

PAULINE AND OTHER  
STUDIES

IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

BY

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XII

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS



Tomb of a Christian Physician (see p. 298).

## XII

### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ACTS

RECENTLY a friend, in whose judgment I place great confidence, remarked in a letter to me that Dr. McGiffert's book on the *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* contained the most powerful statement known to him of the view that the *Acts of the Apostles* could not have been written by Luke, the friend and pupil of St. Paul; and he urged that I should state clearly and precisely the attitude which I hold towards the argument so ably stated by the distinguished American Professor. The very fact that in several important points, such as the Galatian question, Dr. McGiffert has come to the same opinion as I hold, makes the difference between us as regards authorship all the more marked; and, as the Editor also asks me to write a review of this important book, it seems advisable to state why I remain unconvinced by its arguments against the Lukan authorship. It is rather confusing that Luke is spoken of as "the author" in many pages of Dr. McGiffert's book; but this is merely done for brevity, and the Professor is most clear and emphatic in denying the Lukan authorship.

The judgment which has been quoted in my opening sentence may be taken as a proof that the book is characterised by deep study and knowledge, long deliberation, and remarkable dialectical skill. I do not, however, intend to

write a review of the book as a whole; but content myself with a brief statement of the strong qualities shown in it. I should mention, as an example of the book at its best, the defence of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Colossians, which is an admirably concise and powerful piece of reasoning. And there occur many other similar passages, some of which critics may rank higher than the one which I have selected. The same qualities appear everywhere throughout the book. It will, however, be better to confine myself to one subject—the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles (with which of course goes the Third Gospel).

Dr. McGiffert goes over the book of *Acts* paragraph by paragraph, dissecting every statement; and with remorseless logic piles up argument upon argument. The cumulative effect of these is to show such a series of erroneous statements in the book as are absolutely inconsistent with the idea that the writer could have been an intimate friend of Paul and of other actors, or himself an actor, in the events described. The book of Acts is pronounced to be a second-hand work throughout: and the proper and only profitable method of historical study and criticism in reference to it is found to be an analysis of its sources.

On any theory as to the authorship of *Acts* and the Third Gospel, the question of sources is one of great importance. The author is almost universally admitted to be a Greek, a stranger to Palestine (which he knew only from a visit), probably born after many of the events which he records had occurred; and he expressly states that many written accounts of the period treated in his First Book (*i.e.*, the Third Gospel) were known to him. The question as to his sources is of prime consequence; and we all admit that some of his sources were written. But I have been concerned to

maintain that great part of *Acts* is not dependent on written sources, but is partly gathered from the mouths and from the oral accounts of actors (especially Paul), and partly written down from personal knowledge (in which case the author uses the first personal form of narrative). The author's view as a whole throughout the book is, as I maintain, Paul's view; and in great part of it we must trace the hand of a pupil of Paul's, accustomed to hear Paul's opinion and to be largely, almost entirely, guided by it. But, in certain cases, I think that statements resting on other authority are admitted: in chaps. i. and ii. traces of popular traditions are visible, in chap. xii. 12 it is distinctly given the reader to understand that John Mark was the authority: the comparison of viii. 40 with xxi. 8, 10 gives an equally distinct hint that Philip was the authority for chap. viii. In the Ephesian narrative, chap. xix., I recognise probably a statement of popular Asian belief in verses 11-19, and in verses 16-7 a narrative of non-Pauline tone, intended by an admirer of Paul to bring out that Apollos was indebted to Paul's teaching (conveyed through Aquila and Priscilla) for a great advance in his spiritual knowledge and power: the author was fully aware of Apollos' gifts and grace, but he was clearly desirous that it should be known that these were acquired only after Apollos had come in contact with Pauline influence. I cannot recognise any hint conveyed by the author as to the source of his narrative about Peter; but probably a better knowledge of the author's life and circumstances would reveal some hint as plain as that in xii. 12, or that which lies in the comparison of viii. 40 and xxi. 8, 10.

