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Foreword to Henry Cadbury's "The Making of Luke-Acts"

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FOREWORD

More than two years ago, as I conducted my research on Henry J. Cadbury in the Haverford community, Howard Clark Kee recalled one of Cadbury's characteristic greetings: "Tell me Howard," Cadbury would say as their paths crossed at Brynn Mawr College, "what have you learned that I ought to know?" Apparently, Professor Kee was not the only one greeted in such a way. Donald Jones recalls being asked a similar question by Cadbury upon their first encounter at Earlham College. Having just completed a Ph.D. on Luke-Acts, Jones appropriately reversed the query back to Professor Cadbury: "I have been asking that question of you, sir, for the last three years."¹

Of Cadbury's more than one-hundred and sixty published New Testament-related books and essays, and among his more than two hundred fifty reviews of New

¹ See Donald L. Jones, "The Legacy of Henry Joel Cadbury: Or What He Learned that We Ought to Know," in *Cadbury, Knox and Talbert: American Contributors to the Study of Acts* (ed. Mikeal C. Parsons and Joseph B. Tyson; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 28-36 (esp. 35f.). Margaret Hope Bacon also mentions Cadbury's asking a similar question of Kee in her excellent biography, *Let This Life Speak: The Legacy of Henry Joel Cadbury* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 203. I am indebted to her for connecting me with Hendrickson Publishers. The Cadbury family must also be thanked for releasing the rights to this book, as should the Haverford Quaker Library and George Fox University for granting me a Gest Fellowship and sabbatical and summer research grants, respectively.

Testament books,² it is fair to say that his most influential contributions lay in the field of Luke-Acts, and among his many contributions in that field the most significant single work is his ground-breaking book, *The Making of Luke-Acts*. Following on the heels of several more technical treatments of Luke and Acts,³ this work drew together many of Cadbury's views in an exceptional synthesis. Bringing together considerations of underlying sources and their transmission, the distinctive functions of vari-

² See the bibliographies at the end of the collection of Cadbury's New Testament essays I am gathering (Trinity Press International, forthcoming). Included also are bibliographies of works on Cadbury and reviews of his New Testament works by others.

³ "Studies in the Style and Literary Method of Luke" (his 1914 Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, later published as *Style and Literary Method of Luke* (Harvard Theological Studies 6; 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1920 [repr. New York: Kraus Reprints, 1969]); "A possible Case of Lukan Authorship," *Harvard Theological Review* 10 (1917): 237-44; "Luke—Translator or Author?" *American Journal of Theology* 24 (1920): 436-55; "The Purpose Expressed in Luke's Preface," *The Expositor* 8 (21, 1921): 431-41. Four articles from a single work merit notice: "The Composition and Purpose of Acts: The Greek and Jewish Traditions of Writing History," 7-29 (with the editors), "The Identity of the Editor of Luke and Acts: The Tradition," 209-64, "The Identity of the Editor of Luke and Acts: Subsidiary Points," 349-62 (co-authored with the editors), "Appendix C—Commentary on the Preface of Luke," 489-510, in *Beginnings of Christianity. Part I: The Acts of the Apostles*. Vol. 2 (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; London: Macmillan, 1922); "The Knowledge Claimed in Luke's Preface," *The Expositor* 8 (24, 1922): 401-20; "The Relative Pronouns in Acts and Elsewhere," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 42 (1923): 150-57. Two other text-critical essays in *Beginnings of Christianity* are notable: "Collation of the Peshitto Texts of Acts," 291-375, and "Collation of the Vulgate Text of Acts," 276-90, in *Beginnings of Christianity: Part I: The Acts of the Apostles*. Vol. 3 (ed. James R. Ropes; London: Macmillan, 1926). See also "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. I," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 44 (1925): 214-27; "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. II, 'Recent Arguments for Medical Language,'" and "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts. III, Luke's Interest in Lodging," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45 (1926): 190-209 and 305-22. Many others, of course, appear later.

ous literary forms, parallels with ancient literature, disparate linguistic issues, and factors related to the personality and purpose of the author, Cadbury produced what has become something of a classic in the field. The longevity of the study is suggested by Cadbury's modest but telling reflections on the appearance of the second edition. After the first edition had evoked an entire generation of discussion, he commented in the preface to the second:

For a book like this to be reprinted after thirty years, and to be reprinted without thorough rewriting, is unusual. The only justification is that such an analysis of the process by which this double unit of the New Testament came into being has continued to seem to myself and others a useful study and that no other work has appeared in the interval covering the same ground. . . . There have been commentaries on Luke and, especially in this decade, on Acts. But all these studies, whether by myself or by others, have given little reason for reversing earlier judgments or resolving earlier uncertainties. Neither the Revised Standard Version nor the Dead Sea Scrolls have suggested any changes!

