Thy kingdom come; 13:29, And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God; and 22:18, I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes". This does not imply either that Luke is confused or that he is working with two incompatible traditions. It implies, rather, that though the Kingdom of God is formally yet to come, it has "virtually" come already; that is, the virtus or power of the Kingdom is already operative in history in anticipation of its plenary realization at the end of time. Luke understands the movement of history, in general, to be linear and progressive; but the historical dynamism inaugurated by Jesus is not merely linear and progressive toward the goal of history, it is already charged with the goal. Linear history has itself become eschatological.

Obviously, Luke has thereby made an important conceptual change in the sense of eschatology. He has effected a differentiation of two elements which up till his time had never been clearly and incisively distinguished. He has discriminated between "the end" as goal (concretely, the definitive saving act of God in the paschal mysteries of Christ) and "the end" as stop (concretely, the parousia). He has eschatologized history by affirming the realization, in history, of the end as goal. By the same token he has

liberated the community that itself consciously lives this eschatological history from the original simplicity of expecting the end as stop, to come about immediately as if by a kind of necessity, inasmuch as the end as goal had been reached in principle. The Lucan differentiation was not inconsiderable liberation of the community. It represented a service of truth and a service of the church, and it remains a striking paradigm of what in the past hundred and fifty years has come to be known as "doctrinal development".

As we have already noted, Luke's linear conception of history is altogether free of immanentist ideology. Thus, the Kingdom of God is not a programme of social or other reforms that men might launch by their own efforts. Its reality, rather, hinges on the act of God. History takes on eschatological quality and men stand already under the definitive judgement of God. To reject God's purposes (as concretized, for example, in the apostolic preaching) is to be "cut off from among the people" (Acts 3:23; Lk. 10:16). As every individual stands under judgement, so does the world as a totality. In Lk. 21:5ff. Luke sees this judgement as already begun in the destruction of Jerusalem, an historic event. Francis makes this point conclusively. He writes:

Luke closely links the eschatological signs in heaven with what we must understand as the eschatological destruction of Jerusalem. This simply means that one cannot isolate the destruction of Jerusalem as only a historical event. The darkening of the sun, moon and stars (Joel 2:10, cf. Lk. 21:25), the anguish of men (Joel 2:6, cf. Lk. 21:25,26), and the quaking of the earth (Joel 2:10, cf. Lk. 21:11) all relate to the charge of the soldiers who scale the wall and burst through weapons to leap upon the city (Joel 2:7-8), and leave a desolate wilderness (Joel 2:3). That is to say, Joel, Luke's source for the prophecy of eschatological witness and cosmic signs related these to the desolation of Jerusalem and so does Luke.²³

Contrary to the apocalyptic tradition generally, the crucial and pivotal event of history for Luke is not at its end but at its centre. It is the resurrection of Jesus, proclaimed in the apostolic kerygma. This event is the confirmation of the anticipated presence within history of the Kingdom of God. 'Secular' events now have 'sacred' significance; in fact there is no more any distinction between them. History unfolds according to the plan of God, with the new quality given it by Jesus, the Lord and Saviour.²⁴ Paradoxically the 'end' was revealed at the resurrection and yet it is the same end which is yet to come. The risen Christ, says Luke, is the model for the end. He is simply "the first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23).

²³Fred O. Francis, "Eschatology and History in Luke-Acts", p. 56.

²⁴Luke does not thereby deny that ever since the beginning God has been the God of history. Luke's claim is that in Jesus the power of evil was broken.

Around Jesus both the past and the future, as well as the present, acquire a new significance. Oscar Cullman points out in Christ and Time²⁵ that in Jesus the decisive battle in God's war against evil has been won. Though there are more battles to be fought, victory is already certain.

To summarize: The Lucan redaction eschatologizes history by the entry into history of its very goal. But the goal of history is present in a unique and (with reference to Judaic eschatological hope) absolutely unexpected way. The goal of history is anticipated by the resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit. History goes on, but with a difference. The Kingdom at work prophetically in Jesus, is confirmed by his resurrection, his ascension, his gift of the Spirit and of the forgiveness of sins. The end of time is not to be known by the disciples (Acts 1:7-8). Yet, with the outpouring of the Spirit, the community already lives "in the last days" (Acts 2:17).

²⁵Oscar Cullman, Christ and Time, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964).

The Church, the Spirit-filled Community,
Attests and Manifests the Kingdom of God

If, as Jesus had claimed and his resurrection had confirmed, the Kingdom of God had in some sense already come, how could it be defined in the interim between the resurrection and the end of time? Vincent Taylor presents the issue as follows:

The foundation idea (of Kingdom) is expressed by the Hebrew word malkuth, the active rule of God. God's sovereignty in the hearts and lives of men expressed in the doing of His will describes in its fundamental aspects what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom implies God's kingship, His kingly rule. The kingship, of course, implies a community, a domain in which God's rule is fulfilled, . . . but we wholly miss the key to the teaching and parables of Jesus unless we realize that his primary emphasis was upon God's kingship.²⁶

Schnackenburg says that "we should on no account call the βασιλεία in its present form 'kingdom of God' because in English this suggests something objectively completed and realized."²⁷ He too emphasizes its meaning as God's kingship.

According to Luke the community of Christians, i.e. the Church, lives in a period of salvation history which will culminate at the parousia. The parousia will

²⁶Vincent Taylor, The Life and Ministry of Jesus, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1954), pp. 66-67.

²⁷Rudolf Schnackenburg, God's Rule and Kingdom, trans. John Murray (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), p. 354.

see the establishment of God's perfect Kingdom. The question which we must answer is one of the relationship between the Church and the perfect ' βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ' in the Lucan redaction.²⁸

There are at least four occasions in Luke-Acts on which Jesus is questioned, either directly or indirectly, about 'when' the Kingdom of God should come. Lk. 17:20, "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming . . ."; 19:11, "He proceeded to tell a parable . . . because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately"; 21:7, "And they asked him, Teacher, when will this be?"; Acts 1:6, "Lord will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Each time the question is posed Jesus refused to respond in terms of time. If the Kingdom were to be identical with the coming-to-be of the Church, it is reasonable to assume that Luke would not have been so emphatic about Jesus' rejection of the question 'when'. The implication is that the coming of the Kingdom is not to be identical with the beginning and growth of the Church.