These may serve as examples to show how it would be possible to draw out a detailed argument that the author of

*Acts*, while sharing the general carelessness of ancient historians as to stating precisely their sources of information, does nevertheless suggest intentionally to the reader in various cases the idea that definite persons were the authorities for certain statements. Further, the author's style marks the difference between those parts where he had been a witness and those where he was dependent on the reports of others. Studied according to the canons of criticism which govern the study of the ordinary classical authors, *Acts* must be recognised as a work in which the expression is perfectly clear and natural in the person to whose pen it is attributed by tradition, and is unexplained and unintelligible in any other person. Further, the tradition makes clear the genesis of much of the book, and enables the reader to follow back most of the statements to their exact source. In the case of any ordinary classical author, this line of reasoning would be treated as conclusive, and the inference would never have been doubted. The literary history of the book in its growth stands before us clear, simple, self-consistent and harmonious with the facts known from other sources,<sup>1</sup> provided one does not twist it, or squeeze it, or thrust into it such absurdities as the North-Galatian theory (pardonable and hardly avoidable when Phrygia and Galatia were unknown lands, but now persisting only through the strength of prejudice).

From the literary point of view, the proper object of study is the author, his attitude towards his sources, and his method of using them; and I believe that that method of study is the most profitable as regards *Acts*, as is recognised

<sup>1</sup> That difficulties remain to be elucidated and obscurities to be illuminated, I have always declared; but that is universal in classical literature, and the discovery of new documents, while solving many old questions, adds continually to the number of difficult points in all departments of ancient scholarship.

in the case of every other book. But the "Source-Theory," as one may term it, turns the study of that book into a mere analysis of Sources; it proceeds as if the author's method and personality had no significance except as a cause of error, and makes it a fundamental principle that the one and only important question in every case is whether the author had a good or a bad, an early or a later, Source for every statement.

Dr. McGiffert has not convinced me: in other words, I think his clever argumentation is sophistical. In examining it, I should like as much as possible to concentrate attention on the impersonal aspect as a problem in history; and, to avoid obtruding the personal reference on the reader, it will be better to speak as far as possible of "the Source-Theory," meaning always the special form set forth in the work under review. Dr. McGiffert and I are desirous of reaching the truth, starting from different sides.

A true critical instinct makes Dr. McGiffert recoil from the extremest form of the "Source-Theory". The fundamental difference between the Source-Theory and the literary method of study is that, wherever any characteristic is observed in the book, the former attributes it to the "Source," while the latter sees in it an example of the author's method and style in using his sources. Take, for example, the transition from the name Saul to the name Paul during the interview with Sergius Paulus (*Acts* xiii. 4 ff.). Dr. McGiffert rightly says, on page 176, that in this case "the author, with the instinct of a true historian, evidently felt the significance" of the interview. On the other hand, many scholars see there only the transition from a "Source," in which the Apostle was called by the name Saul, to another "Source," in which he was called Paul. Now

what authority have we for the confidence (which Dr. McGiffert rightly entertains) that the author of *Acts* "felt the significance" of the situation? What reason is there for rejecting the theory that the peculiar constitution of the text at this point springs simply from the "Sources"? Our only ground is the literary instinct which recognises with absolute and unfaltering force that here the author is not dominated by his sources, but dominates them and moulds them into a powerful narrative, showing the hand of a master, not of a mere editor.

On the other hand, we find the statement on page 257, "There are certain features in his report of Paul's stay in Athens which can be explained only on the supposition that he had in his hand an older document which he followed in the main quite closely". But we search in vain for any reasoning to prove that the literary skill which was recognised in the Paphian episode was inadequate to frame the Athenian narrative out of information which the author received and moulded to his own purposes. It is simply assumed that, because the narrative is at this point generally trustworthy, therefore it uses "an older document". The same assumption is made time after time in the course of the keen scrutiny to which the narrative of *Acts* is subjected. In this scrutiny, as a rule, the "Source-Theory" starts by begging the whole question; and the admission which has just been quoted from page 176 is a temporary divergence from the regular method.