The same can be said after the next triad of decades. An interesting fact about *The Making of Luke-Acts* is that while the work comes across as less erudite than many of Cadbury's earlier treatments, it seems to have made a more substantial impact than many of his more technical works.⁴ Especially if taken together with its sequel, *The*

⁴ For instance, when the volume appeared, the *London Times* (Literary Supplement, Nov. 24, 1927, p. 850) observed, "The work before us is not primarily designed for scholars. It is addressed to the more general circle of those who are interested in New Testament problems but who have not the equipment to appreciate a more technical treatment. But none will read it with deeper interest than Professor Cadbury's fellow-workers, who will be best able to appraise the labour, skill and originality which he has brought to his task." Nearly fifty years later, Ward Gasque appraises *The Making of Luke-Acts* as "one of the most

Book of Acts in History, The Making of Luke-Acts is undoubtedly Cadbury's most enduring single contribution to biblical studies. Even at its initial appearance, E. F. Scott commented about the range of this work's appeal:

He writes in an interesting manner, and his argument at most points can easily be followed by any intelligent reader. At times, perhaps, he has been unduly careful to make everything clear and simple; but no one who is acquainted with the subject can mistake the value of the book. There is more genuine scholarship in it than in nine-tenths of the ostentatiously learned books that are being written today about the New Testament. Its outstanding merit is that in every chapter it is the outcome of first-hand research.⁵

Several particular contributions of this important work emerge for the reader. For one, Cadbury analyzes the Gospel of Luke and Acts as a unified two-volume work—a sound judgment, which was novel at the time. Regardless of varying ways of seeing the connection between the two books, Cadbury's judgment has remained largely unchallenged over the last several decades within Lukan scholarship. A simple review of the number of recent books and articles on "Luke-Acts" suggests the validity of this judgment.

The volume likewise contributes to our understanding of Luke-Acts by demonstrating the value of considering personal factors of authorial intent and procedure that are based on linguistic and stylistic phenomena in the text itself, rather than merely assuming certain qualities could be attributed to the author. This approach has bothered some readers because of Cadbury's reluctance to support traditional views of authorship and to make "definitive strikingly original studies of the Lucan writings ever conceived" (*A History of the Criticism of the Acts of the Apostles* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1989], 185, note 65).

⁵ E. F. Scott, "The Genesis of Luke-Acts," *Journal of Religion* 8 (1928): 285.

pronouncements.”⁶ A point here should be clarified. Cadbury, here and elsewhere, does not claim to know who the author was *not*. He simply raises questions about the extent to which the author can be identified and offers a more conservative approach, limiting himself to what can be known reliably from the texts themselves. Claiming the author’s identity *cannot be known for certain*, however, is not the same as claiming that the view that Luke authored Luke–Acts is *known not to be true*. On the subtlety of this point, and ones like it, some interpreters on both sides of the issue have foundered. For Cadbury, greater reward is offered through “motive criticism,” which analyzes why an author writes. Such attempts to recover an author’s motives must concentrate, then, on the stylistic, rhetorical, linguistic, and narrative aspects of the writing itself. While such an approach may require painstaking care, it moves from the philological and linguistic phenomena in the text itself to draw inferences based on the data alone. In that sense, it infers no more, or less, than the text itself suggests.

Cadbury’s impressive synthesis of form and source criticism enriches Luke–Acts study in a third way. As one of the first American scholars to introduce European views of form criticism to American biblical studies, Cadbury demonstrated the practical value of this interest by considering the history and function of Luke’s material before it came to be used by Luke. Alongside this formal analysis, Cadbury applied form-critical observations to redaction and source analyses by showing how Luke’s uses of earlier material were conditioned by the character of their form and function. In that sense, the evangelist was helped by sources, but he was also limited by them. From a broader source-critical perspective, since Cadbury’s analysis of Luke’s use of Mark and Q, the Two Document Hypothesis (that

⁶ *Ibid.*

Matthew and Luke both used at least Mark and another source, Q) has become all the more firmly established in the minds of most New Testament scholars. The many similarities among the Synoptics, as pointed out by Cadbury, make it extremely difficult to explain the literary data any other way.

Finally, Cadbury's comparative work, identifying similarities and differences between Luke and ancient writers, affords the reader many insights into Luke's perspective, context, and historicity. Though comparisons and contrasts with the likes of Josephus raise questions of historicity in both directions, Cadbury lifts the discussion above apologetic interests in one text being "right" at the other's expense. He then relocates the focus on the interpretive and hermeneutical implications of the biblical renderings, which is where biblical interpretation is always most meaningful. In this and other explorations, Cadbury's pervasive fairness comes through. While Cadbury only occasionally engaged other scholars explicitly in his analysis (indeed, he saved that for his massive number of reviews and other essays), he did engage the text in the light of their works. This probably accounts for the long-range value of his work, over and above the life spans of hermeneutical trends and scholarly fashions.

What difference will the renewed accessibility of Cadbury's work have upon New Testament studies in the future? No one can tell for sure. If Cadbury's exceptional analysis of the Greek text, his sobriety of judgment, and his multileveled and interdisciplinary approaches to his material provide any pattern for future scholarship, the effect is certain to be positive. Indeed, Cadbury brings together the often disparate approaches of historical-critical, literary-rhetorical, and theological analyses into an impressive whole; but such is made possible only because of his intensive and extensive treatments of relevant texts and themes elsewhere.

If one were to ask of Henry Cadbury, along with Donald Jones, what he had learned that we ought to know, the answer would certainly begin with a fresh consideration of *The Making of Luke-Acts*. With the availability of this new printing, such is now possible!

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