

Summary and Reviews  
of Hans Conzelmann's book  
THE THEOLOGY OF ST. LUKE

by

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*final comment  
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The Theology of St. Luke by Hans Conzelmann. Translated by

Geoffrey Buswell. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1960. 255 pp.

This present work of Hans Conzelmann builds on the shoulders of Form Criticism. It is well known that Form Criticism arose in part from the destruction of the framework of the life of Jesus and from the cul de sac situation that had resulted from source criticism. One of its main insights has been to point out the fact that the Gospels in nature and purpose are not historical records or biographies in the usual <sup>sense</sup> ~~concept~~ of the word, but the proclamation of saving events--but, to be sure, such as in the author's view have taken place in history. In the process of analysing this early Christian proclamation, Form Criticism also has brought into relief the part that the needs of the Christian community had in the shaping of the tradition about Jesus. These insights have become commonplace in New Testament studies.

style?

Conzelmann's book is addressed not to the single components of the kerygmatic proclamation but rather to the Gospel of Luke as a whole, including the Acts of the Apostles as the continuation of a narrative of events which started with Jesus. It is the author's contention that Luke has taken over his sources, especially Mark, and has modified and cast them into a framework which is his own and which reveals the Evangelist's theological point of view. The work is therefore not concerned with source analysis, as such, but with the editorial work of Luke. The Evangelist, however, is not conceived as a mere editorialist but as a creative writer who

has taken over the traditional kerygmatic materials available to him and has impressed upon them a theology that meets the needs of the church of his time.

According to Conzelmann, it is not until the time of Luke that the demarcation between the period of Jesus and the period of the church, the then and now, the problems of yesterday and those of today, becomes fully conscious. Up until then the church had been projecting its own problems into what she considered the revelatory events without making any clear distinction between the past and present, expecting that the end was not too far away. The delay of the parousia, however, demanded an adjustment to the new situation of the church in the world. It is to fill this need for a theological reformulation of the traditional kerygma that Luke wrote.

Luke is, therefore, looking at the events of the past from a distance and endeavoring to understand the present condition of the church in terms of what has taken place in the life of Christ and in the life of the church. In his picture of history the period of Jesus and the period of the church, although systematically inter-related, are nevertheless two distinct epochs. Furthermore, the period of the life of Christ is seen as normative for the history of salvation. "The church," says Conzelmann, "understands her present existence by recognizing that period as the authentic manifestation of salvation, and thereby is enabled to understand not only her present, but her future." (14)

Luke sees also a distinction between the present in which he lives and the ἀρχή, or the foundation period of the apostles and eyewitnesses. He recognizes the picture of the early church,

but this picture is not meant to harmonize with the present but to stand in contrast to it. The summary statements of the life of the early community in Acts do not mirror present conditions, neither do they represent an ideal for the present. Furthermore, Luke does not wish to reform the present church by the pattern of past times. Yet in spite of this contrast, he maintains a positive relationship between the church of the past and of the present. How this relationship is established is one of the major concerns of Conzelmann's work.

Corresponding to the two sections of the ministry of Jesus--the ministry on earth and the ministry of the exalted Lord--there are two carefully described situations in which the believers find themselves. When Jesus was alive, it was the time of salvation. Satan was far away; it was a time without temptation for Jesus and one in which the disciples were well protected (cf. Luke 4:13 with 22:3; 22:35). However, since the passion, Satan is present again and the disciples of Jesus are subject to temptation (22:36). The plan that Luke superimposes on his two-volume work has the purpose of demonstrating, on the one hand, the distinction between the period of Jesus and the period of the church, and on the other, the continuity between them. The story of salvation that emerges from Luke's schematization falls into three stages: (1) the period of Israel: ① "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"; (2) the period of Jesus' ministry (Luke 4:16 ff. and Acts 10:38); ② (3) the period since the ascension, which corresponds on earth to ③

the period of the ecclesia pressa. During this last period the Christians are subject to persecution and the virtue of patience is required. This moral fortitude is possible by looking back to the period of Jesus and looking forward to the parousia. The parousia does not represent a stage within the course of saving history, but the end of it, and corresponds to creation. The two books, therefore, belong to each other and are separate, as a result on the one hand of the continuity of redemptive history, and, on the other of its divisions. Luke, then, according to Canzelmann, has created the pattern of Heilsgeschichte, viewing salvation in historical perspective--the period of Israel, the period of Jesus, and the period of the church--bound on either side by creation and the parousia. The latter is not conceived as an imminent event but rather as a future happening which is not the present concern of the church. The book derives its name from the Heilsgeschichte pattern that is present in Luke. The middle of the time is the time when Jesus lived.