It is a rule of criticism that when a theory of authorship is propounded, the supposed author must be a conceivable and natural personality. It is not admissible to make the imagined author in one place of one character, and in another to attribute to him different qualities. But this

compiler of *Acts* is never presented to us as a self-consistent and possible and imaginable character. Inconsistent and contradictory qualities are assigned to him. "He was keenly alive to the dramatic possibilities of the position in which the Apostle found himself placed" at Athens (p. 257); but he sternly resisted the temptation to work up those possibilities in a way contrary to the real facts recorded in his sources. Now, only a person endued with considerable literary feeling and historical sympathy is able to be "keenly alive to the dramatic possibilities" of a situation in past time and in a strange country; and only a person who has a strong sense of veracity will resist the temptation to touch up the situation whose possibilities he is so keenly alive to, and will rigorously deny himself the slightest embellishing touch which does not stand in the record. Yet this person did not shrink from the most shameless and stupid mendacity in other cases: he found in two "Sources" accounts of a visit of Paul to Jerusalem, and he thought they described two separate visits, and invented a whole chapter of false history in order to work in the second visit which his stupidity had conjured up:<sup>1</sup> he invented a Decree (or rather made up a Decree from real materials which belonged to another time and situation), and placed this Decree in the mouth of the Apostles assembled at Jerusalem (xv. 22-29): he invented, without justification or suitability, two sentences (xix. 28, 29), which he put in Paul's mouth in the same incident where otherwise he showed such self-denial and rigorous adherence to truth and the record; and so on in endless succession. How reconcile these contradictions? Who is this author, who shows at once such literary feeling and such helplessness in literary expression, such scrupulous

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 310 f., on this point, and p. 311 on the Decree.

veracity and such unscrupulous disregard to truth? Who is it that sometimes transfers to his pages fragments of a "Source" more awkwardly than the feeblest Byzantine compiler, for he forgets to change a first person to a third, at another time selects and remodels till he has constructed a narrative which shows "the instinct of a true historian," "keenly alive to the dramatic possibilities of the situation"?

The charge is frequently brought against the author of *Acts* that he gives a false picture of Paul's sphere of work in the cities of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, describing Paul's work as conducted largely among the Jews, whereas Paul's own words show that it was mainly among the Gentiles. This is not taken by the critics as a proof of mendacity: but as simply the result of ignorance; and the inference is that, if the author had really been a friend of Paul, he would have known better. It is indisputable that in *Acts* the reader's attention is always pointedly drawn to Paul's work among the Jews. Dr. McGiffert draws from this the inference that the author knew no better. Mr. Baring-Gould, on the contrary (as we shall see in the following article), draws the inference that Paul misstated or misjudged the facts, when he represents himself as the Apostle of the Gentiles. To me it seems that Luke, while devoting most space to the account of Paul's work among the Jewish part of his audiences, makes it clear that the Gentiles were vastly more numerous than the Jews in the Churches of Galatia, Thessalonica,<sup>1</sup> Asia, etc. I find no such contradiction between Paul and *Acts* as Dr. McGiffert does. Paul speaks more of the Gentiles and to the Gentiles, because they were the most numerous, but usually makes it quite clear that

<sup>1</sup> The question of reading comes in here: *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 235 f.

there were Jews also in the Church which he is addressing. Luke speaks at greater length of the appeal to the Jews because he lived through the struggle against the Jews, and sympathised with Paul under the attacks made against him as unfriendly to his own nation, and was keenly desirous to prove that Paul always gave full opportunity and welcome to the Jews in every city. Such a desire is very natural in a personal friend of Paul ; but we see no reason why a stranger, writing after the conflict was long past, should be so eager to defend Paul against dead enemies and a buried enmity and a people which had ceased in A.D. 70 to be a nation.