The Lucan account of the pre-ascension teaching by Jesus given to his apostles says that Jesus spoke to them "of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Yet to their question

²⁸Conzelmann maintains that there is no direct relationship between the Church and either God's actual kingship or the perfect kingdom of God. The Church, like Jesus, proclaims the 'hope' of a future kingdom; in no sense is it present now.

of time which follows in v. 6, Jesus answers, "It is not for you to know . . .". Were the Church to have been the earthly manifestation of the Kingdom in Luke's understanding the "no" of Jesus at this point would certainly have been qualified. As Acts opens in this way so does it close. Paul; in Rome, is "preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:31). There is in this account the certainty that the preaching of the kingdom required a knowledge of Jesus. Nonetheless the kingdom appears to be other than the Church.

Schnackenburg, from his study, reveals a change of emphasis in the preaching of Acts. He says:

Linguistic examination reveals the centre of gravity has shifted from God's reign to the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah and Lord. Only once is the basileia made the object of εὐαγγελίζεσθαι (8:12); the person of Jesus occurs more frequently (5:42; 8:35; 11:20; 17:18) or other closely related expressions: the word (8:4); the word of the Lord (15:35), peace through Jesus Christ (10:36), the promise fulfilled in Jesus (13:32 seq.). The same is true of the parallel and related words κηρύσσειν (on two occasions with βασίλεια namely 20:25; 28:31; otherwise with different phrases 8:5; 9:20; 10:42; 19:13). Frequently God's reign is proclaimed in conjunction with Jesus Christ. . . . It is even more significant that the reign of God is no longer mentioned in the missionary discourses. In the whole of Acts it is introduced only seven times as against thirty-nine times in Luke's gospel. On the other hand, the theme of Christ, that is the gospel of Jesus' redeeming ministry from his baptism, and of his crucifixion and Resurrection, is the central motif of these discourses.²⁹

²⁹Schnackenburg; p. 261.

Instead of the immediacy of the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth this shift of emphasis to the Gospel of Jesus, the risen and ascended Lord, focuses on his messianic role continuing in heaven. As the exalted Lord he guides and protects the Church on earth. In this connection it is noteworthy that Lk. 22:68-69 omits the "coming with the clouds of heaven" of Mk. 14:62 and Matt. 26:64; he adds the words 'of God' to the 'right hand of Power'. C. H. Dodd says of Luke's omission that "it is the session at God's right hand that is immediately impending"³⁰ in Luke's redaction. Acts 7:56, the conclusion of the speech of Stephen, expresses the same emphasis upon "the Son of Man standing at God's right hand". The development of this understanding of Jesus, as Messiah, reigning from God's right hand is crucial to the Lucan interpretation of the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom.

We shall now examine the question of what the Church is for Luke. Luke's is the only extant account of the event of Pentecost. This, if not the conception of the Church, is its birth. He interprets these events as fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. The quotation of the prophecy in Acts 2:17-21 concludes with a promise of salvation. "It is of significance for Luke's eschatological understanding

³⁰Dodd, p. 78, n. 2.

of the Spirit and witness that he concludes the quotation here."³¹ In so doing he identifies the beginning of the Church as an eschatological event; it begins 'ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις' (2:17).

The ἐκκλησία, eschatologized by the Spirit, continues to administer the Messianic graces necessary for salvation. These are the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Nonetheless Schnackenburg concludes that "the Spirit, God's great eschatological gift does appear as an independent reality but is still the Spirit of Jesus. Luke 24:49 makes it clear that it is Jesus who sends the 'promise of the Father' to his disciples and all those who believe in Jesus receive the same Spirit in baptism (Acts 2:38)."³² Therefore it is Jesus who is Lord of the Church on earth.

The Church, for Luke, is still the 'pilgrim Church'; it is on its way towards the realization of the Kingdom of God. It is assured that the power of evil has been crushed though it has not yet been completely wiped out. Jesus, in the parable of the sower and its subsequent explanation, Lk. 8:4-15 (cf. Mk. 4:1-20; Matt. 13:1-23), teaches that though the seed is alike, to bring forth fruit requires "holding it fast in an honest and good heart" (8:15). Those

³¹Francis, p. 52.

³²Schnackenburg; p. 264.

who do not persevere become victims of the power of evil. Lk. 22:28 makes the same point. It is the apostles' continuance with Jesus in his trials that will permit them to be given a place in the Kingdom. Simply accepting Jesus does not ensure partaking in the Kingdom. Membership in the Church is not equivalent to membership in the future ' *Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* ' (Lk. 6:46). However the Church is charged with that power which is an anticipation of the Kingdom. Lk. 10:19, "Behold I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you."

The Church, the eschatological community, is for Luke the authentic restoration of Israel. The apostles are kept at the number twelve (Acts 1:26, Matthias is elected to replace Judas) representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Paul, though he claims in his own writing to be an apostle, is not so recognized by Luke. He was not an eye-witness to the resurrection (Acts 1:22). The new Israel is not to forget the old Israel; its mission is to unite Jew and Gentile in acceptance of the claims of Jesus, as well as his redemptive acts. As the restoration of Israel (Acts 28:28), the new chosen people of God, its mission is to the 'uttermost parts of the earth'. Through the Church people will come into the Kingdom; it is the assembly ground but not yet the Kingdom itself.

In the writing of Luke-Acts the redactor relies on

others for much of his information. He emphasizes that he has recorded the traditions "just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Lk. 1:2).³³ It is obvious that there were those within the Christian community who were the authoritative voices because of their association with Jesus during his life on earth. Their authority pervades the teaching of Acts (6:4). The desire to remain faithful to the teaching of Jesus indicates that the Church understood itself to have a commission which was not of its own making; a commission exercised through the power of the Spirit, the gift of the exalted Lord.