The figure of Jesus is thus set into a large framework and interpreted as a historical phenomenon. Also the basis is set for a greater elaboration of the description of the ministry itself. In Luke, the ministry of Jesus appears in three stages: (1) the period of the gathering of 'witnesses' in Galilee, opening with the proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God; (2) the journey of the Galilians to the temple, opening with the narratives containing the disclosure that Jesus must suffer; (3) the period of teaching in the temple and of the passion in Jerusalem, opening with the revelation of his royalty at the entry. This period closes with the dawn

of the new epoch of salvation with the resurrection and ascension.

Concerning these three stages, Conzelmann says: "The constitution of the three stages represents the transformation of the original eschatological scheme of the two aeons carried over into history, one of the characteristic motifs in Luke's thought. Just as in the conception of redemptive history the two-fold structure of eschatology is replaced by the threefold structure of historical perspective, so also in the account of Jesus' ministry. Whereas in Mark the eschatological conception is manifested in the sharp contrast between the two epochs (Galilee and Jerusalem), in Luke these are the successive phases of the ministry." (note 2, p. 17).

The above statements present in a summary fashion Conzelmann's thesis. The five parts of the book are attempts to validate it, mainly through the exegetical treatment of those areas in Luke-Acts that Conzelmann considers to have been shaped by Luke either by modification of his sources or by outright creation.

Part One is entitled: Geographical Elements in the Composition of Luke's Gospel. A careful analysis of the relationship of John the Baptist to Jesus is made here. John is not conceived as within the ἀρχή, as in Mark, but rather as the last of the prophets and therefore as belonging to the period of Israel. Also there is a clear demarcation of the spheres of activity of John and Jesus. The Jordan is the region of John the Baptist and belongs to the old era. The desert is not a geographical, but a symbolical element representing the prophet. After his baptism Jesus never comes into contact with the Jordan and its surroundings. In Luke John

is associated neither with Judea nor with Galilee. This is the area *John* of the activity of Jesus.

According to tradition, John the Baptist stands on the dividing line between the old and the new. He announces the imminent coming of the kingdom and is also a sign of its arrival. In Luke, John belongs entirely to the old dispensation of Israel and both his message and person lose their eschatological significance. Says Conzelmann: "It is John's role to prepare the way for this [the preaching of the Kingdom] by preaching and baptism, and his great merit is that he refused to claim for himself the Messianic role. At the same time, however, this makes plain John's limitations: it is only through the proclamation of the Kingdom that John's preaching, and only through the Spirit that John's baptism, are raised to the level appropriate to the new epoch." (p. 23).

It is Conzelmann's argument that Luke uses geographical factors *geography* for theological purposes. The physical separation of John's ministry from that of Jesus is for the purpose of setting John and his message within the framework of the period of Israel. This geographical and theological separation Luke accomplishes by conscious editorial modification of his sources.

The course of Jesus' ministry is also conceived by Luke in terms of geographical areas which have theological significance. The *Galilee* first phase (4:14-9:50) takes place in Galilee which seems to be conceived as Jewish territory contiguous to Judea. The temptation account is significant for in it the evangelist introduces the *Satan Jesus* theme that the ministry of Jesus from that time on will be free from temptation until the time of the passion (cf. 22:3). This

is the import of the statement: *σουτ' ἔσας πάντα τὰς γενεὰς  
 ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἀπὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἄρξαι καὶ ποῦ*

A special epoch in the center of the whole course of Heilsgeschichte is about to begin which is not the last time, but a period between the "period of the Law, or of Israel, and the period of the Spirit, or of the church." (p. 28).

When Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth proclaims his famous "today," the statement has no eschatological significance. This *Today* "Today" is seen by Luke as something in the past, but not merely as a past event, for the period of the ministry of Jesus is the image of the future salvation, of heaven where temptation has no reign.