In this connection, take one example. In *Acts*, Paul is represented at Corinth as going to the Jews, and only after their refusal, turning to the Gentiles, and doing so at first by means of the half-way "house of a certain proselyte, Titus Justus".<sup>1</sup> But, "in Paul's own epistles there is no hint of any such procedure"; and his statement "is hardly calculated to confirm Luke's account" (p. 268). And yet, "it must be recognised that there are some striking points of contact" between Luke's and Paul's accounts of Corinthian affairs (p. 269). Crispus is common to both accounts; and though Paul does not mention that his Crispus was a Jew, "there is no reason to doubt that he is the man whose conversion Luke reports". Obviously Paul is not concerned to

<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate that the bare term "proselyte" is sometimes inaccurately used in the book under review to designate a "God-fearing" Gentile. In a question so delicate and so vexed, it is desirable to use the technical term very strictly. In my *St. Paul*, p. 43, I used "proselyte" in the same loose way, to indicate a "God-fearing" person, because I had not yet defined the terms, and added the definition in the next paragraph; but friendly critics pointed out that it was best to avoid absolutely this loose use of "proselyte". Titus Justus (rather Titius Justus) was not a "proselyte," but only one of the "God-fearing" Gentiles, who had been attracted to the circle of the Synagogue.

mention the nationality of the persons whom he names among the Corinthians—he is entirely absorbed in a different purpose; and it is mere hypercritical special pleading to argue that Luke is inaccurate, because Paul gives no account of the stages by which his mission in Corinth developed. If he converted a ruler of the Synagogue (and Paul does not himself think it necessary to mention that Crispus was so), it is pretty clear that he must have addressed himself directly to the Jews. He would never convert a Jew, if he addressed only Gentiles.

But I cannot stop to show, step by step, how unfair and sophistical the "Source-Theory" is: to do so would need a book. I can only ask the "Source-Theorists" what points they lay most stress on, and examine these.

Beyond a doubt, the one serious reason which must weigh heavily with every reasoning man, and make him doubt whether the author of *Acts* could have been an intimate friend and companion of Paul, is the topic discussed on pages 170-172, 194-201, 208-217. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, speaking with the strongest emphasis, and with a solemn adjuration that he is speaking the absolute truth—"touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, that I lie not"—declares that in his first two visits to Jerusalem after his conversion, he learned nothing from the older Apostles, that he carried no message from them to his own Churches, that they imparted nothing to him, but merely approved of his schemes and ratified his mission.<sup>1</sup> Now the second visit is by most scholars identi-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. McGiffert puts this clearly and well, p. 211: "It is a point of the utmost significance that Paul distinctly asserts that those who were of repute in the Church of Jerusalem imparted nothing to him (*Gal.* ii. 6) . . . in other words, he was left entirely free by them to preach to the Gentiles exactly as he had been preaching".

fied with the visit described in *Acts* xv. But, in that visit, so far from the Apostles imparting nothing to Paul, as he declares, they, according to *Acts*, were the supreme authority to whom he referred a question for decision; they imparted to him a Decree on this question. He carried this Decree to his Churches, and "delivered them the Decree for to keep, which had been ordained of the Apostles and Elders that were at Jerusalem" (*Acts* xvi. 4). Rightly and honestly, Dr. McGiffert is revolted by this contradiction between Paul and *Acts*: rightly and honestly, he refuses to shut his eyes to it, or to whittle it away and minimise it, and delude himself into the idea that he thereby gets rid of it: the clear contradiction exists in a most vital and serious matter. If *Acts* is right, and if the common theory is to be followed, Paul was throwing dust in the eyes of the Galatians; therefore, the inference is drawn that *Acts* is wrong, and that the supposed Decree was never issued by the Council, or carried by Paul to his Churches. The "Decree" is a mere fabrication by the compiler of *Acts*; or, rather, "it is impossible to suppose so peculiar a document an invention of the author of *Acts*," and, therefore, "some historic basis for it must be assumed". The basis is found by supposing that it was probably made up out of James's speech (*Acts* xv. 13-21), or that it was promulgated at some other time, and wrongly attributed by the author to this Council (p. 212 f.).

