

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-6-1924

The Christology of Acts

George F. Horn

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_horn@gsl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Horn, George F., "The Christology of Acts" (1924). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 692.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/692>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ACTS

**A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

George F. Horn

**Concordia Seminary,
May 6, 1924**

Bibliography:

- B. Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, 2 voll.
- A.H. McNeile, New Testament Teaching in the Light of St. Paul's.
- James Hastings, Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. 4 voll.
- Meyer, Commentary to the New Testament. Acts, I and II.
- Robertson, Luke the Historian in the Light of Research.
- Kretzmann, Popular Commentary, Vol. I of the New Testament.
- Fuerbringer, Einleitung in das Neue Testament.

The Christology of Acts.

The book of Acts was written mainly for history so we would not expect to find much doctrine in it. And yet it is full of doctrine. For this we must thank the Holy Spirit who has preserved it to us by inspiration. St. Luke was inspired with the information necessary to the recording of the speeches we find in the book. These speeches are the chief sources of doctrine in this book though not the only ones. A study of the book for any one doctrine reveals incidentally many other doctrines. This is brought out especially clearly when we consider the book from the viewpoint of the Ecumenical Creeds. The Trinity, the Fatherhood of God, the creation and the preservation of all things by Him are clearly taught. So also we find many references to the Holy Spirit and His work of conversion and sanctification, the church and questions pertaining to it, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Just how many of the articles comprehended under the second article are embodied in Acts we will see as we go along for that is the subject of the present dissertation.

But before we go into these doctrines themselves we must look briefly into the book itself as a whole---its author, his aim, the sources and the time of the composition, in short, the isagogics of the book. That it was written by Luke, the author of the Gospel by this name (cf. 1,1 with Lk. 1,1-4) and the co-worker of Paul in the later years of his ministry (cf. the "We" sections, chap. 16ff.), there can be ~~little~~ no doubt. "The Fathers, since the time of Irenaeus have frequently made literal quotations from the book and have expressly designated

it as the work of Luke" (Meyer on Acts I,1). Nor can the opposition of certain heretical sects --Ebionites, Marcionites, Severians and Manichaeans--be taken seriously as the book was displeasing to them on account of ~~the~~ different features of its doctrine.

The primary aim of the book was to describe the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem, the center of Jewry, to Rome, the center of the civilized world. Luther (St.Louis XIV,92 quoted in Kretzmann, Intro.to Acts) in his Preface to this book says: "This book you should read and regard not merely as St.Luke's record of the personal doings or history of the apostles but this is the point you should rather note, namely, that with this book St. Luke teaches all Christendom to the end of the world the true chief article of christian doctrine which tells us that we must all be justified alone by faith in Jesus Christ, without the Law or our own works." Thus Luther lays emphasis on the pauline character of Acts. Yet there are those who assign to this book a different aim, namely, a conciliatory one. The Tuebingen school of theologians with Baur at its head was the leader in this movement which would take all historical accuracy and credibility from Acts. "They affirm that the Paul of the Acts, in his compliance towards Judaism is entirely different from the apostle as exhibited in his Epistles (Baur); that he is converted into a Judaizing Christian, as Peter and James are converted into Pauline Christians (Schwegler); and that our book, as a proposal of a Pauline Christian towards ~~peace~~ peace by concessions of his party to Judaism, was in this respect intended to influence both parties, but especially had in view the Roman church (Zeller)." (Meyer, I,11). A.H.McNeile (p.120)

says: "Whether the speeches ascribed to St. Paul contain a true representation of his teachings is more doubtful.... They contain echoes of Pauline phrases.... But they also contain expressions which St. Paul never uses in his epistles." But if Luke in this book was really trying to whitewash over the differences between Paul and the Judaizing party in Jerusalem (as it is called), why does he bring in the story of the conversion of Cornelius, which took place under Peter and the record of the apostolic Council at Jerusalem (chap. 15)? Why, also, does he in the last chapter (28, 25ff) close Paul's intercourse with the Jews with a ~~flat~~ rejection of them from the Apostle's own mouth? No, the aim of St. Luke in writing this book was not to make it appear that there was no dissension between Paul and the other apostles for this was unnecessary as there was no dissension between them as is shown by the decision of the Apostolic Council. In the study of this book we are to remember that it was not written to serve as a dogmatical treatise (as were the Epistles of Paul) but it is ~~sh~~ simply to give us a comprehensive history of the spread of Christianity. In the course of this history the author naturally touched on many doctrines while giving the different speeches of the ~~of~~ ~~the~~ apostles but we need not expect that he has given us the full text of all these speeches. So the speech delivered by Peter on Pentecost is not given in full as Luke himself tells us: "And with many other words did he testify and exhort (2, 40, cf. 17, 3; 18, 5).

