

*THE WORK OF ST. LUKE: A HISTORICAL
APOLOGY FOR PAULINE PREACHING BEFORE
THE ROMAN COURT.*

IN the title of this article is already expressed that I assume as a base for this study the unity and the authenticity of the work of St. Luke (Gospel and Acts). After the works of Zahn, Harnack, Ramsay, it seems allowable to base argument upon their common results. Surely every historical result remains liable to revision, but a well-founded hypothesis can best be tested by its consequences and its applicability in details. So I start from the unity and authenticity of St. Luke's Gospel and Acts, and since the time when Harnack (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, 1908, p. 224 f.) felt obliged to apologise for the resemblance of his results with the rather suspect conservatism of Zahn, Blass, Ramsay, even such apology has become antiquated.

It is not only for brevity's sake, but also in acknowledgement of the great merits of Sir W. M. Ramsay in the region of the New Testament and Early Church history, that for the fundamental views of the following pages I refer especially to his works. I argue from the following theses on which partly I will give my restrictions and comments:—

1. St. Luke is the author of St. Luke's Gospel and Acts.
2. Both books are planned as parts of one historical work.
3. The work shows the great qualities of the author, especially with respect to style, disposition and deliberate choice of details.
4. Especially in the parts in which St. Luke writes as an eyewitness we may rely upon the trustworthiness of details, and for other parts St. Luke has followed the best traditions he could find.

The third thesis, however, must be entirely disqualified

if really, as is often asserted, it has been the intention of St. Luke to describe the diffusion of Christianity to the ends of the world. Not only Rome, where *Acts* xxviii. ends, is not the end but the centre of the world, but from *Acts* ix. onwards St. Paul is the principal person in the narrative, and what is not immediately a description of his work and his life is only characterised by the intention to make St. Paul's preaching and position clear. Even St. Peter is mentioned in the second part of Acts only when St. Paul's way crosses his. Of the great missionary regions lying outside of the sphere of St. Paul's work we hear nothing except by casual information. There are abundant traces of important missionary results in Alexandria and Egypt, and St. Luke knows of them (*Acts* xviii. 25 ; xi. 20 ; xiii. 1), but as Alexandria lies outside the missionary route of St. Paul, St. Luke does not speak of the missionary work there nor of the results of it.

Looking upon St. Luke's work as it lies before us, it is easily to be seen that the plan of a centre of missionary work, from which the evangelisation of the world moves towards the periphery, is not followed in it. The plan of the book may rather be compared with a pyramid : the broad basis is the Gospel of Jesus, which underlies all preaching of His missionaries ; the second stage is the foundation of the church at Jerusalem, the mother of all churches ; the third, the missionary work of the first church as far as it is necessary to relate it in order to understand the work of St. Paul ; the fourth, the missionary work of St. Paul, in which the Jerusalem churches and Apostles are mentioned only when St. Paul comes in contact with them ; finally, the voyage to Rome with the culminating point : in Rome under the eyes of the Roman judges and officials he preached the kingdom of God with all boldness and without being hindered.

That these words are really the culminating point to

which the whole work tends will be shown presently. But first I have to face a serious objection. The end of Acts is esteemed rather awkward, and is really so if its history is written from a later point of view, say *ca.* 80 A.D. Then it is entirely inconceivable how St. Luke could leave out the result of St. Paul's trial, of which the beginning is pointed to (*Acts* xxviii. 30, 31), and which cannot have been anything else but St. Paul's acquittal. The words of Agrippa (*Acts* xxvi. 32), ἀπολελύσθαι ἐδύνατο ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος εἰ μὴ ἐπεκέκλητο Καίσαρα, point to this result. St. Paul himself expected with full confidence his acquittal (*Phil.* i. 25; ii. 24; *Philem.* 22), which in the Pastoral Epistles is presupposed. Why did St. Luke not mention it? Zahn and Ramsay suppose that a third book was planned by St. Luke. The main argument for this thesis is found in *Acts* i. 1. St. Luke is esteemed to be a too correct stylist to write πρῶτος, i.e. first of more than two, where he means πρότερος, first of two. I will not lay stress on the use of the word πρῶτος in *Acts* xii. 10, where, in fact, there seems to be not the least hint of *three gates and three guards*; I acknowledge that in several passages St. Luke uses the word πρῶτος correctly. Surely, but he *never* uses the word πρότερος; so all material to show that St. Luke used *this* last word correctly fails, and Sir W. M. Ramsay must content himself to say that in *Acts* i. 1 πρῶτος means, first of more than two, "*if St. Luke wrote as correct Greek as Paul wrote.*"¹