Another difficulty exists in this connection, and the "Source-Theory" is again invoked to solve it. "It is clear that Paul intended the Galatians to understand that during the fourteen years<sup>1</sup> that succeeded his conversion, he had been in Jerusalem only twice." But in *Acts* three visits

<sup>1</sup> Or, as some hold (wrongly, in my opinion), seventeen years.

are mentioned, according to the ordinary view; and Dr. McGiffert rightly refuses to accept the sophistical excuse that the middle visit was only a little one, or an unimportant one, and might therefore be omitted by Paul, even though he takes his oath to the Galatians that he is telling them the absolute truth. Once more the explanation is sought in an error of the author of *Acts*. He found in two "Sources" two different accounts of the same visit, *viz.*, a visit paid in A.D. 48, in which Paul and Barnabas carried to Jerusalem the money collected by the Antiochian Church (*Acts xi. 29*), and at the same time propounded the difficulty as to Gentile Christians for solution by the Apostles and Elders (*Acts xv.*). These accounts were so different that the author mistook them for accounts of two separate visits, for one Source "might well be interested to record only the generous act of the Antiochian Church, while another might see in the settlement of the legitimacy of Gentile Christianity the only matter worthy of mention". Inasmuch as the Gentile question fell immediately after the first missionary journey, the compiler made the unhappy guess that the money had been carried to Jerusalem before that journey, and thus falsely evolved an intermediate unhistorical visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.

If this view hits the truth, then assuredly *Acts* was not written by Luke, the friend of Paul. It is impossible that a companion of Paul in many journeys and for many years should be so ignorant of a most important epoch in Paul's life as this theory makes out. But there are difficulties besetting the theory. We may well grant that the author of *Acts* may have "found two independent accounts of the same journey in his sources". But these accounts would not be divorced from all surroundings; each of them would

necessarily relate the events before and after, and would make the succession of events moderately clear, for these sources were historical narratives traversing part of the same ground that *Acts* treats of. I can find no fair parallel in literary history for a supposition so violent. One is used to such maltreatment of history among ignorant students, who are experimenting to discover what is the minimum of knowledge which will be accepted for a "pass" by an examiner. But except among the examination papers of passmen, I have seen nothing to parallel the audacious and shameless ignorance which is thus attributed to the compiler—an ignorance which might almost suggest the theory that *Acts* is the rejected examination paper in history of some lazy candidate for matriculation in an ancient University. The compiler is supposed by Dr. McGiffert to have written under Domitian, between 81 and 96, at a time when one Christian had been martyred in Pergamos and none in Smyrna,<sup>1</sup> when many pupils and friends and associates of Paul and the Apostles were still living, when the real facts must have been known to great numbers of persons, and when any doubt could have been cleared up with the utmost ease. We are asked to believe either that the compiler was so extraordinarily stupid as to imagine that the accounts of one event given in two historical narratives were accounts of two different events, feeling no doubt, and boldly lifting one account out of its place and thrusting it in at a point several years earlier, or that he was so careless and

<sup>1</sup> On the date see page 437 f.; on the view that so few martyrs suffered in Asia under Domitian, see page 635 (where it is apparently implied that there had been no serious persecution in any of the seven Churches of Asia, except the martyrdom of Antipas: that is as much as to say there had been no persecution in Asia, against which see *Letters to the Seven Churches*, ch. ix).

lazy that he would not test by a very easy process the doubts which did suggest themselves to him.

While the form which is given to the "Source-Theory" in this work is in many respects most ingenious and able, the early date assigned to the compilation involves the Theory in many difficulties, which it was free from on the old supposition of second-century authorship. But that supposition in its turn is involved in difficulties which have led Dr. McGiffert to abandon it.