As to the sources which the author employed we need not worry. Whether he used a written document concerning Peter, another concerning Stephen and a missionary narrative perhaps belonging to it (as Meyer, Acts I, 13, thinks is highly probable) is not a

4.

question we need long argue. It may well be that he did use such written and even traditional sources in the editing of his books. This does not conflict with the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures for the Holy Spirit does not despise such means of obtaining information. But to try to name the different sources used is at best a very problematical matter. It is senseless, also, to infer that the book is not inspired because Luke himself lays no claim to such inspiration (cf. Robertson, p.41). It is true that Luke does not claim that his book is inspired yet it bears such an unmistakable imprint of the Holy Spirit, He is mentioned so often (about seventy times, so that someone has called Acts, "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit") and He plays such an important role in all the undertakings of the apostles that it is not stretching the imagination to assign this book to His inspiration. And it is noteworthy that Peter in his first speech (1,11) assigns the Psalms to the work of the Holy Spirit working through the mouth of David.

The time of the writing of Acts is best taken between the dates 63 and 65 $\beta.\beta$.A.D. For this early date speaks the fact that no mention of Paul's second imprisonment and death (67-68), nor of the destruction of Jerusalem (70) is made. Luke was with Paul during the latter's first imprisonment in Rome (28,16; Col.4,14) and knows that the imprisonment lasted two years (28,30). Luke may have written during these two years or afterwards when Paul was on further journeys but it seems more reasonable to suppose that he finished the book just at the end of these two years.

There is another false notion with regard to early christian theology in general, which we wish to speak of before we enter into the body of our paper. This is, as we might call it, the

evolutionistic theory of theology according to which some of the brighter brains of our day would describe the steady growth or evolution of theology during the first century of the christian era. This is what McNeile means when he speaks (p.118) of Paul's "controversial epistles in which he expressed the maturer convictions arrived at by mediation and experience." And p.127 he says: "The question (of Jesus' being made Messiah) was altogether outside of Peter's horizon. It was because it came within St.Paul's that his doctrine was epoch-making in Christian thought." And the writer in Hasting's (I,181) says: "In these factors....we have the conditions for the rapid evolution of a doctrine of reconciliation through the cross." Again on the same page we read: "And whatever explanation be give the composition of the speeches of Paul, the primitive character of the Christology they present remains a fact." Now, while it is true that the theology of the speeches in Acts is not so full and explicit as that of the controversial epistles of Paul, for instance, yet it is to be held that this is not due to any evolution in the theology but simply to the different aims of these books. Robertson (p.181) is right when he says:"The early chapters of Acts faithfully preserve the primitive Christology, in essence the same as that of St.Paul." That this is the case we will see as we go along.

We will follow closely the order laid down in the second Article of the Apostles' Creed as this is the simplest order. It is to be noted that there is in Acts no mention of the birth and childhood of Jesus but this is partially explained by the fact that Luke had in Gospel given a very full account of them to Theophilus, to whom both the Gospel and Acts are addressed (1,1 and Lk.1,3) and partially by the fact that his birth was known to the Jews and

understood as a matter of course by the Gentile hearers. This then also explains why the humanity of Christ is not especially ~~dwelt~~ dwelt upon though he is called "a man approved of God" (2,22; cf. also 17,31) and we are told that he was laid in the grave (13,29). But the active ^{life} ~~ministry~~ of Jesus, his ministry, is referred to in Acts. So St. ~~Paul~~ Peter in the speech made when an apostle was to be elected to take the place of Judas, marks the limits of this ^{-try} ministry as it is marked by the Gospels---from the Baptism to the Ascension-- "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us." (1,22). In his speech on the first Pentecost (2,22ff) Peter describes the character of this ministry. "Jesus the Nazaraean (cf. 3,6; 4,10; 6,14; 22,8; 26,9) a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (2,22). And especially in the address preceding the baptism of Cornelius (10,36ff) he ^{-s-} describes the life of Jesus very closely thus: "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published ^{-ough-} through out all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree." "Holy" and "Just" are the two epithets applied to Jesus in Acts which throw light on his character. So in 3,14 Peter calls him "the Holy One and the Just" and in 4,27 he is described as the ^{1st} "holy child Jesus" who was anointed by God; in 7,52 he is called, absolutely, "the Just One" (cf. also 22,14; 13,28: the innocent one). The writer of