The rejection by his own townfolk is symbolic of his rejection *rejection* by the Jews at Jerusalem and later during the Gentile mission. It also anticipates the Gentile mission in the reference to the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian. Jesus now moves to Capernaum to gather his own spiritual family. This is the time of the gathering of the witnesses freely on Jesus' own choice. The Galileans that are freely chosen by Jesus are set ever against his own relatives. The point is that no one can be a disciple of Jesus except by election. Flesh and blood relationships do not count. The motif of the Galileans has an apologetic note, directed against the immediate claims of the family of Jesus at later times.

From Luke one gets the impression that Capernaum is in the middle of Galilee and not by the lake. The lake is only a boundary and is treated as such. The call of Levi is put in the country and not by the lake. Luke also shows a special interest in Judea



(4:44; 7:17; 23:5). For him, in contrast to Mark, Jesus' ministry *Jerusalem*  
embraces the whole of the Jewish territory. Jesus, however,  
 never moves out of Judea. He never ventures into Perea, Decapolis,  
 or the region of Tyre and Sidon. Galilee is of interest to Luke  
 because of the "Galileans" and it is kept as a separate region  
 but within Jewish territory. All this geographical juggling takes  
 place because only Judea is the land where the events of the middle  
 of redemptive history take place. It seems that Luke is viewing  
 Judea from afar, without any exact idea as to geographical realities.

The lake and the mountain are geographical places treated *lake, mt.*  
 theologically. The mountain is the place of prayer and secret  
 revelation. The people cannot go up there and, therefore, Luke  
 sets on the plain the discourse that corresponds to Matthew's Ser-  
 mon on the Mount. The lake is the place of manifestation.

The second phase of Jesus' ministry (9:51-19:27) is conceived *Journey*  
 geographically in terms of a journey. The journey is just an editorial  
 device to introduce a new motif into the picture, namely, the neces-  
 sity of suffering in Jerusalem. From now on a new attitude enters  
 into Jesus' consciousness: he must suffer and it has to be in Jeru-  
 salem (13:31-35). Conversely with Jesus' understanding of his own  
 approaching departure, Luke presents the failure of the disciples  
 to understand that Jesus must suffer.

The final phase of the ministry is set within the locality of *Jerusalem*  
 Jerusalem. Several Lukan motifs appear at this stage. The entry  
 has no eschatological significance; its only purpose is to gain  
possession of the temple. It is not connected with the parousia  
 nor with the city at all. According to Luke, Jesus only enters

the city at the Last Supper. The Pharisees now disappear from the scene. The scribes and the chief-priests are the opponents.

The Mount of Olives is not used as the place for the eschatological discourse; the mountain is not the place for teaching but for prayer. On the discourse about the last things, the eschaton and Jerusalem are set apart. This shows that Luke sees the destruction of Jerusalem as an event in the past. The Lord's Supper is conceived as a strengthening for the *ἐπιπάθει*, now that the period of temptation is over. Temptation is connected here with martyrdom.

The apologetic motif in respect to the Jews and the Romans appears conspicuously in this last phase of the ministry of Jesus. Luke puts the blame for the death of Jesus squarely on the shoulders of the Jews. The Romans, on the other hand, are whitewashed. This theme is carried into the book of Acts even in contexts where Luke has traditional kerygmatic material which makes guilty both Jew and Gentile.

The resurrection appearances are transferred to Jerusalem. The resurrection is conceived as a surprise, something which cannot be deduced from Messiahship.

Jerusalem, then, is the place of death and resurrection; it is also the place of rejection and therefore its destruction is justified. Furthermore, it is the place where the new mission starts. From there the progress of the mission moves in concentric circles until it reaches the heart of the empire.

All these themes Conzelmann sees as being peculiar to Luke.

We shall now consider the remaining four parts rather briefly, since the basic structure of the book has already been presented.

### Part Two: Luke's Eschatology

In this chapter Cenzelmann endeavors to show how Luke has modified his sources and has imposed his own in order to cope with the problem of the delay of the *parousia*. It is actually this problem that compels Luke to postulate his threefold Heilsgeschichte scheme. Basic to the eschatological thinking of Mark is the concept that the Kingdom has drawn near. Luke, however, is not concerned with the coming of the Kingdom but with its nature. The nature of the Kingdom can be seen now in Jesus and his ministry and the presence of the Spirit, in the reality of the church and of the sacraments. When the final consummation will take place, nobody knows. In the meantime it is the responsibility of the Christians to gird themselves for persecution and to endure. Cenzelmann puts great emphasis upon the fact that Luke is the first one to make a deliberate appeal to the phenomenon of the Spirit as a solution to the problem of the *parousia*. The Spirit is the substitute for the presence of Christ.