Associated with the realization of the Kingdom of God was the complete annihilation of evil. Though, as we have already stated, the power of evil was overcome by Christ's resurrection, it was not eradicated from the earth. The Christian community knew this by experience (Acts 5: 1-11). The Church, oriented toward the future, has the assurance that after 'the test and discrimination of judgment' it will be taken into the Kingdom of God. Luke does not understand the Church to be identical to the Kingdom. But inasmuch as the Church now lives, as Jesus had, under the ascendancy of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God in and

³³For a discussion of this claim, in view of the changes Luke made in Christian eschatology, see pp. 47-49 of this dissertation.

through the Church has already overtaken men. But, as in Lk. 11:20, this merely reiterates with emphasis the prophetic, operative presence of the Kingdom, the plenary reality of which remains essentially future. The Church is not the Kingdom, but again and again it is in the Church and through it that the saving power of God, which his "Kingdom" or "reign" symbolizes, is operative and manifest. To summarize: There is then, the most intimate tie between Kingdom and Church, comparable to the tie between Kingdom and Jesus. "Because God's eschatological reign was already present in the person and action of Jesus, and will manifest itself in power and glory at the Parousia, the community established by him and attached to him has a share in the saving graces of the present and promises for the future The Ecclesia is the community of those who look for the kingdom of God, the threshold of the βασιλεία, because its members have the promise that if they persevere to the end they will have a share in God's reign."³⁴

Luke Removes the 'Immediacy' of the Parousia
but Retains its 'Imminence'

Inasmuch as the earliest Christians lived in the expectation of the immediate parousia, eschatology determined their relationship to the world. Some of the Christians

³⁴Schnackenburg, pp. 230-231.

to whom Paul wrote (around 50 AD) in II Thess. were "living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work" (3:11) as they awaited Christ's return. It was a natural reaction for those who were convinced that the parousia was to be immediately and would be attended by the resurrection of the dead, the dawn of the new aeon, and the realization of the absolute reign of God. Paul reproves them for their behaviour. "Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living" (3:12).

Luke's solution to this crisis was to remove the immediacy from the parousia and to defer the end of time to an unknown date, as far as human knowledge is concerned, in the future. Nonetheless to dwell on the delay of the parousia and to use the delay as a deliberate opportunity to put off one's repentance, is to jeopardize one's chance to enter the Kingdom (Lk. 12:35ff; 21:34ff) announced by Jesus. In taking this interpretation Luke remains agnostic about the date of the parousia while still retaining its imminence. By this we mean that in changing the primitive Christian belief that expected the parousia in the very near future, Luke does not thereby place it in a distant future. He simply makes no claims about its time. It could come at any moment. Its immediacy is replaced by its imminence. The effect of this was not a down-grading

of the importance of this life and its responsibilities; on the contrary it called the believer, in the midst of these, to be always ready for the parousia.

Luke is responding to that which is made both obvious and irrefutable by the continuation of history. His response makes great use of the Jesus tradition of the Gospels in a way that Paul, for example, did not and could not. His redaction speaks for his interpretation of the interim between the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and his second advent.

Mark, it is widely agreed, was the earliest of the synoptics to have been written. In addition to their common and private sources of the Jesus tradition, Matthew and Luke both had either access to Mark's Gospel or his sources. Mark's teaching of Jesus about the parousia is found chiefly in his 'little apocalypse' (13:5-37). Both Matthew and Luke have this section (Matt. 24:4-36; Lk. 21:8-36). Without setting these Gospels in their present form in any chronological order of compilation, a comparison of these sections in each makes clearly visible the Lucan consciousness of the delay of the parousia.

The Marcan statement that "many will come in my name saying, I am he!" (13:6), (Matt. 24:5, "many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ"); has in Luke that they will also say "The time is at hand!" (21:8). Luke's

explicit reference to the time as being of the nature of a false message indicates that he understands both that the time is not at hand and that the time element is not of utmost importance.

At the conclusion of the warning against false messengers of the parousia Mark (13:7) and Matt. (24:6) say ". . . but the end is still to come." Luke has "but the end does not follow immediately" (21:9). Instead of the ὄυτω of Mark and Matthew, he uses οὐκ εὐθέως, "not immediately", which denies more forcefully both the expectation of the immediate end of time and the fixed, discernible sequence which would allow the end to be exactly dated at least in a relative chronology. This change of wording is doubtless conscious and purposeful. Luke's emphasis is certainly not on a datable end of time.

Lk. 21:32 does not use the τὰυτα of Mk. 13:30 and Matt. 24:34.³⁵ By his omission of the demonstrative pronoun he softens the reference to the particular things or events of the apocalyptic discourse which has preceded it. "ὄυτος" indicates present or near objects.³⁶ Luke's

³⁵Luke 21:32, "έως ἄν πάντα γένηται"; Mark 13:30, "ὄυ τὰυτα πάντα γένηται"; Matthew 24:34, "έως ἄν πάντα τὰυτα γένηται."

³⁶Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, (9th ed.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 1276.

alteration intends to remove the note of immediacy from the expectation by the Christian community of the parousia.

Lk. 17:22-37 records Jesus' conversation with his disciples about 'the day of the Son of Man'. Luke has considerably more than the Matthean account of the words of Jesus.³⁷ "As it was in the days of Noah . . .; Likewise as it was in the days of Lot . . .; so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed" (17:26,28,30). The immediate expectation of the parousia is replaced by a constant orientation of history toward the end of time. As well as eschatologizing history Luke historicizes eschatology.

C. H. Dodd says that Luke unlike Matthew "has provided a brief introduction to the parable (of the pounds) which indicates clearly the application which he intended. . . . The effect of this is to draw special attention to that part of the story which speaks of the master as taking a long journey and then returning to take account. The parable is made explicitly to teach a lesson concerning the delay of the second advent."³⁸ The introduction says:

³⁷Matt. 24:37-41 records the words of Jesus pertaining to the whole discussion. Vs. 38 & 39 say: "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the Day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

³⁸C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, p. 115.