But even if St. Luke had the intention to write a third book, the end of Acts remains awkward if the supposition is true that he wrote a score of years after the events narrated. The first book reaches really a final point, the ascension of the Lord; but in Acts it is just the crowning fact, the acquittal of St. Paul, that is lacking. Even if a third book was planned, the omission of this fact, be it in

¹ *St. Paul the Traveller*, 11th ed., p. 309.

the form of a short notice, is inconceivable. The only really easy explanation is that Acts has been written just on the point of time where it ends, viz., at the beginning of the trial of St. Paul. The only really serious objection¹ to this hypothesis seems to me the passage *Luke* xxi. 20-24 compared with *Mark* xiii. 14-16. I can discuss this question only after having handled the whole of the problem. Lately the hypothesis has been defended by Koch,² who, however, weakened his thesis by separating the Gospel from Acts by an interval of two years, and who failed to explain the reason and the purpose why this historical work was planned and written just at this point of time.

To my view the end of Acts gives a decidedly distinct answer to the chronological question. St. Luke tells us that St. Paul during two full years abode in his own hired dwelling. The aorist *ἐνέμεινεν* shows that these two years have passed, and that now St. Paul has been transported elsewhere (the *πραιτώριον* of *Philippians* i. 13). But there "he continued to receive all that went unto him and preached the Kingdom of God and taught what concerned the Lord Jesus with all boldness, none forbidding him." I lay stress upon the imperfect *ἀπεδέχετο* and *διελέγετο*. In contrast with the aorist *ἐνέμεινεν* these imperfects must denote: "and continued until this very time to receive and to discuss."

It seems only natural to follow the line of inquiry indicated by the exegesis of the final verses of Acts. If it is right it is not difficult to give an answer to the question for what purpose St. Luke wrote his book. It must then have been written as an *exposé* of the teaching of St. Paul, not in the form of an abstract theological system, but in the

¹ For the rest cf. Harnack, *Apostelgesch.*, S. 221; and Koch, *Die Abfassungszeit des lukanischen Geschichtswerkes*, Leipzig, A. Deichert, 1910.

² *l.c.*

form of a history of facts and matters, of *πράγματα* which only could serve as material in a Roman procedure. The words of Gallio (*Acts* xviii. 14 seq.) are much to the point, and largely explain the purpose of St. Luke. Before a Roman court only *facts* of misdemeanour or crime are dealt with, questions of *word* or *names* or *Jewish* law are rejected. So St. Luke wishes to give an account of facts bearing on St. Paul's trial. He begins therefore with the beginning, the Gospel of Jesus, whom St. Paul preaches, and ends where the facts are at an end (*πεπληροφορημένων πραγμάτων*, *Luke* i. 3). So St. Luke must unavoidably begin with an account of the life of this Jesus whom St. Paul preached, and it is very remarkable that *Acts* ends with the words : *διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρηρησίας ἀκωλύτως*. In these very words lies the point to which the whole of St. Luke's historical apology tends : the very preaching for which he has been traduced by the Jews, and for which he will have to justify himself before the Emperor, has been continued by him in Rome, even under the eyes of the *praefectus praetorio*, who was responsible for his behaviour, and neither this high authority nor any of the Roman officials has anyhow hindered or forbidden him in doing so. In this way the end of *Acts*, instead of being awkward or abrupt, shows the fine and eloquent acumen of St. Luke in the "peroration" of his apology. They almost anticipate the verdict of the Emperor.

These final words, however, are prepared by many preceding traits throughout the book. The fact has often enough been remarked that St. Luke shows a decided prejudice in favour of the Romans. I wish to lay stress on the fact that it is especially Roman *justice* which in his book plays the *beau rôle*. In the trial of Jesus the Jews condemn Him to death ; the only member of the Sanhedrin who is said not to have assented to it, Joseph of Arimathaea,

is called ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος. Pilate, however, the Roman governor, states three subsequent times that Jesus is not guilty of anything that deserves punishment (*Luke* xxiii. 4, 14–15, 22). Gallio, who is described *Acts* xvii. 14 f. as a strictly just and high-minded Roman official, drove the accusers of St. Paul away from his tribunal. Before the tribunal of Festus it is unanimously declared that St. Paul has done nothing by which he should have deserved death or prison, and it will not be without special motive that Agrippa, whose advice as of an expert Festus has asked in the case of St. Paul, confirms the opinion of Festus and expressly declares: "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