### Part Three: God and Redemptive History

In this section, Cenzelmann attempts to present, in the first place, the manner in which Luke solved the problems of the church's relationship to the Roman state and to the Jews. He considers a very original achievement of Luke the fact that he fixed the position of the church in the scheme of redemptive history and then deduced from this the rule for its attitude towards the world. The apologetic aim in respect to Rome, as said above, is clearly seen

in the passion narrative, as well as in certain sections of the missionary journeys. In the Gospel as a whole there are, however, some traces. John the Baptist exhorts soldiers and publicans to be loyal to the state. The messianic program of Jesus is non-political (4:18 ff). Herod declares Jesus innocent. The death of Jesus is conceived as by divine decree. The entry is not a political event; its only aim is the possession of the temple.

In the Book of Acts the exemplary conduct of many Roman officials is clearly shown. Gallio represents the ideal conduct of the state. He finds that the controversy between Jews and Christians does not affect the Roman law and therefore dismisses the case. Paul's appeal before the Roman authorities is in terms of his civil rights and never in terms of the protection afforded to Jews under Roman law. Throughout the consideration of the case of Paul, Luke manages to shape the narrative in such a way that extreme confidence is shown in the justice of the Emperor. The Jews, on the other hand, are presented in an entirely different light. Luke deliberately makes them to present their accusations ambiguously before Gallio. It is the Jews who cause the civil disturbances.

However, the basic question of the relation of the Christian to the Jew is not taken up by Luke in political dimensions but rather in terms of redemptive history. There is a collective polemic carried on against the Jews coupled at the same time with a call to repentance. The starting point of the mission is always in the synagogue, which procedure is conceived as required by redemptive history (cf. Acts 13:46). The Church can never forget that the Jews form part of redemptive history. The transition from

the old Israel to the new one (the Church) is a subtle one. The first Christians keep the law and are faithful to the temple, but the Gentiles are not required to do so. Conditions prevalent at the first do not necessarily continue. The Christians according to Luke have taken over the privileges of the Jews as one epoch is succeeded by another. The Church is new Israel.

Another point that is taken up in this chapter is the place of God in redemptive history. The Heilsgeschichte pattern that emerges in Luke-Acts is definitely, according to Luke, God's plan. God's *Boudn* is emphasized; also his predetermination and the hiddenness of his decree. The concept of necessity (*dei*) appears especially in the passion. God's plan, however, concerns the saving events and not the individuals.

#### Part Four: The Center of History

In this chapter Conzelmann considers in detail Christ's relationship to God, and the implications of his life and ministry for the church and the world. Since this has been considered previously in our presentation, we shall only point out one of the new motifs that Conzelmann finds in Luke.

Luke seems to take for granted that God the Father is superior to Jesus. The idea of a pre-existent Christ is lacking in him and therefore creation is only the work of the Father. The angels are subjected to God and not to Jesus. The plan of salvation is exclusively God's own, Jesus being only the instrument. The saving events are God's deeds. In other words, there is a definite concept of subordination in Luke.

### Part Five: Man and Salvation: The Church

The Church plays a major role in Luke's theology. Says Genselmann: "Luke does not directly define the position of the individual in the course of redemptive history. Instead, his position is defined as a mediated one, for he stands within the Church, and thereby in a definite phase of the story. The Church transmits the message of salvation, in the first place the historical facts to which the eye-witnesses testify, and which are then handed down by the Church after the eye-witnesses are gone. This transmission by the Church makes it possible for the individual's remoteness in time from the saving events of past and future, from the time of Jesus and from the Parousia, to be no hindrance to him. Instead of the nearness of these events there is the Church with its permanent function. In the Church we stand in a mediated relationship to the saving events--mediated by the whole course of redemptive history--and at the same time in an immediate relationship to them, created by the Spirit, in whom we can invoke God and the name of Christ; in other words, the Spirit dwells in the Church, and is imparted through its means of grace and its office-bearers... For Luke the believer must be indissolubly bound to the Church, if he is not to sink either into speculation or into eschatological resignation" (p. 208).

There is no idea in Luke that the Church has declined from its original idea; neither is the primitive community held as a model. The Church is the provision between times that makes it possible to endure the time of waiting.

Church

transmission?