"He proceeded to tell a parable because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately" (19:11). Luke adroitly changes the "application while leaving the substance of the story unaltered."³⁹ Is the Lucan change an act of infidelity to the Christian heritage? a remaking of Christian belief? This important issue calls for a full treatment which we will undertake in a moment.

Luke has two accounts of the ascension of Jesus, viz., 24:50-53 and Acts 1:6-11. In his Gospel account the resurrection and ascension are one event: the exaltation of Jesus. The exaltation relates back to and confirms that which has gone before. Acts describes the ascension as a separate event from the resurrection. Between the two the redactor has inserted the notice on "the forty days". During this time Jesus gives his apostles his final teaching about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3b). As the exaltation of Jesus in the Gospel confirms the claims of what has gone before it, so in Acts the ascension confirms what is yet to come, viz. the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of the Spirit and the mission of the Church. In the events of Pentecost the 'eschaton' arrives but not the end of time. Flender says of this separation of these events in Acts:

³⁹Ibid., p. 121.

"By interpreting the exaltation narrative in this way Luke escapes the danger of presuming a direct connection between the raising of Jesus and the general resurrection of the dead, which would prolong the eschatological reality of the resurrection into earthly time."⁴⁰

The Lucan account of the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem (21:5-7) omits the notice that his disciples asked him 'privately' (κατ' ἰδιάν -- see Mk. 13:3 and Matt. 24:3) about the signs of the end and when it was to take place. Flender says of Luke's omission: "Luke uses κατ' ἰδιάν in other places (10:23) to indicate teaching confined to the disciples. He has a reason for this change. The destruction of the Temple is no longer an eschatological secret but an event in the past and therefore an obvious fact. The world--so the discourse continues-- is headed for judgement which has already begun with the destruction of Jerusalem."⁴¹ Luke maintains that the eschaton has already begun within history, yet history also moves towards the parousia. Again he removes the immediacy from the parousia while his agnosticism about the date preserves its imminence. This is also explicit from the world-wide mission of the Church in Acts.

⁴⁰Helmut Flender, St. Luke, Theologian of Redemptive History, p. 19.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 13.

To summarize: The Lucan redaction when compared with the other synoptics shows how Luke crystalizes a trend, already evident, in solving the definite time period associated by the primitive Christian community with the parousia. The immediacy associated with the parousia had been refuted by the continuous passage of time. Luke removes the immediacy but retains the imminence of the second advent of Jesus.

Luke Maintains Radical Fidelity to the Gospel as it is Understood by Paul and the Other Synoptics

The claim is made that Luke-Acts represents a falling away from the teaching of Jesus and is thereby more representative of the teaching of 'early Catholicism'. Such a claim raises two questions: (1) Did Jesus intend the Church? (2) Did the Church interpret, develop and change the teaching of Jesus according to its own 'sitz im leben'? It is to the latter question, as it pertains to Christian eschatology, that this section of the dissertation addresses itself.⁴²

Three themes in the Lucan understanding of Christian eschatology have been dealt with in the foregoing sections. The conclusions that have been reached are: (1) Luke eschatologizes history from the period following John the

⁴²The first question is not within the scope of this study. For an excellent discussion of the question see B. F. Meyer, The Church in Three Tenses (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 31-53.

Baptist⁴³ all the way to the future parousia; (2) in the interim period between the ascension of Jesus and the parousia the Kingdom of God has a proleptic impact on the world through the Christian ἐκκλησία; (3) removing the immediacy from the expectation of the parousia, Luke retains its imminence. Are these conclusions entirely Lucan, reflecting the Church's practical solution to a practical problem, without maintaining fidelity to the teachings of Jesus?

It must be readily admitted that the New Testament eschatology was not a systematic construction, as in the case of some modern theories. On the contrary it was, to some extent, occasioned by the questions that arose from historical circumstances surrounding Christianity which were answered in the light of the resurrection and sayings of Jesus.

Even a cursory reading of the three synoptic gospels will reveal that their authors either rely heavily upon each other for material or have common sources (perhaps

⁴³Cf. J. Jeremias, New Testament Theology. The Proclamation of Jesus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 46f.: The phrase "until John" in Lk. 16:16 (Matt. 11:13) "can be understood either inclusively or exclusively. If heos/mechri is meant to be inclusive . . . then the Baptist still belongs to the time of the old aeon. This was Luke's understanding. For he keeps stressing in Acts that the time of salvation began after the death of John the Baptist (1:5; 10:37; 13:24f.; 19:4)."

both!). Redaktionsgeschichte has, by its study of the author's arrangement of the various pericopes, made visible his personal theological understanding. Allowing for personal differences, enough has been shown by the comparisons used in this dissertation to conclude that the synoptics' theological understanding is quite similar. Luke, however, does represent more clearly than the others the resolution of the problem caused by the delay of the parousia.

What about Paul? Writing earlier, he shows little familiarity with the sayings of Jesus tradition or the literary form of the gospel. Does Lucan eschatology reflect any concurrence with his eschatological understanding? Some recent scholarship has concluded 'no', thereby forcing a choice between Luke and Paul. In pursuing the question with which this section deals, particular attention will be focused on Pauline eschatology.

Philipp Vielhauer, in his study of the Lucan Paul of Acts and the historical Paul of the epistles, concludes that Luke in Acts has changed the theological understanding of Paul. In relation to eschatology, he claims that Luke moves it from the present, as in Paul's writing and relegates it to the end of time.⁴⁴ He does it by his scheme

⁴⁴Philipp Vielhauer, "On the Paulinism of Acts", Studies in Luke Acts, pp. 33-50. Vielhauer has three other

of redemptive history. His scheme loses completely the eschatological beliefs of Paul and the primitive Christian community. Vielhauer admits that even though the eschaton has come, according to Paul, in the saving act of God, there is also the future of its realization. Central to his

irreconcilable differences between the Lucan Paul and the historical Paul. They are: (1) the natural theology of the Areopagus speech; (2) there is no polemic against the Law in Acts; (3) Acts has an adoptionistic Christology. These differences though outside the particular concern of this dissertation, i.e. eschatology, are related to its general concern in this section.