It is extremely improbable that such a view of Roman justice could be defended by any Christian after the sudden persecution under Nero, which implied a change of policy towards the Christians, and this consideration confirms the supposed date we fixed for the composition of the Lukan work. The emphasis, however, with which St. Luke makes his appeal to Roman justice implies another conclusion, viz., that the book was written as information for some Roman official (or more of them), whose influence in the process of St. Paul was of eminent importance. There is no doubt that St. Luke has tried to describe facts according to truth and accuracy. He especially tells us so in his prologue. There have been more persons who have described the matters, which at the moment he writes have reached some culminating point (πεπληροφορημένα πράγματα), but by the word ἐπεχείρησαν St. Luke indicates that to his view not only the task was a difficult one, but also that the persons who have tried to fulfil it were not wholly qualified for it. The case of *Luke* xxi. 20–24 compared to *Mark* xiii. 14–16 may illustrate the point, and shows at the same time the diverging view held by St. Luke of the position of the Roman

empire. The two passages may be put in comparative parallels :—

*Mc. xiii.*¹⁴ *Όταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως ἐστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω) οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη·¹⁵ ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ καταβάτω μηδὲ εἰσελθάτω ἄραι τι ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτοῦ,¹⁶ καὶ ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν μὴ ἐπιστρέψάτω εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω ἄραι τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ·¹⁷ οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις.

*Lc. xxi.*²⁰ *Όταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἰερουσαλήμ τότε γνῶτε ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς·²¹ τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη, καὶ οἱ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῆς ἐκχωρέτωσαν, καὶ οἱ ἐν ταῖς χώραις μὴ εἰσερχέσθωσαν εἰς αὐτήν,²² ὅτι ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως αὐταὶ εἰσιν τοῦ πλησθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα.²³ οὐαὶ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις· ἔσται γὰρ ἀνάγκη μεγάλη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄργη τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ,²⁴ καὶ πεσοῦνται στόματι μαχαίρης καὶ αἰχμαλωτισθήσονται εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πάντα, καὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν.

The great difference between these two parallels is not that the one is more apocalyptic in character than the other, nor that the Lukan version must be a *vaticinium ex eventu* on account of the military details it gives. If the judgment on Jerusalem would come by the Romans, and no Christian of the first century could expect anything else, the military details were self-evident. The great difference is rather that the account of St. Mark is written from the standpoint of a Jew or a Jewish Christian, who abhors the abomination that Jerusalem and its temple will be trodden down by the Gentiles, whereas St. Luke lays stress on the fact that the Romans will be the fulfillers of God's justice towards the people that has rejected His Messiah. It is for that reason that St. Luke leaves out the *βδέλυγμα* and speaks only of the *ἐρήμωσις*; that he speaks of the *ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως* by which all things which are written will be fulfilled; that he speaks not only of the great distress in the land, but also of the wrath upon this people of the Jews; and that this

judgment upon Jerusalem is the beginning of the times of the Gentiles (cf. *Acts* xxviii. 26 ff. and *Rom.* xi.).

So even this detail, which formed the most serious objection against the thesis that St. Luke wrote at the beginning of St. Paul's trial, is obviously a confirmation of it and in agreement with the plan and purpose of the whole book, and shows what St. Luke meant when he disqualified his predecessors to some extent. To the mind of St. Luke his narrative ought to possess three qualities: ἀκρίβεια, ἀσφάλεια, and completeness, in the sense that matters ought to be narrated from the very beginning. This was the more necessary because his reader is to some extent acquainted¹ with the matters, and partial knowledge could imply wrong judgement.

The reader to which St. Luke writes is a high Roman official of proconsular or at least equestrian rank, as is necessarily implied by the title given to him: κράτιστος. That St. Luke knows and follows the legitimate use of this word is seen from *Acts* xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25, where it is the title of the governors of Palestine, Felix and Festus. The list of places where the word occurs so far as I have been able to find them in Dittenberger's *Sylloge inscr. graec.* shows not only that the title was used only for high political or religious officials, but makes it highly improbable that the second adjective by which St. Luke addresses his reader, Θεόφιλος, is meant as a proper name. In connexion with the tradition or the hypothesis that St. Luke and his reader originated from Antioch, it might be esteemed of some importance that the name Θεόφιλος Θεοφίλου Ἀντιοχεύς occurs in an inscription found on Delos,² but this is a mere

¹ Cf. the meaning of the word κατηχεῖσθαι, *Acts* xxi. 21, 24; xviii. 25; *Jos. Vita*, 65; *Philo leg. ad Cai.* 30. It does not signify that "Theophilus" was a catechumen; cf. Zahn, *Eintl.*³ ii. S. 390.