Church = mediation  
saving events

Spirit

in the Church  
with them  
the church

Church  
in between times  
provision

The initial period of the Church is set apart as the unique period of the witnesses; it is a period of persecution like the present, but also a time of peace, different from the present. The primitive community continues to keep the law and partake in the worship of the temple but these practices are not normative for the present. The Church is seen in terms of development. The development from Jerusalem is a matter of necessity. The missionary expansion is according to God's plan.

There is no idea of apostolic succession in Luke. The original period of the witness is thus unrepeatable. "In actual fact," says Conzelmann, "the unity of the Church of the past and present consists in the identity of her message and her sacraments; baptism confers forgiveness and the Spirit, and the Lord's Supper continually keeps the fellowship in being. The sacraments are the abiding factor, that which spans the gulf separating the present from the beginning" (p. 218).

The existence of Jesus has a fundamental significance for the Church--especially his ministry. The Christian life consists in looking back towards Jesus--the one who came and lived--and in looking forward toward Jesus--who is coming.

In conclusion, according to Luke God's plan is continuous: the Scripture, Israel, the Church, the Empire and all the world find their meaning in relationship to the center of history--which is Jesus.

## REVIEWS OF CONZELMANN'S BOOK

## A. Catholic Reviews

1. Léon-Dufour, Xavier, S.J. "Bulletin D'exégèse du Nouveau Testament," Recherches de Science Religieuse, LVI, 1958, pp. 242-250.<sup>1</sup>

This is the most complete critique that we have been able to find, and we present it in first place in order to avoid repetition in other reviews of the points taken up by this critic.

Says Léon-Dufour: "The different parts of the work are unequally treated. The conciseness of the last parts is often an obstacle in the understanding of the author, although constantly detailed analyses succeed in supporting the general statements..." (243).

"The rejection pure and simple of the Prot-Luke theory is far from being justified by the handful of notes that appear here and there throughout the book. The reality is greatly simplified when Luke is considered simply as an editor of Mark... One searches in vain for a valid confrontation of Luke with the Gospel of Matthew. The critical dogmas of Bultmann are taken for granted without much discernment" (244-245).

"On the other hand, we must be grateful to Conzelmann for trying to evaluate the work of Luke. However, this should not be done to the point of not paying attention to the continuity of the evangelical tradition. The Form Critics have reduced Luke to the status of an impersonal compiler. On his part, Conzelmann has exalted his personality to the degree that he makes him a theologian, but in the pejorative sense that that word may have in the

<sup>1</sup> All translations from the French and the German are my own.



mouth of a critic. If by chance Conzelmann recognizes that Mark already carries something that resembles a Lukan affirmation, he admits it grudgingly (p. 52, n. 1 [German edition]); if Luke seems at times to be more original than Mark, he is quick to add that it is naturally the artificial construction of Luke (p. 64, n. 6); if the imminence of the *pareusia* has already been pushed back in Mark, the consequences have not been drawn (p. 187, n. 4). Finally, if it is true to say that Luke was conscious of the time factor in revelation, why make him the author of the history of salvation and say that eschatology becomes Heilsgeschichte, as if there were no anticipations in the former evangelical tradition?" (245).

"Imperfectly set in regard to Mark, the work of Luke is no longer on the line that leads to John. How many times one would like to suggest such a comparison. Does not Luke announce the fourth Gospel when he shows that Jesus does not perform miracles on request (Luke 8:19; 9:9; 13:3) or that the disciples are not able to understand before the light of Easter dawns on them (p. 52)?" (245)

"This lack of a comprehensive view of the tradition explains without justifying it, that which vitiates Conzelmann's interpretation. It is possible that originally the first Christians may have lived intensely the expectation of an imminent *pareusia*; but it is certain that, according to the judgment of many exegetes, even non-Catholics, that illusory expectation had already been tempered in Mark--even in the first interpretation of the message of Jesus. If the first interpreters avoided the illusion, why make Jesus the only victim of it? ... Furthermore, why the desire

to explain the theology of history according to Luke by the experience of the delay of the parousia? This is to connect the known with the unknown, the certain with the hypothetical. Why consider the theology of Luke as a step-gap solution and not as the deepening of a situation which was given? Why not admit that Luke has dejudalized rather than de-eschatologized the primitive message? Conzelmann does not fear to see in Luke a man who would have deformed the evangelical message by his psychologizing and by his tendency to hellenize and spiritualize everything (p. 198, n. 1). He should free himself more of his critical manner by not confusing an authentic eschatology with the expectation of an imminent parousia." (245-246).