the article on Christology in Hastings thinks that these epithets may be traditional, coming from the book of Enoch. But he himself admits that "in 3,14.... the contrast drawn.... with the "murderer" for whom the Jews had asked suggests that the words at the same time ^{time} connote the consciousness that they fitly describe the character of Jesus". Nor will it be amiss to remind the reader that the Old Testament itself speaks of Jesus as the Holy One (cf. Ps. 16, 10: "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.") Thus by speaking of the Holy and Just One, by inference even the birth of Christ is referred to in Acts for had Christ been born of man in the natural way he would not have been, absolutely, "the Holy One."

The suffering and death of Jesus naturally receive more attention in the speeches of the apostles. Peter in his first ~~speech~~ speech (before the disciples) makes mention of the fact (1, 16-20) that the fate of the betrayer of Jesus had been foretold (Ps. 69, 25; 109, 8) and he also tells us that Judas, one of the disciples, was guide to those that took Jesus (v. 16). In the 8th chapter (vv. 32-35) ³⁵ where the story of the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch is recorded ^{-ed} we are told that Philip applied Is. 53, 7.8 to Jesus. So it was now well-understood that Jesus' death had been long foretold (cf. 26, 23). Repeatedly the fact is mentioned that the Jews were the ~~main~~ cause of his death (4, 10; 5, 30; 7, 52; 10, 39; 13, 28) generally as a direct accusation against the Jews themselves in order to bring them to repentance. And even the Jews themselves (5, 28), tacitly at least, admit that the blood of Jesus was upon them by saying: "And ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." In 3, 14 Peter charges the Jews with having denied the Holy One and the Just and desiring a murderer to be granted to them. The fact is also mentioned (4, 25-27) that the rulers of the Gentiles, Herod and Pontius Pilate, were "gathered

together against the Lord and against His Christ". That he was hung on a tree is told us once in so many words (10,39^{of 13,39}) and several times (2,23;4,10) it is expressed by the term "crucify". Paul preaching in Antioch even testifies (13,39) that Jesus was laid in the grave: "And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre". This testimony Paul gives in order to impress upon the minds of his gentile hearers that Jesus was truly dead and thus to make evident the great miracle and the certainty of the Resurrection. Thus we see how positively the death of Jesus was preached already in the earliest apostolic church. The real significance attached to his death we will see later.

There is yet another feature of his death, however, which it will be well for us to consider here---the predetermination of God in this matter. With the clearest of words Peter tells the Jews in his Pentecost sermon, (2,23) that the death of Jesus had been predetermined by God: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Here Peter tells the Jews that they need not think that they have overpowered God by killing Jesus, for the Father had long before decided that this was to be the mode of death of the Savior. But Peter also charges the Jews with having committed a horrible sin by putting him to death. "Herod and Pontius Pilate with the gentiles and the Jews as a people had only carried out what the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done(4,28)" (Hastings I,181). And not ~~the~~ only had the death of Jesus been decreed from eternity in the mind of God but it had also been foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament: "Those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His pro-

phets, that Christ should suffer He hath so fulfilled" (3,18). Paul in his defense before Agrippa says among other things: "Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead" (26,22.23).

But what value was placed on his death? Did the apostles consider his death in the same light as the death of anyone else? No. "They connected the death of Jesus with the blotting ~~of~~ out of sin and for these reasons this Jesus was the subject of the 'glad news' (5,42), the object of faith (9,42;11,17) and the cause of faith in men (3,16)." (Hastings I,178). But the very same writer also says: "Now when we apply this test (what Jesus is to save us from) to the conception which lies behind the language of the primitive community, we find that, while it has very definitely moved away from the political, it has not yet reached a developed consciousness of the ^{ethical} deliverance." By "ethical deliverance" he means the deliverance wrought by Christ's vicarious suffering and death. Let us see what Acts says.