² Dittenberger, *Sylloge*, 559, 1.

coincidence. Theophilus is a rather common name, and this fact excludes all inferences from the quoted inscriptions. But wherever the title *κράτιστος* occurs it is given to persons who bear genuine Roman names: Antonia Tryphaena, Aurelia Melitine, Tiberius Claudius, Stertinius Quartinus, etc.¹ That is an indication that *Θεόφιλος* is meant, not as a proper name, but as an epitheton denoting the qualities on which the expectation of the convincing force of the narrative is built; the reader is a God-fearing Roman, one of those Gentiles of which *at the end* of *Acts* (xxviii. 28) it is said: *αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται*. In this light the long quotation from Isaiah at the end of the book, otherwise hardly explicable, becomes clear: the Jews have rejected the Gospel and persecute its missionaries; the Gentiles will accept it, these are really lovers of God. The end and the beginning of the book once more appear to be closely connected.

For which person or persons was the book written? That there may have been more than one person to whom a copy of the book may have been sent must expressly be stated. A proper name is not mentioned, and the account shows no personal traits (with one exception soon to be noticed). The reader is a man of proconsular or equestrian rank, and a man of influence in the procedure of St. Paul. The case of St. Paul was to be judged by the emperor, probably by him personally (cf. especially *Acts* xxvii. 24; *Phil.* iv. 22).² So the fate of St. Paul depended theoretically entirely on the personal verdict of the Emperor. With two important restrictions: the first is that the Emperor in every case in which he had to give his verdict consulted his *consilium*, which in the earlier time was composed for every individual case according to its proper character. To this *consilium*

¹ In *κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν* used of Epaphroditus, *Jos.*, *Vita*, 76, and *Contra Ap.* i. 1, the word is not used as a title, as the addition of *ἀνδρῶν* shows.

² Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* ii. 34 sq.

were called the *amici principis*, to which in the time of Nero belonged e.g. Seneca (Tac. *Ann.* xiv. 53 *fin.*). The second restriction is that Nero hardly ever was really himself; he always stood under some good or bad, but mostly bad influences. At the time we speak of these influences came from two sides: the better ones from Seneca, the philosopher and teacher of Nero,¹ and Burrhus, the *praefectus praetorio*, a man of great military merits and of unquestionable honesty; the bad ones came from Poppaea Sabina, the Jewish proselyte (Jos. *Ant.* viii. 11), of which lascivious and mischievous woman Tacitus says: *huic mulieri cuncta alia fuere praeter honestum animum.*

If we have to make a suggestion as to the direction in which we have to seek the persons to whom the Lukan apology was addressed, the answer cannot be doubtful. We immediately think of Seneca. When I had come so far with my inquiry I consulted the work of Kreyher, *L. Annaeus Seneca und seine Beziehungen zum Urchristentum*, and was surprised that his study, which attacked the problem from an entirely different side, had led in many points to the same results as my own inquiry. For more details I must refer to his work, though I cannot myself endorse many of his views. It seems, however, highly improbable that the traditions which connect Seneca with Christian, especially with Pauline, teaching should be entirely devoid of truth. The parallels in his writings to Christian beliefs and Christian writings, so striking that Tertullian calls Seneca *saepe noster*, are perfectly and easily explained if in the way we indicated Seneca became acquainted with St. Paul and through him with Christian teaching.

¹ In the time in which *Acts* was written there was only one *praef. praet.*; cf. *Acts* xxviii. 16, v. 1. Only after the death of Burrhus there were two. Against the explanation of *στρατοπεδάρχης* as *princeps peregrinorum* cf. Zahn, *Eint.*³ i. 392 f.