"Theologically, Conzelmann seems to align himself on the side of Bultmann. This magnificent effort to characterize the work of Luke results in the eyes of Conzelmann, not ours, in the destruction of its importance. By exalting Luke and his personality, he seems to have uprooted him from the flow of authentic evangelical tradition. Consequently he in turn stigmatizes him as Frühkatholizismus." (246)

2. Henkey, Charles H. The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XVII, 1955, pp. 525-527.

Henkey is surprised by Conzelmann's Catholic conclusions on the concept of the church. He is also impressed by Conzelmann's statement that Luke did not interpret the early church as valid forever. This implies that historical development does not involve defection from original ideals.

However, although recognizing Conzelmann's unbiased scholarly attitude, Henley disagrees with him concerning Catholic dogma, designating him as in this respect an unauthentic interpreter of Luke. These are the weak points that he sees in Conzelmann: "He [Conzelmann] believes that Lk. clearly professes a subordination (pp. 147, 149, 159-60, 179, etc. [German edition]), although he confesses that there are no explicit statements on the exact relationship between the Father and the Son (p. 149). Christ's passion and death have no importance for salvation (pp. 175, 200, n. 21). Jesus had only a passive part in the Resurrection (p. 179). The apostolate was not a permanent office, only the historical fact of being a witness (p. 189); consequently C. rejects the idea of hierarchical succession. He finds in Acts no trace of original sin, but only actual sin, so that Lk. has only an ethical and not a theological concept of sin (pp. 199-200, n. 3); neither is there any trace of second penance after baptism (p. 201, n. 3)" (p. 528). Obviously Henley criticizes from the dogmatic, rather than from the historical point of view.

Concerning Conzelmann's style Henley says: "C. is certainly not easily readable. His style is filled with the complicated and abstract expressions characteristic of German scientific writing. His sentences sometimes cohere only loosely and give rather the impression as a glossary to a work on Lk." (p. 525). With this judgment we agree heartily.

3. M. E. B. Revue Biblique, LXII, 1955, pp. 138-139.

Mr. B. accepts Cenzelmann's main contention that Luke has modified his Markan source in order to adapt it to the perspective of a different eschatology. But he adds: "In accepting this position one could, nevertheless, ask himself the question whether or not Luke (and before <sup>him</sup> the Christian community) did not falsify the Christian message. In other words, the problem can be posed in two opposite manners: (1) Christ had announced an imminent parousia and the approaching coming of the eschatological and celestial kingdom; the Markan tradition would give an echo of that proclamation, and Luke would have transformed it, adapting it to the conception of a different eschatology, which was imposed on the Christian community, especially after the Fall of Jerusalem. (2) But it seems difficult to deny that certain of the words of Jesus allow room to suppose a delay between the resurrection and the parousia, and offer precise rules to guide the life of the community here on earth. Therefore, would it not be more appropriate to say: in the very first times of Christianity, under the influence of Jewish eschatological ideas, the meaning of the words of Jesus was falsified when it was reinterpreted in an imminent eschatological sense and the Christian community was only finding again the spirit of Christ when it extricated itself little by little of a whole complex of ideas inherited from Judaism?" (pp. 138-139). This is a very astute way of setting the alternatives. Mr. B. also points out Cenzelmann's failure to contrast the Lukan and the Johannine traditions.

4. Viard, A. O. P. "Bulletin de Théologie Biblique," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XXXIX, 1955, pp. 278-279.

After giving a short summary of Conzelmann's book, Viard comments: "But is there such a profound difference between Mark and Luke? And would the latter have been satisfied to express such a revolutionary point of view only by using slight changes in the sources that he had at his disposal? Already in Mark there are traces that underline the fact that the parousia is not imminent." (p. 279).

#### B. Protestant Reviews

1. Reicke, Bo. Theologische Zeitschrift, XI, 1955, pp. 130-132.

"Heilsgeschichte is for Conzelmann," says Reicke, "something secondary which Luke first created. Originally there was something which stood in opposition to it, which he designates as eschatology without closer definition. Although the author does not say it explicitly, he has placed himself on the side of his teacher, Bultmann, in the current debate about O. Cullmann's book, Christ and Time. The author cannot deny the fact that there is a Heilsgeschichte concept in the New Testament, which has been emphasized above all by Cullmann. But according to Conzelmann, this concept originated later as a result of a disappointed expectation. It is a theory developed by Luke, established certainly on account of the circumstances, valuable, edifying, and spiritual but still only a theologumenon, a secondary reconstruction. The personal involvement of Luke is heavily emphasized as Conzelmann does not want to

reken with various traditions which precede Luke" (130-131).