We are told that Jesus is to bring remission of sins and deliverance from the judgement to come. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out" (3,19). It is Jesus, the Son of God, who is to be considered as "turning away every one of us from his iniquities" (3,26). "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (4,12). "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever ~~beli~~ believeth shall receive remission of sin" (16,43). And in many other passages we are told that it is through Jesus that sins are forgiven. But this remission of sins includes also deliverance from the impending Judgement. Peter in his Pentecost sermon (2,18ff)

cites Joel 2,28-32 where the outpouring of the Spirit and the Last Days are closely connected and the promise is made (v.21) that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The day of wonders and signs (v.19) is the day of Judgement. Those who call on the name of the Lord will then be saved from the Judgement.

Does the book of Acts tell us just how it is that Jesus saves from sins, i.e. does it teach forgiveness of sin by the vicarious atonement of Christ? There are those who do not find this doctrine in Acts. The writer of the article on Christology in Hastings (I,181) expresses himself thus: "In these factors--- correlation of death of Jesus with whole redeeming purpose of God, foreshadowing by prophecy of vicarious value of death of innocent Jesus and the remembered attitude of Jesus towards his own death--- we have the conditions for the rapid evolution of a doctrine of reconciliation through the Cross. The doctrine itself is not here; but distinct approximation to it can be traced in the collocation of Jesus as the suffering Messiah with an appeal for 'repentance unto remission of sins' (3,18.19). So in 2,38: "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. More cannot be said. The nature of the connection between the death of Jesus and the Divine plan remains obscure.... (Its) explanation.. was an unfolding of the primitive conviction that there was a profound connexion between the death of Jesus and the removal of sin". B.Weiss agrees with this: "Herein (the people's non-realization of the fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah) is to be found the reason why, in this elementary proclamation, the saving significance of the death of Jesus had still to be kept in the background" (I,177)

From this we see that Weiss believes that the apostles and disciples themselves knew that Jesus' suffering and death were for the purpose of redeeming the lost human race. But essentially he agrees with the former in that he says that this doctrine is not taught in Acts.

Now, it is to be observed that the salvation (4,12;13,26; 2,21) preached by the apostles and disciples in Acts is more closely defined. It is called a "remission^{or forgiveness} of sins" (ἀφεσις) (10,43; 13,38;5,31); it is called a "peace" through Jesus Christ (10,36); it is called a "justification" (δικαίωσις) by Jesus" (13,39); a "blotting out (ἐξάλειψις) of sins" (3,19), a "purchasing (περιποιεῖν) through his blood" (20,28). How are we to consider these expressions? Let us see first of all to what kind of people the apostles and disciples preached. When we know what class of hearers they addressed we can better judge how their preaching was understood. Of the speeches recorded in Acts all, with the exception, possibly, of one, were made before people who had^{ed} were more or less acquainted with the Jewish religion. Cornelius was a devout and God-fearing man dwelling in the midst of Jews. Certainly it is not a leap of the imagination to suppose that he was well-acquainted with Jewish ritual and the Old Testament (10,12,2). Agrippa was, according to Paul's own testimony 'expert in all customs and questions of the Jews' (26,3) and acquainted with the prophets (v.27). Paul's charge to the elders of Ephesus (20,18-35) was made before Christians. And even the speech in Athens (19,18-31) was addressed to men who may well have been instructed in some of the chief points of Christianity as Paul had disputed with them before and they had noticed that he seemed "to be a setter forth of strange Gods" (v.17).¹⁸⁸⁾ EB

Such being the case we have the duty as well as the privilege to understand the passages given above in the light of the Old Testament^{ent.}