Perhaps, however, we must go further. There seems no reason why St. Luke should have sent a copy of his book only to Seneca ; at least Burrhus had an equal right to it, and St. Luke accordingly has not put a proper name in the address of his book. Perhaps we find a trace of the fact, that also Burrhus, the *praef. praetorio*, received a copy of the book, in a various reading in *Acts*. In chapter xxviii. 16, the text of **N**, etc., runs : ὅτε δὲ εἰσῆλθομεν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην, ἐπετράπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ' ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ. The text of **H**, etc., gives the reading : ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης παρέδωκε τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ στρατοπεδάρχει, τῷ δὲ Παύλῳ ἐπετράπη, etc. When one copy was sent to Burrhus, the *praef. praet.* himself, the fact that the prisoners were delivered to the *praefectus* of course was omitted in this copy and only the facilities allowed to St. Paul were mentioned expressively and gratefully. In the other copies the *praefectus* was inserted, not with his proper name Burrhus, but only by his title ; it was in this quality that he had to take over the responsibility for the prisoners.

The other influence under which Nero stood is not left out of sight by St. Luke. Poppaea was not yet omnipotent then as she was afterwards, after the death of Burrhus and the going into exile of Seneca. But her influence was only counterbalanced by that of Seneca and Burrhus, and when she, the *Jewish proselyte*, was to become the speaking-tube of the Jews in the presence of Nero, the friends of St. Paul had reason to fear her influence. St. Luke shows in his work that he saw the danger. In contrast with the one characteristic feature of his narrative, the claim made to Roman justice as undoubtedly in favour of St. Paul and the Christian preaching, is the other feature—the hatred of the Jews towards Jesus and His followers. I need not go into details : the Jews are the persecutors of Jesus and His followers ; and even where a Roman governor as Felix abuses

his power over St. Paul, St. Luke omits not to say expressively that not only hope of gain, but in fact the influence of his *Jewish* wife Drusilla and the favour of the *Jews* have driven him to it (*Acts* xxiv. 24-27). The God-fearing protectors which St. Luke hoped to convince of the justice of St. Paul's case ought to be on their guard against an influence which perhaps they would not have noticed otherwise.

That this fear of St. Luke was well founded can be seen from the history of the Neronian persecution. Seneca had gone into exile, Burrhus was dead, Poppaea all-powerful. When there were to be sought culprits for the fire of Rome, they were soon found in the Christians. That they had really set Rome on fire could not be proved in the strict sense; but they were *gens malefica*, they were guilty of *odium generis humani*; the punishments inflicted on them were such as were inflicted upon *sorcerers, magicians*, etc. That notwithstanding they were punished for the fire of Rome shows, not that they were punished even where their guilt was not proved, but that they were believed or accused of having set Rome on fire by their *magical arts*. So it is clear that in this persecution use has been made of a popular accusation against the Christians, and when afterwards the people of Rome pitied the Christians, it was not because they were believed not to be guilty of *odium generis humani*, but because the Romans saw quite clearly that the Christians were punished for what Nero had performed. That St. Luke knew this popular accusation and tried to refute it may be seen, for instance, from the narrative of Simon Magus (*Acts* vii. 9 ff.), of Elymas the magician (*Acts* xiii. 6 ff.), and of the Jewish exorcists in Ephesus (*Acts* xix. 13 ff.).

In this way St. Luke has tried to be the able and eloquent barrister of St. Paul. He succeeded, and his confidence in Roman law, at least for the case he defended, has been confirmed.

The word "barrister" which I use has not been chosen unintentionally. In the *Canon Muratorianus*, the valuable Roman document, we read about St. Luke : tertio evangelii librum secundo lucan lucas iste medicus post ascensum $\overline{\text{XPI}}$ cum eo paulus *quasi ut iuris studiosum* secundum adsumsisset rumini suo ex opinione concribset. The words *quasi ut iuris studiosum* have been emended into *itineris studiosus* and in other ways, but remained difficult. I conjecture that in these words lies a reminiscence of the service St. Luke paid to St. Paul in his first trial by writing his historical apology for the information of the Roman juridical advisers of the emperor.

D. PLOOIJ.

*DR. MOFFATT'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.*

It has occurred to me, in reading the new translation which Dr. Moffatt has given us of the books of the New Testament and in making a rapid survey of the notices and reviews which it provoked, that there were many features of the new translation which had entirely, or almost entirely, escaped the observation of those who discoursed on the matter in the ear of the public. Their criticism was too fragmentary, too confined to the examination of occasional passages which were known to present peculiar textual or hermeneutic difficulties, to be regarded as a just estimate of the value of Dr. Moffatt's work. For that reason I propose to set down in order certain features of the new translation which are significant to those who do not regard any rendering of the New Testament as an isolated phenomenon, but who look upon it as one of a series in which one must lose sight neither of the great