"... To be sure, Cenzelmann has given a very instructive picture of the Luken Heilsgeschichte. However, he starts from a very esoteric concept of eschatology, since he presents this Heilsgeschichte as a basic reformulation of the early Christian eschatology. The non-initiated person must ask in vain in which sense the expression is used here. The only thing that is clear is that an undetermined imminent expectation is presupposed. Furthermore, it is to be noted that a primitive Christianity free from heilsgeschichtlichen ideas, which Luke would shape in his own way, is not to be presupposed without further ado" (p. 131).

Reicke also points out the failure of Cenzelmann to make any comparisons with the Johannine tradition.

2. Turlington, H. E. Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXVI, 1957, pp. 319-322.

Turlington praises highly the fresh and sharp studies of the text of Luke-Acts and the fine theological reconstruction of Lukan theology which Cenzelmann accomplishes, but he adds: "Nevertheless Cenzelmann sometimes has imposed various elements of his hypothesis upon passages which are at variance with it. To cite but one example, in Acts 2, the prophecy of Joel is said to have been interpreted as eschatological in Luke's source, but the gift of the Spirit is now considered to be the opening of a longer epoch. However, if Luke deliberately altered his sources to fit his scheme, it is singularly strange that he should retain a phrase such as: 'This is that which has been spoken' as introduc-

tery to the prophecy, and even repeat 'in the last days' within the quotation. The latter phrase is not even found in the original passage in Joel. Can it really be said that Luke has reinterpreted every previous eschatological concept as if nothing eschatological has happened?" (321)

"Conzelmann," Turlington continues, "is convincing in much that he affirms about the Lukan concept of Heilsgeschichte, but not in his thesis that the concept is entirely new and unique with Luke... The writer is said to have created it as a substitute for an earlier eschatology, (defined only as a near-expectation of the parousia) and to have imposed it on his sources. The difficulty is that these sources are nowhere adequately defined with the single exception of Mark, and even in Mark Conzelmann finds disarrangement of the church's eschatological ideas (p. 187, n. 4 [German edition]). How does he conclude so easily, that Luke has in his journey-report imposed on his special source the idea of the necessity of the Messiah's suffering? What are his criteria for determining the ideas which he is so sure Luke completely transformed? The concepts of fulfilment and continuity under a divine plan are by no means his creation. The most obvious answer is reference to Paul (e.g. Rom. 9-11) but Heilsgeschichte in some form is present in other New Testament writings. It is surely not, as Conzelmann would have us believe, a secondary concept created by the author of Luke-Acts" (pp. 321-322).

3. Robinsen, Jr., William C. Interpretation, XVI (April), 1962, pp. 191-196.

"While accepting the main elements of Conzelmann's analysis," affirms Robinsen, "I find some aspects of his argument unconvincing. It is not clear to me that Luke sought to organize Jesus' ministry into three sub-epochs and specially that he intended thereby to indicate a psychological development of Jesus' self-consciousness. Nor do I find the attempt to establish a 'border' character for the Jordan and the lake persuasive. Conzelmann makes use of the border idea in his interpretation of Luke's treatment of the Baptist, which, also has its difficulties" (195).

"Conzelmann," he continues, "apparently thinks that Luke inserted the word 'prophet' in the Q statement at Luke 7:28a in order to group John the Baptist with the prophets of the first epoch of redemptive history and so avoid eschatological implications. Thus he maintains that Luke made 7:28 agree with 16:16 (the law and the prophets were until John; from then the good news of the kingdom is preached...'), where he takes 'from then' to mean 'from--excluding' rather than 'from--and including.' But the text-critical basis for ascribing to Luke the insertion of 'prophet' into 7:28 is weak, and the meaning of 'from then' in 16:16 is debatable. On page 21 Conzelmann says that 16:16 is the key to Luke's understanding of the Baptist; on page 26 it is 3:19 f. which provides the key. In both cases Conzelmann is arguing that Luke took pains to separate Jesus and John. As has just been noted, 16:16 is



ambiguous. Luke 3:19 does mention John's imprisonment before telling of Jesus' ministry, but so does Mark 1:14, so that it is difficult to maintain that Luke was here making a radical departure from Mark." (p. 195)