The Jews were acquainted with the Old Testament as it was read on every Sabbath in the synagoges (13,27; cf 15,21). It is true, they had not really comprehended its contents (13,27) because they had not recognized Jesus as the Messiah when he came into the world though all the prophets had witnessed of him (3,18.24;10,43). Sacrifices were a part of their daily life; they knew what these sacrifices were for even though they may not have applied this to themselves. They knew that God does not desire burnt-offerings (Ps.40,6~~ff~~; cf 51,16). Moreover they had read of the 'Suffering One' in Is.53 and Ps.22 though they did not understand these things any more than did the Ethiopian eunuch (8,34.35). But now when it was preached to them that Jesus had suffered, died and risen again and that he had been exalted to the right hand of God as Prince and Savior and as Judge of all (cf. below) could the Jews fail to understand the things which were said concerning the remission of sins especially in view of the ~~the~~ fact that the history of his death and resurrection are so closely connected with the exhortation to repentance and faith (2,36;3,18.19;5,30.31;13,28-30.38)? St. Paul (13,39) also comes out very plainly. He says: "By him all that believe are justified". Of this expression the writer in Hastings (I,181) says: "If in the following verse (the one of which we are treating) he seems to cross the line into 'Paulinism' ^{does} he does not go very far. 'Justified' has the same significance here as ^{the} in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk.18,14)" But it is to be noted that this justification through Jesus is set into the sharpest contrast with the fact that by the law no man can be justified (v.38b). In the Old Testament it had been said (Lev.17,11): "For it is the ~~the~~ blood that maketh an atonement for the soul". Since then, it was known to the Jews that here is no forgiveness of

sin without shedding of blood (Heb.9,22) and that Jesus (the Messiah^{-iah} approved of God) had died, as Scripture had foretold that he must, and that he was now offering forgiveness of sin by faith in his name^{name}, how else could the term "ἐν τούτῳ ἰκανοῦνται" be understood than of an atonement through the Cross?

But there is one passage which the writer in Hastings himself confesses to be a "seed-thought of much that we recognize as specifically Pauline" (I,181)---the passage (20,28): "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Indeed this is a "seed-thought of much that we recognize as specifically Pauline!" It is more---it is a full-grown plant. Nowhere in his Epistles does Paul teach redemption through the blood of Jesus more plainly than here though he does carry it out at much greater length in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians and we are to keep in mind here that Paul was addressing Christians (elders of Ephesus). He sets the fact that Christ died for our sins in this pregnant form: That the new holy community, like the old one in Egypt at the time of the slaying of the first-born, has been redeemed at the cost of blood, the blood of God's own beloved Son. Πραγοῦν means, namely, to get for one's self, to purchase and refers to Is.43,21: This people have I formed for myself. Thus we see that Jesus may well be the subject of the 'good news', the object of faith and the cause of faith in men (cf.above). For these reasons we are constrained to disagree with those who conclude that "a doctrine of Atonement was not yet (among earliest Christians) defined or grasped" (McNeile,125).

The real value of the death of Jesus is brought out by

the Resurrection which is told us with such certainty by the ^{apostles} / apostles. Indeed the Resurrection is dwelt upon so often in this book that it has been called the "Demonstration of the Resurrection" (cf. Kretzmann, Intro. to Acts). Why it is so often spoke of we will see ^{later} later on under the Messianic office of Christ.

As the death of Jesus was necessary because it had been foretold in the Old Testament, so also the Resurrection. Peter, in his Pentecost speech (2,25-31) adduces Ps.16,8-11 (Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption) as proof for the Resurrection of Jesus and shows that it could not apply to David for "he is both dead and buried and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" (v.29). Paul (3,35-37) argues in the very same way from the same Psalm. In his speech ^{before} before Agrippa he links the Resurrection of Jesus with the Death saying ^{that} that both had been foretold by Moses and the prophets (26,22.23).

It is noteworthy that the apostles almost invariably set the Resurrection of Jesus in the sharpest contrast with his death (2,23.24; 3,15; 4,10; 5,30; 10,39.40; 13,29.30; 26,23). Nor do they fail to emphasize the fact that it was God who raised him from the dead. One or two instances will suffice as examples: "And (ye) killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead" (3,15) and: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a ^{tree} tree" (5,30; cf. also the other passages quoted just above). Nor was the Resurrection of Jesus the same as that which will befall all of us-- he was raised already on the third day (10,40) instead of waiting until the Last Day. This is plain proof that Jesus' death was ^{different} different from that of other men. To establish the fact that Jesus was really risen still more firmly in the minds of his audience in Anti-

och Paul tells them that he "was seen many (40 according to 1,3) days of them that came ~~to~~ up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witness unto the people" (13,31). But though Jesus had been raised from the dead and shown to many, he was not ^{shown} shown to every one but only to chosen witnesses. In 10,40-42 Peter in his speech before Cornelius says: " Him God raised up the ~~third~~ third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and ^{to} to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." So the witnesses of Jesus' Resurrection were to act as such to all men preaching to them the way of life, as is also shown in 1,22: " One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." That the apostles were true to their trust we are told 4,33 and 25,19.