My own theory of the visits to Jerusalem—that the second visit of *Acts* is the second visit as described by Paul in *Galatians* ii. 1 ff., and that the third visit of *Acts* lies outside of Paul's argument (because he is merely discussing what was his original message to the Galatians, whether of God or from the Apostles, whereas the third visit did not occur till after the Galatians were converted)—is briefly dismissed as impossible on page 172 *note*. The reason is noteworthy: "The discussion recorded in *Acts* xv. can have taken place only on the occasion which Paul describes in *Gal.* ii. 1 *sq.*," and neither earlier nor later. We ask how and where Dr. McGiffert acquires the knowledge of that obscure period which enables him to pronounce so absolutely that, on a subject which (unless *Acts* is hopelessly wrong) was debated for years with much bitterness, the particular discussion mentioned in *Acts* xv. can have occurred only in A.D. 48 and at no other time. His authority is *Acts* itself, an authority which he discredits at almost every point to some greater or less degree; yet from this poor authority he can gather absolute certainty as to the exact period when alone one discussion of this much-debated topic can have occurred. The fact is that unless *Acts* is accepted as a good authority, we must resign our-

selves to be ignorant about the Apostolic period, and must cease to make any dogmatic statements as to what is possible or impossible.

Every reader must be struck with the enormous part that is played in the discussion of the *Acts of the Apostles* by the argument from the author's silence. Wherever we learn from any other source of any incident or detail, however slight it may be, which is not recorded in *Acts*, the inference is almost always drawn that the author was ignorant of it, or rather that he had an inadequate or inaccurate "Source". For example, in the Athenian narrative "his account betrays a lack of familiarity with some of the events that transpired at this period" (p. 257); and yet the author here "followed in the main quite closely" a document, which is stated in the following pages to be old and trustworthy. Moreover, the author "was keenly alive to the dramatic possibilities of the position in which the Apostle found himself placed"; which implies a high degree of historical insight and sympathy. Here, then, we have a case in which an author, who possessed great literary and historical power, and had access to a good and early authority of Athenian origin, is pronounced ignorant of certain *minutiæ* of the going and coming of Timothy, because he does not enumerate them. Surely the supposition should here be entertained that he thought these *minutiæ* too unimportant to deserve enumeration in a highly compressed history of the developing force of Christianity within the Roman Empire.

Many critics seem to have failed utterly to realise that the author of *Acts* is not a biographer but a historian, that he selects the points which are important in his conception of the developing Church, and stands quite apart from little

details regarding the precise number of times that Timothy went back and forward between Achaia and Macedonia. It is enough that the author says nothing that is contradictory of what Paul mentions in writing to the Thessalonians (as is frankly conceded on p. 257); beyond that it is mere pedantic niggling to insist that, if the author had known how many times Timothy went to and fro, he must have told it.

It is impossible in a necessarily short paper to touch on every point raised as regards *Acts*. But I have taken those which seemed most characteristic. Let me add one only. On page 280 f. the Ephesian residence is discussed. From the word used by Paul himself, "I fought-with-beasts at Ephesus" (ἐθηριομάχησα, 1 *Cor.* xv. 32), it is inferred that the Apostle had been condemned to death, exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, and escaped in some way from death. This penalty could only be inflicted by the supreme official of the province, the Proconsul; and therefore it is maintained that "an uproar resulted, and he was arrested and condemned to death as the cause of it"; the Proconsul had the power, "when the contest in the arena did not result fatally, to set him free". As Dr. McGiffert rather humorously observes, "doubtless he was convinced that Paul would avoid creating any more disturbances".

When Paul recounts to the Corinthians his sufferings, 2 *Cor.* xi. 23 f., he did not think it worth while to mention that most remarkable of all escapes and dangers, though he mentions many far less striking and impressive, because he had already mentioned it in the first Epistle, and it "may have seemed unnecessary to do so in the second". Why not apply the "Source-Theory" here? The two Epistles use different Sources!

I need not discuss such a shadowy and hypothetical substitute for the realistic and impressive narrative of *Acts*.<sup>1</sup> I venture to doubt if any two scholars in the whole of Europe will accept this interpretation of the fundamental word "fought-with-beasts". The sketch of the supposed trial and condemnation and fight in the amphitheatre and pardon is too false to Roman habits of administration, and to the surroundings of Epheso-Roman society, to have any claim to be taken seriously. It is simply a blot upon a very clever and learned book.