4. Cadbury, Henry J. Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXX, 1961, pp. 304-305.

Cadbury's review is very brief. He maintains that Cenzelmann's Heilsgeschichte motif is a simplification. He says: "To paraphrase the phrase 'consistent eschatology,' we have here 'consistent Heilsgeschichte,' not, of course, for Jesus, but for the author of Luke-Acts. Whether the latter simplification will prove any more successful the former remains to be tested. The case rests on subtle, partial, or selective considerations. The author concentrates on the editorial point of view. He is not concerned with the question of sources or with the facts of history. The delay of the second coming forced the editor to a revised framework of divine intentions. He framed his perspective of history to suit theology rather than basing theology on the events related in the tradition" (p. 305).

5. Winter, Paul. Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXXI, 1956, pp. 36-39.

Winter grants that Cenzelmann's Heilsgeschichte pattern is an acceptable structure to handle Luke's theological outlook, but is not convinced that the detailed exegetical interpretations fit the general scheme and disputes the claim that Luke has treated

arbitrarily the tradition before him for the sake of his scheme (37). He also criticizes Genzelmann's undue emphasis on the symbolical and typeological interpretation of geographical data, pointing out that the author presses his point where there is no evidence for it, and furthermore, that such symbolical and typeological interpretations are typical of Gnosticism.

Winter's main criticism of Genzelmann is the latter's failure to deal adequately with the problem of the sources. He maintains that Genzelmann dismisses too easily the Prete-Luke hypothesis. The question of the sources is important, according to Winter, because it decides to some extent whether one is dealing with material that Luke received or that he created.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is no question in our minds that Genzelmann's work is a major contribution to New Testament studies. This is recognized by all the critics that have been mentioned above. Especially stimulating is his basic contention that Luke-Acts cannot be understood properly except from the vantage point of redemptive history. Fresh and suggestive are also his exegetical studies concerning the theological significance of locality in Luke and the over-all treatment of the apologetic motifs that Luke has interwoven in his narrative.

However, there are some basic criticisms of Genzelmann's work that cannot be avoided.

1. Genzelmann is completely dependent on Rudolf Bultmann's monumental work, Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition. He

never departs from this canon. It is B. Reicke who points out that Conzelmann would have done well in taking into account the work of other scholars.

2. Conzelmann is not precise in the definition of his terms. This is especially the case in relation to eschatology and the issue of Luke's sources. Nowhere in his book does Conzelmann grapple with the problem of what eschatology meant to the early church. He takes for granted that it was merely a near-expectation of the parousia. This obviously is an oversimplification. In respect to the sources, Conzelmann only considers Mark. He does not reckon with Luke's special source, nor does he venture to establish comparisons with the Johannine tradition. The problem of the sources is more important, it seems to us, than Conzelmann is willing to grant.

3. Perhaps Conzelmann's basic flaw is his all-important affirmation that Luke created the Heilsgeschichte pattern. A scholar can come to this conclusion after a thorough comparison of all that the New Testament, and for that matter the Old Testament also, has to say about redemptive history. But this is exactly what Conzelmann does not do. He simply presupposes that there is no contrary evidence.

4. At times Conzelmann seems to ride his theory to death by clever fits of exegetical analysis. Beth Robinson and Turlington point this out.

The theological thrust of this work is not stated in black and white but it is not hard to determine. On the one hand, by postulating the thesis that Heilsgeschichte is Luke's own creation,

Conzelmann seems to erode the basis on which Cullmann's theological structure rests. On the other, Conzelmann also affects those on the Catholic side who look to Luke as a part of the Catholic development. He says to them that there is no basis in the claim that the development can be traced back to Jesus.

One final observation might be in order. The reader of this book soon realizes how powerful has been Luke's schematization in shaping our view of early Christian history. Even if we do not grant that Heilsgeschichte is original with Luke, we have to concede that his picture of an orderly, necessary development in the ministry of Jesus and in the mission of the church captures our imaginations. One feels compelled to see the whole development of Christianity as a predetermined historical scheme.

A careful report. If you had gone a little further in your positive and negative critique, it could have gotten an A-; as it stands it remains in the B category.

B+