"The risen One, however, had also been exalted to the ^{right} right hand of God and that likewise because David had already foretold ^{the} the Exaltation, of the Messiah to God's right hand (2,33-36) as Peter shows from Ps.90,1 (The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy foot-stool)---a passage which had been ^{been} applied to the Messiah by Jesus himself." (Weiss, I, 179). Jesus had spoken of his Exaltation (MK.12,36) and had even referred to the same Psalm as did Peter in his Pentecost speech. This fact (that Jesus had prophesied it) combined with what they had seen on Ascension Day (1,9.10) assured the apostles of the certainty of the Exaltation so that they could bear witness to it as is done in 5,31: ^{31:} "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior." Proofs of this Exaltation are also to be seen in the two visions recorded in Acts. So in 7,56.57 we ~~is~~ are told that Stephen

at his trial said: "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And Paul speaking before Agrippa, in describing his conversion, tells (26,13) of seeing "a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun" and of hearing ^{the} ~~the~~ voice of Jesus. Wherein this Exaltation consisted we are also told. It is first and foremost a 'sitting at the right hand of God' (2,34; 7,56). He is to be a Prince (5,31) and a Judge for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (5,31)---so he is the ruler in the kingdom of grace. He is also ordained to be the Judge of the quick and dead.

But the Resurrection and the ~~Exaltation~~ Exaltation to the right hand of God had a deeper significance for his disciples than simply as a vindication by the Father of the One who had been crucified as a blasphemer--- no, by this Resurrection of Jesus from the dead and by his Exaltation God had testified that this ~~Jesus~~ Jesus is the Messiah looked forward to in the Old Testament. This "conviction rested upon and appealed to the Resurrection as the conclusive proof of the Messiahship of Jesus. But the Resurrection was uniformly connected with the Exaltation to the right hand of God....The Resurrection is thus regarded as the external, visible side of a great transaction which has its true significance in the Exaltation of Jesus to Messianic rank and honor in heaven; it was a public declaration of his station." (Hastings, I, 178). It had been evidenced in his earthly life that Jesus was the Messiah who was to bring to completion the salvation which God had predetermined for His people. That God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power had been evidenced during his life-time by the fact that he went ~~about~~ about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (10,38; cf. 4,27). Yet royal dominion was such an essential feat-

ure of the Messiah in the expectation fo the Jewish people that without it no one would be regarded as the Messiah. Indeed, the suffering Savior as depicted in Is.53 and Ps.22 was entirely strange to the minds of the Jews. Their idea of the Messiah was different. They expected him to ascend a visible throne in Jerusalem and to free the people of God from the yoke of the Romans. But Jesus had not done this. And yet, despite this, the whole house of Israel might know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom the Jews had crucified both Lord and Christ (2,36). That this Jesus has become the cornerstone of the completed theodrac^y, Peter testifies before the officers of the temple (4,11) : This (Jesus Christ of Nazereth) is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. He has also now been exalted of God to be a Prince, (5,31).

But not only is it said that Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God, but he also receives the same attributes as God Himself. He is called repeatedly "The Lord" (ὁ Κύριος ; 2,36; 11,23. 24. and ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς: 1,21; 4,33; 11,20; 15,11) as only Jehovah Himself is called. In this the LXX is followed which translates אֲדֹנָי of the Old Testament by Κύριος and this name is applied to God in 1, 24; 2,20; 3,19; 4,26. etc. There are those, it is true, who claim that this name ὁ Κύριος was not understood by the early Christians to mean "God" or "Lord"; that this was a traditional name. But the fact that he is described as sitting at the right hand of God, (5,31), coming in the clouds of heaven, (1,11) to be the Judge of the quick and the dead, (10,42) shows that he was considered more than man. This is also evidence by the fact that divine worship is accorded him in Acts. 2,21 and 7,59.