The first difference is refuted by Rom. 1:19-20. Here Paul refers to a natural theology: God's "everlasting power and deity have been visible, ever since the world began, to the eye of reason, in the things he has made." The theme, while not dominant, is present. There is no reason to suppose that in a situation like that described in Acts 17:22-34 Paul might not have developed it. On (2) it is evident that the Lucan Paul has no violent polemic against the Law, yet in Acts 15:2 Paul and Barnabas were brought into "fierce discension and controversy" with those who taught that Christians must be circumcised according to the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. Finally with reference to (3) it is clear that on the basis of the Lucan opus, Luke's christology is not adoptionistic. Peter Borgen, "From Paul to Luke", The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, 31, 1969, p. 181, says: "The letters of Paul may not only be used as comparison to the chapters about Paul in Acts, the way Veilhauer does, but should be considered also in relation to the whole of Luke-Acts."

In addition, as Ulrich Wilckens points out, (op. cit., p. 68): "The two men (Luke and Paul) stood at different points in the history of the Church: Luke knew neither Judaism nor Gnosticism from personal experience. And the way he consistently shows the Christians to be on friendly terms with the Roman authorities presupposes a context different from the one in Paul."

conclusion on Pauline eschatology is his interpretation of Paul's understanding of the interim period. He says: "The Pauline 'already' and 'not yet' are not thought of quantitatively, and their relationship is not understood as a temporal process of gradual realization. It is a question of the paradoxical contemporaneity of the presence and the futurity of salvation, not a question of temporal but of ontological dualism."⁴⁵ On this interpretation the time since the resurrection does not really count for Paul and therefore Vielhauer has no other alternative but, as it were, to place brackets around it.

Rudolf Bultmann, in his exhaustive study of Paul interprets Rom. 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law," to mean that for Paul Christ is the end of history, i.e. the end of "this present evil age."⁴⁶ The Christian believer because he is in Christ transcends history as this membership is constantly renewed in every succeeding moment of time. There can be no such thing as salvation history. Eschatology itself is outside of time.

Clearly if the Pauline theological interpretations represented by the scholarship of these men are Paul's, then Luke is not maintaining fidelity to the whole Christian

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 46.

⁴⁶Rudolf Bultmann, Faith and Understanding, ed. Robert W. Funk (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 233.

tradition. Luke's view of history is that it is a continuous redemptive process. It is to the writings of Paul that one must turn in seeking an answer.

Paul believed that the resurrection of Jesus was confirmation that the eschaton had arrived. Individuals, by becoming members of the Christian community, could share now in the 'new age'. II Cor. 5:17, "When anyone is united to Christ there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has begun." He also looked forward to the parousia of Jesus in the immediate future. I Thess. 4:15, "We who are left alive until the Lord comes" Gradually Paul orients his thinking to a longer future before the parousia. I Cor. 15:24, "Then comes the end, when he delivers up the kingdom to God the Father, after abolishing every kind of domination, authority and power." An eschatology of the 'already' and 'not yet', which Luke makes explicit is developing in Paul. Surely this is not just an about turn in Christian eschatology to compromise for Paul's disillusionment with the continuance of history. On the contrary, the evidence strongly suggests that it is an aspect of Jesus' teaching which came into view as the event of the resurrection receded into the past.

Paul's understanding of the interim period between the 'already' and the 'not yet' has also to be considered. Neither Veilhauer nor Bultmann view it in terms of the

temporal. Did Paul? Wilckens concludes his study of Paul's writing that he did not see history in this way. He says:

It is most assuredly not the opinion of the historical Paul that history means the perpetually new decision of the individual. It must be granted that in Paul's understanding the gospel of Christ must be accepted by the individual, and that Christian living is the responsibility of every individual. But just as Christian living is not really an accumulation of momentary "decisions" in which the Gospel must perpetually be accepted anew, so the individual believer does not really determine the horizon of the Pauline understanding of Christianity. On the contrary, this horizon is the "history of salvation".⁴⁷

Salvation does have an history, as Wilckens continues:

"The thinking of both (Paul and Luke) rests upon the Old Testament and Jewish belief according to which God realizes his salvation in historical events."⁴⁸ The interim period is for Paul the field for the mission to the Gentiles and thereby the extension of the Church. It is the field of activity for Christians. Peter Borgen concludes from his study that "Paul interprets the time of the Gentiles on the basis of an eschatological interim period which connects historical events with the end."⁴⁹

Paul looks forward to a cosmic realization of that

⁴⁷Ulrich Wilckens, "Interpreting Luke-Acts in a Period of Existentialist Theology". Studies in Luke-Acts, p. 76.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁹Peter Borgen, "From Paul to Luke", p. 182.

which in some sense already is. Luke too maintains this same eschatological belief. In so doing he stands within the primitive Christian tradition of a conception of redemptive history.

To summarize: Luke's "salvation history does not originate in, but is influenced by, the delay of the parousia."⁵⁰ It also reflects his radical fidelity to the earliest Christian beliefs.

Did Luke Understand his Changes
as a Remaking of Christian Belief?

It is readily evident that the transition by Luke from primitive Christian eschatology to what has since become known as classical Christian eschatology deliberately advances beyond the letter of the Christian tradition. The advance was in response to the awareness of the on-goingness of time as problematic. Christians were compelled to admit that the parousia was not to take place immediately as they had believed. The Lucan change, as we have shown, was not a change originating solely with Luke. The change was present, albeit in an embryonic stage, in the earlier writings of Paul and Mark (or his sources).

A study of the New Testament indicates an openness to change in the first centuries of the Church's life. Luke

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 182.

and Matthew, for example, feel quite free to rearrange the Marcan gospel and their other sources according to their particular understanding of the Christian faith.