The conclusion from a long examination of the Ephesian incident is that "it is impossible to discover a satisfactory reason for the omission of" so many occurrences as are known to us from Paul's own words, or why the author failed to relate the events which were of most interest and concern to Paul himself (p. 283), except that his "Sources" are to blame. But why was Luke bound to guide his history according to the thread of interest which guided Paul in writing to the Corinthians? Paul was arranging his topics to suit the special circumstances of the Corinthian Church; Luke was arranging his history according to his idea of the real importance of the topics.

This method of studying the *Acts*, and distinguishing between what is true and what is false or only half-true in it, is generally practised with a view to eliminate the "miraculous" element, and leave a solid basis of non-miraculous facts. The miraculous element is, undoubtedly, a serious difficulty; but no honest process of criticism can get rid of it. It is implicated in the inmost structure of the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. McGiffert himself says about part of it, "The general trustworthiness of Luke's account cannot be questioned. The occurrence is too true to life and is related in too vivid a way to permit a doubt as to its historic reality" (p. 282).

whole New Testament, and in the very nature of the men who wrote its books. Dr. McGiffert sees clearly and frankly recognises that the miraculous element cannot be expelled from *Acts*; that Paul, and his contemporaries, and the oldest and best "Sources" of *Acts*, all believe and accept and record miraculous events and miraculous powers. He leaves the marvellous element in *Acts*.

Accordingly, the miraculous healing of the lame man at Lystra "is too striking and unique to have been invented" (p. 189). Some of the accompaniments, however, are pronounced doubtful. There are analogies to *Acts* iii. 2 ff. and x. 26; and the words of xiv. 15b-17 "are much like Paul's words in his address to the Athenians recorded in the seventeenth chapter of *Acts*". Therefore these touches are declared to result from the author's feeling "the influence of other accounts given elsewhere in his work". If I understand this phrase rightly, it means that the author could not resist the temptation of touching up his narrative here by introducing words and details from other incidents belonging to other years and countries. This is the same author, who, as we saw, so sternly resisted the temptation to touch up his narrative at Athens (except the speech of Paul, which he did embellish).

Moreover, when we turn to the passages which are said to have furnished the materials which are worked up in the Lystran incident, we find that they also have themselves been touched up, and are not pure, unadulterated early sources. How marvellous is the unerring art which can distinguish every layer in this complicated construction, and can determine how far the Lystran incident is taken from a good and trustworthy source, what details are added, from what secondary source each added detail is derived, what is

the character of the secondary sources, and what elements in them are good and what are bad! But this elaborate process is not recognised as permissible by profane historical critics: it is too clever for us.

The term "an older source" is used in a very vague way, which defies strict analysis, throughout the book. Wherever there is found in *Acts* any fact which can be accepted as true, it is attributed to the use by the author of "an older source". As the author was not the pupil and friend of Paul, we get the general impression that his authorities about events, none of which were known to him on his own authority as an actor in them,<sup>1</sup> were partly older and good, and partly later and bad.

With this classification of the authorities in our mind, we turn to page 647 ff. There we find that the term "the Apostles" is used by the author of *Acts* in a peculiar and narrow sense, *viz.*, denoting the primitive body of Twelve Apostles (to whom Paul is added as an equal, though of later appointment); whereas "in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, and in the Epistle of Barnabas," as well as in the Apocalypse and the *Didache*, the term "Apostles" is used in a broader sense (which was the common use of the word, while the original Apostles are "the Twelve").

"In the book of Acts, on the other hand, the broader meaning appears only twice (xiv. 4, 14), and that apparently under the influence of an older source." In contrast to that "older source," the ordinary Lukan use of Apostles in the narrower meaning of "the Twelve" with Paul, is, as we must understand, under the influence of a later source. This "later source" was, however, of strongly Pauline character, for the narrower sense occurs during the first century "only

<sup>1</sup>On that point Dr. McGiffert is quite clear and emphatic.