"Had he been the Christ while on earth? There are not wanting indications which seem to carry back the Messianic status into the earthly ministry. He had been raised up by God (3,26. cf. 7,37; 13,33) as it had been predicted by Moses that God would raise up a Prophet, (3,22). He had been sent by God as one blessing his people and by God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power (10,28). This last expression probably means 'appointed as Messiah' the occasion referred to being the baptism of Jesus. 'Since Isaiah 11,2 (And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord) the conception of the Messiah in Jewish theology had been indissolubly linked with that of the Spirit. The Messiah is the bearer of the Spirit' (Brueckner, in R.G.G. II, 1208) so that the anointing with the Spirit is equivalent to installation as Messiah" (Hastings I, 182). B. Weiss (I, 180 from the reformed view-point, of course) contends that "His earthly ^{life} was not yet the manifestation of the Messiah which was to bring about the ultimate consummation." For proof he refers to 3,19 - 26, hinging his argument on the fact that Jesus must be sent once more as he was sent the first time (v. 26). He even goes so far as to say that even "the Jesus who is enthroned and ruling in heaven (v. 21) is not yet in a perfect manner that which the Messiah is to be to the people." But it is to be remembered that this second coming of Jesus is not in order to complete salvation for us, but in order to "bless us in turning away everyone from his iniquities" (v. 26). He is already the Prince and Savior (5,31); He is already exalted (2,33); He has already poured out of his Spirit upon all flesh (2,17. 33) as he had promised to do in

Joel 2, 28 f. And this pouring out of the Spirit in Joel is connected very closely with the last days. When, then, should Jesus come into his full Messianic glory? At the last day when he will come as the Judge of all? As was said above "the anointing with the Spirit is equivalent to installation as Messiah."

Incidentally it may be well and encouraging to note that on several occasions the disciples proved from the Old Testament that Jesus is the Messiah tho the author does not give the line of argument used by the disciples. So Paul, when in Thessalonica, "reasoned three Sabbath days with the Jews out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (17, 2. 3). We are told of Apollos, (18, 28) that "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. "

There is yet one more doctrine which demands our attention before we close --- the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ. We have already touched upon it at various places above, especially in the discussion of the Messiahship of Jesus but at this point we will consider it for itself, not as a side issue. Jesus' second coming is plainly foretold in 1, 10 and 11: While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, We men of Galálee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Not only do the angels foretell that Jesus is to come again (for he does this continually, cf. 3, 26) but they say

that he is to come visibly. And it will be the same Jesus as the one who ascended into heaven. He is to come in the clouds of heaven. This reminds us of Dan. 7,13 where "one like the Son of Man" is referred to as coming "with the clouds of heaven." This "traditional dramatic form" of his coming is rather locked down upon by the writer on Eschatology in Hastings (I, 526) but it is to be believed since it is told us by the Bible. When this second coming of Jesus will take place, is of course not foretold but Peter (2,17f.) is quoting from Joel (2,28.29) takes over bodily the latter's word which place together the outpouring of the Spirit and the last day. Thus Peter also gives the impression that the last day is very near. We are, however, told (17,31) that the day of Judgment is "appointed", that is, set in God's mind.

The purpose of this second coming is to judge the world and to destroy Jerusalem. So in 10,43 we are told that "it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." This verse brings out the point that all men are to be judged by Christ. The same thing is brought out in 17,31: "Because he hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." This man will judge the world in righteousness. As testimony and seal that God will really do this the Resurrection of Jesus is to serve. We are also told 24,25 that Paul's reasoning of judgment to come was one of the factors in causing Felix to tremble. Another purpose in this second coming is recorded for us in Acts. The Jews in their accusation against Stephen make this charge: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. (6,13).

We have come to the conclusion. We have seen that the doctrine of Christ, his person and his work, is really very fully treated in Acts. There is no doubt in the mind of the writer that the articles on the Father and the Holy Spirit are also well-presented^{-ed} --- so well-presented, in fact, that a very good system of theology might be made up from this book alone, especially when taken with the Old Testament. The writer is well satisfied that the study of this book has been worth the time spent upon it, even if he had gotten no more than an idea of the copious doctrinal content of a book of the Bible which has by him hitherto been considered a purely^{ly} historical book and therefore hardly the source of much doctrine. Thus the wonders of God's Word are brought home to us again. May we be mindful of, and thankful for them always.