Since our concern in this dissertation is the Lucan redaction, the historical question which we must attempt to answer is how Luke justified these changes, particularly in eschatology. The very fact that the eschatological beliefs were contradicted by the continuation of time was not without its influence. If the eschatological change was obviously necessary, was it a remaking of Christian belief? Luke's affirmation in the prologue to his Gospel would make his answer to the latter question, "No". On this basis we must reconstruct what his answer would be to the former question.

Luke, as a Christian, confessed a faith in God as he was revealed supremely in Jesus Christ. At the same time it is not too much to suggest that he naturally realized the distance between what is comprehended in the human intellect about God, from any source, and God himself. Therefore there could never be, for Luke, (as for all people), any absolute statements about God except an affirmation of his existence. Any attributive statements must be accepted with an openness.

Now Luke understood the Church as the Spirit-filled body of believers in a particular place. He also recognized

the activity of the Spirit within the community. There were those individuals who were referred to as charismatics, possessing in a unique way the gift of the Spirit. They exercised their charism within the context of the Christian community. "The charismatic's dependence upon the official Church . . . and the Church's acceptance of the charismatic and his gospel are facets of a common, if never formulated, self understanding."⁵¹

The openness in the attributive statements about God was not an openness for the exercise of speculative theology per se. The authority for change Luke believed to come from the self-possession by the Spirit. That Luke understood himself to be a charismatic, and was so recognized by the Church, is the ground for the Church's acceptance of his changes in eschatological understanding. He was responding to historical circumstances but it was by inspiration of the Spirit.

Nonetheless Luke's possession by the Spirit did not result in a new revelation but an insight to the revelation given through Jesus Christ. Nor was it unrelated to relevance. It was not an experience that led to statements devoid of any explicit rationale, as in the case of some prophets and mystics. There was a relation between

⁵¹Meyer, p. 29.

historical circumstances and the eschatological changes he effected. On this point Meyer says: "On every page of the gospels the apostolic Church asserted its pneumatic status vis-a-vis its religious traditions. A charismatically guaranteed authority to interpret in accord with relevance was central to its self-understanding."⁵²

The Transition to Modernity

From the detailed study of the crystallization of classical Christian eschatology, which was in large part a Lucan achievement, this dissertation now turns to the modern period of history. During the more than fifteen hundred year interval between Luke and the beginnings of modernity it is generally true that eschatology had been understood in terms of "the four last things", i.e., death, judgement, heaven or hell. It had been rather like an appended last chapter to the Christian gospel. To be sure there were those like Montanus in the second century and Joachim of Flora in the twelfth century who looked for the immediate coming of the eschaton in history. But these movements with their eschatological emphasis were relatively short-lived.

The modern period in the West has witnessed a renewed interest in eschatology. Along with this renewed

⁵²Meyer, p. 27.

interest, the classical Christian eschatological interpretations became problematic. We are here concerned with the question of why this happened. In attempting to reach an answer we shall first of all discuss two basic features that make 'modernity' identifiable as a definite historical period.

It is always difficult to date the beginnings of historic periods. The genesis of fundamental ideas is never simple. However we shall take the results, and their implications, of the works of Galileo (1564-1642) and Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) as representative of the beginnings of modernity. Galileo symbolizes the rise of modern science; Vico symbolizes the development of man's historical consciousness as well as implicitly a belief in 'progress'.

Galileo and Vico: Symbolic Figures

For our purposes it is unnecessary to describe the experiments of Galileo or his struggle with ecclesiastical authority. The concern is with the conclusions of his experiments and their implications. Galileo discovered the law of falling bodies which he was able to express in a mathematical formula. From this the conclusion was deduced that, as R. G. Collingwood says:

The truth of nature consists in mathematical facts; what is real and intelligible in nature is that which is measurable and quantitative.

Qualitative distinctions, like those between colours, sounds, and so forth have no place in the structure of the natural world but are modifications produced in us by the operation of determinate natural bodies on our sense-organs. Here the doctrine of the mind-dependent or merely phenomenal character of secondary qualities . . . is already full-grown.⁵³

Collingwood continues to explicate: For Galileo, the secondary qualities are not merely functions of the primary and thus derivative and dependent upon them, they are actually devoid of objective existence: they are mere appearances.⁵⁴

In the wake of this the work of the scientist is, as Lonergan says, "determining these laws and so predicting what cannot but occur."⁵⁵

The belief that the universe operates according to the measurable laws, and that only they are real, implies that it is a mechanism. Lonergan says:

A machine is a set of imaginable parts, each of which stands in determinate relations to all the others. In like manner, the universe, implicit in Galilean methodology, is an aggregate of imaginable parts each related systematically to all the others. The sole difference is that, apart from the machine, there are other imaginable elements that can interfere with its operation, but apart from

⁵³R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of Nature, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 102.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 102.

⁵⁵Bernard F. Lonergan, S. J., Insight, (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1967), p. 131.

the universe of imaginable elements, what imaginable interventions can there arise? Mechanism accordingly becomes a determinism.⁵⁶

If the universe operates according to its own inherent laws then both God and man transcend the natural order. (This itself is a radical departure from the ancients who understood man himself as part of nature.) The existence of man is an empirical fact. He confers upon nature from outside it through his sense organs merely phenomenal qualities. God's existence is not an empirical fact. Therefore if he exists at all, he is the 'deus ex machina'. It is not far from this concept to that of a 'machina sine deo'.

Herein lies the roots of the distinctively modern world-view. For the ancients, as Collingwood says, "there was no dead matter, for no difference of principle was recognized between the seasonal rotation of the heavens and the seasonal growth and fall of the leaves on a tree . . .; it was never for a moment suggested that one could be accounted for by a kind of law which did not even begin to account for the other."⁵⁷ He then goes on to draw the comparison between this and the post-Galilean science. He says:

For the seventeenth century all this was changed. Science has discovered a material

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 131.