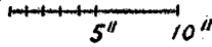
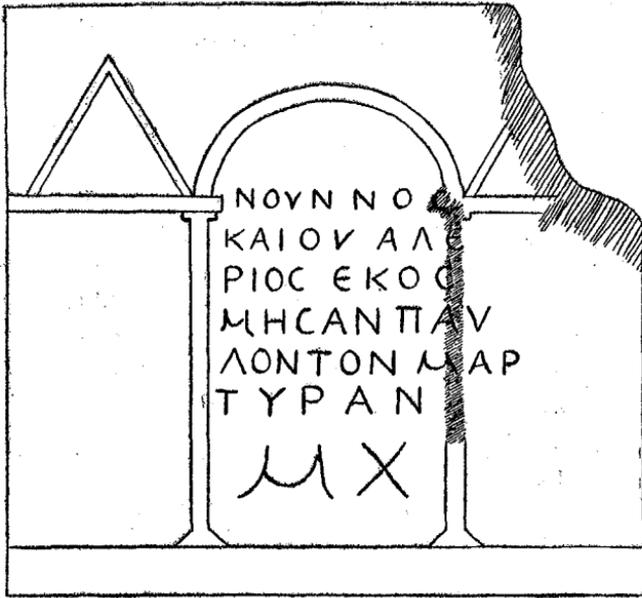
in the writings of Paul himself, and of those authors who had felt his influence". Now the "older sources" described events in almost every stage of Paul's life, and therefore those on which chapters xiii. to xxviii. were founded can hardly have been written before A.D. 60-70. The "later source" is closely connected with Paul and under his influence, and, as it was employed by an author who composed his history between A.D. 80 and 95, it must have been written as early as A.D. 70-80. The distinction is remarkably subtle between the two classes of "source," and does great credit to the acumen of the scholar, who can preserve his balanced judgment as he walks along this sharp knife-edge, and can unhesitatingly distinguish between the older and the later source.

In the time of Bentley it was a proof of genius, a matter requiring great acuteness and wide knowledge, to distinguish, as earlier and later, between works whose time of composition was divided by centuries. In the present century, after discussion and minute examination by many generations of scholars, opinions vary widely as to the period to which many works belong. The *Nux* is taken by some critics for a youthful work of Ovid, while others would refer it to a time after Ovid's death. One of the greatest of modern scholars considers that the *Epicedion Drusi* was composed in the fifteenth century after Christ; many believe that it was written in the first century before Christ immediately after the death of Drusus (B.C. 9).

But, although the original works are lost, the "Source-Theorist" decides with unhesitating confidence whether the source for some half-sentence or half-paragraph of Luke is old, dating from 60-70, or later, dating from A.D. 70-80. We humble students of history cannot come up

to such skill as that ; and we are so rude and barbarous as to smile at it and disbelieve in it. We think that, if the "Source-Theorists" had spent twenty years in the school of Mommsen and the great pagans, instead of among the theologians, they would see that they are attempting an impossibility, and would be as much amused at it as we profane scholars are. All theories of Acts, except one, result in hopeless confusion.

We have in Dr. McGiffert's work a book which shows many very great qualities, and which might have ranked among the small number of really good books, if it had not been spoiled by a bad theory as to the fundamental document, on which it must rest. But it will do good service in bringing home to us that, if the author was Luke, then the acknowledged difficulties in *Acts* must not be solved by the theory of insufficient information. Whom should we look to for knowledge of Paul, if not to Luke, his companion in so many captivities and journeys (the times when Paul would be least occupied with the daily cares of preaching and teaching)? Those who contend for Lukan authorship must deny themselves the easy cure of inadequate knowledge. There was abundant opportunity for Luke to acquire exact information, if on any point he lacked it, for intercommunication was the life of the early Church, and numerous witnesses were living. Dr. McGiffert has destroyed that error, if an error can be destroyed.



Paul the Martyr of Derbe (see p. 295).