⁵⁷Collingwood, p. 111.

world in a quite special sense: a world of dead matter, infinite in extent and permeated by movement throughout, but utterly devoid of ultimate qualitative differences and moved by uniform and purely quantitative forces. The word 'matter' had acquired a new sense: it was no longer the formless stuff of which everything is made by the imposition upon it of form, it was the quantitatively organized totality of moving things.⁵⁸

Giambattista Vico's The New Science maintains that the human mind is a historical structure. This means that the mind does not produce history as something extraneous to itself but produces itself in history, and that this self-production is history.⁵⁹ The consequence of this affirmation is that man seeking to discover himself must look to history. "Time and idea are related as dimensions of human presence."⁶⁰

Though Vico believed in Providence, it was not Providence in the Christian sense. For him history had its own inner necessity. The Christian belief in Providence he took to be a contradiction. Croce, in discussing this aspect of Vichian thought, says:

If now, to return to Vico, we ask how he solved the problem of the motive force of history and what was the precise content for him of the concept of providence in the objective sense, it is perfectly easy to exclude the supposition that his was the

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 111-112.

⁵⁹See A. Robert Caponigri, Time and Idea, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 74-75.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 91.

transcendent or miraculous Providence which had formed the subject of Bossuet's eloquent Discours. It is easy both because in all his philosophy he invariably reduced the transcendent to the immanent, and repeats over and over again here that his providence operates by natural means or (using scholastic phraseology) by secondary causes: and because upon this point his interpreters are practically unanimous.⁶¹

Vico's work embodies the foundation of the modern attempt to discover a meaning and purpose in history without reference to God (or gods). For the ancients history itself was without any essential purpose. Historical events in themselves might provide moral lessons, but the whole panorama of history was meaningless. As Collingwood says:

Greek, Renaissance and modern thinkers have all agreed that everything in the world of nature, as we perceive it, is in a state of continuous change. But Greek thinkers regarded these natural changes as at bottom always cyclical. A change from state α to state β , they thought is always one part of a process which completes itself by a return from state β to state α This tendency to conceive changes as at bottom, or when it is able to realize and exhibit its proper nature qua change, not progressive (whereby progressive I mean a change always leads to something new, with no necessary implication of betterment) but cyclical, was characteristic of the Greek mind throughout its history.⁶²

⁶¹Benedetto Croce, The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico, trans. R.G. Collingwood (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), p. 117.

⁶²Collingwood, pp. 13-14.

Out of Vico's work rises the historical consciousness. This is an awareness that man is the maker of history. The implication of this is "man's full acceptance of his responsibility to transform himself, his words, his meanings."⁶³ To be sure there is still a real sense in which individuals are the product of history. Nonetheless Vico's discovery is a realization of what had been the case, though itself unrecognized, from the very beginning. It makes plain the creativity of men, which places both honour and responsibility upon man's activity.

In addition to realizing the consciousness of man as the maker of history, Vico introduces the concept of 'progress' into history together with what A. R. Caponigri calls "the temptation to progressivism."⁶⁴ Vico, however, does not develop the theory of progress (in the sense of improvement) in the movement of time.

Galileo and Vico as figures symbolically representative of the great movements which define modernity, gave birth to two axioms: (1) the universe is a closed system; and (2) man is the maker of history.

Mechanistic determinism was based on the Galilean conclusion that the universe was a mass of particles which

⁶³David Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 4.

⁶⁴Caponigri, p. 92.

move according to knowable laws. Therefore if one could know the position and movement of every particle of matter in the universe at this moment, one could accurately determine its next movement. To know this would be to know the future.

This conception of science is now obsolete. Science as science deals with the necessary and universals and aims at invariant formulations, but the formulations are abstract. Science as empirical deals with the concrete and is limited to the realm of what is realized in fact. Empirical science is not equipped to pronounce on the limits of the concretely possible, and in fact empirical scientists have become increasingly agnostic on all such questions. But despite the scientific community's abandonment of mechanistic determinism, a la Galileo, the decisive reversal of the Galilean error in terms of "world view" cannot be expected from within the scientific community. For the scientific community is not equipped to answer such questions as "What is the nature of empirical science?" or "What world views are authentically grounded in empirical science?" These are questions for cognitional theory.

Galileo stands at the origins of two movements, a scientific movement whose history of success continues unabated, and a philosophical movement which has left as part of its legacy the axiom that the universe is a closed

system. The second movement--the cosmology of the Enlightenment--has had a checkered history and has a cloudier future. In terms of Christian thought, the philosophical component of Galileo's legacy is simply an error to be corrected.

What of the legacy of Vico? The Vichian claim to find meaning within history as the sphere of the activity of man continues to influence thought and action. People are recognized as responsible beings whose decisions do matter. No longer can history be ignored by focusing exclusively on its goal, however that goal may be understood. There is more and more concern with history as a total process, in which as Ranke somewhere put it, every generation is equidistant from eternity. Human beings are seen as having a share in the shaping of the future. It is this realization that has presented the central challenge to the beliefs expressed in classical Christian eschatology.

Modernity's Critique of Christian Eschatology

Classical Christian eschatology located the importance of the interim period between the exaltation of Jesus and the parousia in the realization of the world mission (Lk. 24:44-47, esp. V. 47). The point of ongoing time lies in the opportunity to confront the world with the claims of Christ.

Implicit in this concept of the future is a

depreciation of the material realm. St. Augustine gives lucid expression to the understanding of history by the classical Christian mind which supports this statement. Theodor E. Mommsen, of St. Augustine's view of secular history, says: "In regard to the developments in the sphere of the earthly city, Augustine emphasized repeatedly in his historical survey the mutability and instability of human affairs. Cities, kingdoms and empires have risen and fallen throughout the course of history, and this will always be the case."⁶⁵ Also implicit in classical Christian eschatological belief was an emphasis upon the spiritual realm. Mommsen continues:

In the spiritual realm, therefore, according to Augustine, mankind has grown up from the time of its infancy through phases of childhood, adolescence, young manhood and mature manhood to its old age (senectus) which has begun with the birth of Christ. That growth of the spiritual enlightenment of the human race found its clearest expression in the scheme of "the six ages" . . . into which he (Augustine) divided the course of the heavenly city on earth. The summit has been reached with the appearance and the gospel of Christ and no further fundamental change will take place in the spiritual realm to the end of time.⁶⁶

This holds before us, in bold outline, the contrasting

⁶⁵Theodor E. Mommsen, "St. Augustine and The Christian Idea of Progress: The Background to the City of God", Journal of the History of Ideas, 12(1951), p. 373.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 373 (underlining mine).

attitude of the early Christian towards the material and the spiritual realms. To the material the approach is negative; to the spiritual it is positive.

To say that there was an over-emphasis upon the spiritual realm at the expense of the material realm is not to say that the early Christians possessed no societal concern. They were concerned, for example, with widows and orphans, neighbours and strangers, friends and foes. But the concern was grounded in citizenship in the heavenly city to come. There was no positive recognition of the material value of man--his creativity, his capabilities and potentialities. History simply followed a continuous, necessary and ordered course which accorded with the plan of Providence.

What of the achievements of man? This is the question that contemporary secular man poses to Christianity. Have they no deeper meaning than simply a passing significance? Are man's capabilities--to reason, to judge, to hope, to love, to dream--useful only to secure a passage to the heavenly city? Can treasure in heaven only be had at the cost of deprivation on earth? These are issues of eschatological significance. Classical Christian eschatology's answers to these queries are against what modern secular man finds undeniably true regarding the present world. Modern man sees meaning in the activity of men in

making themselves and their world. Classical Christian eschatology sees the meaning of man's activity only in relation to the Kingdom of God. As a result the sacred has become for many moderns, if not irrelevant then a marginal extra. Thus man has become understood, both ontologically and chronologically, as a product of the historical process.⁶⁷

After the emergence of historical consciousness, man turned to the study of history as the study of himself. In the process his religious beliefs also became the subjects of his scrutiny. Doctrine was no longer able to be surrounded by the impenetrable wall of revelation; the historical accretions were all too readily evident. No modern man would claim, like St. Augustine, that after Christ "no further fundamental change will take place in the spiritual realm until the end of time."⁶⁸

Modernity's critique of classical Christian eschatology centred on the question of the meaningfulness of the activity of men in the period between the ascension of Jesus and his parousia. Classical Christian eschatology had no satisfactory answer for the modern mind. It had neither conceived of the activity of men as being creative

⁶⁷See Charles Davis, "Questions for the Papacy Today", Concilium, Vol. IV, #7, April 1971, p. 14f.

⁶⁸See n. 66, p. 59, and the quoted passage to which it refers.

of the historical order, nor of the Kingdom of God as being in any sense historically achieved.

Christianity was faced with eschatological beliefs which had again become problematic for the historical consciousness. How was it to respond to this problem? Either it had to maintain itself as an absolute system above this type of criticism (which would be self-defeating) or, as in the case of the Lucan solution, use its "charismatic authority to interpret in accord with relevance."⁶⁹

Resolution of the Problem Posed by Modernity
to Classical Eschatology

The Lucan transition in eschatology serves as a paradigm for the resolution of the problem with which we are concerned here. The main features of that transition are: (1) it comes in response to historical circumstances; (2) it is an advance beyond the letter of tradition. Still Luke claims to maintain a radical fidelity to the gospel.

The rise of historical consciousness demands again that contemporary Christianity reflect upon its beliefs as expressed by classical Christian eschatology. In responding to this challenge the aim here is to suggest the principle that a resolution of the problem must incorporate without working out a whole system.

⁶⁹Meyer, p. 37.

God's supreme revelation of himself in Jesus Christ is the basis for the Christian faith. The New Testament records that revelation not simply as a subjective mystical experience, but as a direct divine intervention in history. This is the 'norm' of Christianity which defines the theological task as other than and more than the construction of a coherent system of thought. The theologian, bound to the community which has been the gift of the Spirit, reflects, in the light of this norm, on the changing world, and reflects, in the light of the changing world on this selfsame norm.

His pivotal question today is the understanding of history. The view of history in which classical Christian eschatology conceived of everything as part of an established order, divinely given rather than historically achieved. Revelation was thus understood as God's plans which were somehow independent of the actions of man. This cosmocentric interpretation of the sacred was related to the knowledge of the classical period and was congenial to the classical mind.

The world of modern men, in contrast to the classical, is historical. (This does not imply a difference but a recognition of what has always been the case.) Man understands himself, not as independent of history, but both as its maker and its product. Indeed he makes himself

in his world. An eschatology, which would claim to be not only authentically Christian but also authentically contemporary, must recognize this. To be contemporary, it must acknowledge the self-creativity of man. To be Christian it must ground man's self-creativity in the reality of God.

How is this to be accomplished? The classical understanding of revelation, as we have already emphasized, imposed God's plans on the historical order as a completed scenario. Man's response was to translate it into fact. This no longer accords with contemporary understanding, nor was it intended to. Failure to grasp this comes from failure to grasp the implicit openness which the early Church realized to exist between revelation as comprehended by the human mind and the infinite nature of God. It is also to ignore the relationship between relevance and the interpretation of revelation.

In the contemporary period revelation can only be understood, as Lonergan expresses it, as God's entry into man's making of himself. God is not the architect of an ideal that is totally outside of history. He incorporates into his ideal the activity of man. The ideal is not removed from the change and flux of history. On the other hand, it does depend exclusively on the activities of men, for Christian revelation intends precisely the participation of man in his world in realizing its goal. It also recognizes

man's freedom to choose.

The transition, which we propose, from classical Christian eschatology to contemporary Christian eschatology must recognize the perfection of God, the self-creating activity of men and man's freedom to cooperate with God or to completely ignore him.

Man's activities have meaning for himself as they relate to his self-creativity. Christian eschatology gives them ultimate meaning, for in the light of faith man's creative work is orchestrated toward an end which transcends the purposes of individuals and groups and nations and international communities and of mankind itself. Whether conscious or not, whether willing or not, the sum of history is "sich realisierende Eschatologie"--eschatology in process of fulfillment. There is no arbitrariness about the end of history. History comes to its end when the new man that is Christ becomes the perfect man, grown to full age and stature.

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