

SOME POINTS IN THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

IV. THE AUTHORSHIP AND COMPOSITION OF THE THIRD GOSPEL.

IF the authorship of any of the Gospels can be considered established, or even if there should seem to be a high degree of probability for a particular view on this head, our theories as to the character and method of the composition must necessarily be thereby affected. The opportunities of information possessed by the writer in question, and the manner in which he would be likely to do his work, will then have to be taken into account. There can be no doubt that the well-attested tradition with respect to the composition of the Second Gospel by St. Mark and his relation to St. Peter, has powerfully influenced the minds of many critics who cannot be accused of bias towards orthodox or conservative opinions. In like manner, if it can be shown that the writer of the Third Gospel was a companion of St. Paul who visited Palestine within less than thirty years after our Lord's crucifixion, this is not only a point of great importance to us in forming our estimate of the historical value of his record, but it will also be full of suggestiveness as to the way in which the materials for it were probably obtained; while it will help, as the belief that St. Mark was the author of the Second Gospel does, to give a life and reality to our speculations on the origin of the Synoptic Gospels, which the subject often lacks, so long as our attention is confined to the evidence supplied by a comparison of the order and phraseology of their narratives.

Now it appears to me that the authorship of the Third Gospel is a question capable of definite settlement to an extent that few others connected with the synoptic problem are. And it has the further significance that it involves

the determination also of the authorship of the Acts of the Apostles.

The argument to which I am about to appeal is linguistic; and considerations of this nature are apt to be very precarious. Linguistic phenomena may be and often are diversely interpreted, if they are limited in amount. But the mass of peculiarities of diction may be so great that this kind of evidence becomes as irrefragable as any other kind could be.

The conclusion that the Third Gospel and the Acts were put forth by the same writer is a case in point. The similarities of style and vocabulary between these two works are such as to have convinced critics of all schools of this.¹ It may be taken as one of the ascertained facts of modern critical inquiry. In judging of the characteristics in question, the other books of the New Testament afford a convenient standard of comparison. The Third Gospel and the Acts have (1) a very large number of words and constructions in common, which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and (2) a very large number which are decidedly rarer in the rest of the New Testament than in these two works, either absolutely or in proportion to the extent of the writings compared. The difference may in part be stated by saying that the style of these two works is on the whole more truly Greek and less Hebraic than the rest of the New Testament. And it may, perhaps, be suggested that if the two writings were the work of two men drawn from the class of fairly educated Gentile or Hellenistic converts, the apparent effect would be the same. But the peculiarities are too numerous for such an explanation, which in itself would not be a very probable one. They

¹ Comp., for example, Zeller, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Eng. Trans., II. p. 213. "In the present case the identity of the author of the two writings is raised to such a height of probability that we have every right to consider it historically proved."

include many instances which must rank as the idiosyncrasies of an individual.

This is not by any means the only sign of identity of authorship in the case of these two writings, but it is the one which least of all admits of being mistaken through any personal prepossessions. The purely linguistic facts are as definite as facts well could be. And seeing that the inference naturally drawn from them is confirmed by all the more general indications of intellectual temper and religious point of view to be observed in each, the practical unanimity of critics on this subject is not surprising.

Let the precise words, however, which I have used be noted. I have spoken of the conclusion that the Third Gospel and the Acts were *put forth* by the same writer. That he used materials, documentary or oral, in both books is commonly maintained, and should indeed be freely admitted on all hands. The agreement to which I have referred extends only to the point that one and the same writer put into shape and left his impress upon these two compositions, so that he must not only have arranged, but in many cases have worked over, the narratives which he adopted from different sources.

Now, as every one who has read the Acts of the Apostles with any attention knows, there are certain passages occurring in the latter part of the book in which the first person plural is adopted,¹ whereby it is plainly implied that the narrator was himself present when the events described happened. The question of the authorship of the Acts (which, as we have seen, carries with it that of the Third Gospel) turns on the character of these sections and their relation to the rest of the work. It is certainly the most obvious view to take, (1) that the writer who here employs the first person plural was what he professes to be, a companion of St. Paul who went with him on the occasion of

¹ Acts xvi. 10-17; xx. 5-15; xxi. 1-18; xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16.

his last journey to Palestine ; (2) that he who in these sections is the narrator of events at which he himself was present, is also the author of the book as a whole. Those, however, to whom the conclusion which follows from these two propositions is unwelcome have denied either the one or the other of them. (1) There are some who have suggested that while the author of the "we" sections is the author of the whole work, he introduced the first person plural in order to give authority to his book, though he belonged to a later generation than St. Paul or any of his companions. But clear-sighted naturalistic critics, like, for example, Zeller, have perceived the impossibility of maintaining this position. For, to say nothing of the difficulty of reconciling this dishonesty with the general impression of the writer's character which we derive from his two works, if he had had this object, he would certainly not have contented himself with claiming the character of an eye-witness so unobtrusively in these few places. Accordingly Zeller and others hold that these sections formed portions of a genuine diary of travel written by a companion of St Paul, which the author of the Acts, a writer of a later generation, made use of ; and that this later writer left the first person plural standing mainly through carelessness, though he may also have been influenced in some degree by the consciousness that it would be effective for the purpose of gaining credence for his work.

In reply it has been rightly urged that it would have been more natural for the historian who so completely appropriated this material to remove, when he did so, these marks of another hand. It is true the mediæval chronicles supply instances of fragments taken from other authors who speak plainly in their own person, which are crudely introduced by the later writer without any attempt to produce consistency. But the author of the Acts was a man

of higher literary aims and qualifications.¹ The signs also which there undoubtedly are in the style of these sections, that he at least edited them on incorporating them into his work, must increase the improbability that he would have allowed the personal pronoun, which belonged to another than himself, to remain.

It is by a comparison of the style of these passages with that of the rest of the Acts that the question before us must mainly be decided. Now the homogeneity of style in the whole work, and the natural inference from it that the narrator who accompanied St. Paul on the journeys recorded in the later chapters of the book was the author of the whole, have been strongly asserted by many who have given attention to the subject, as, for example, by Lekebusch.² The opinion of Renan may also be quoted. After saying that "it is beyond doubt that the Acts had the same author as the Third Gospel," he proceeds: "A second proposition which is not so certain, but which one may nevertheless regard as highly probable, is that the author of the Acts is a disciple of Paul who accompanied him on a good part of his travels." . . . "One is driven irresistibly to the conclusion that he who wrote the end of the work wrote also its beginning, and that the narrator of the whole is the same who says 'we' in the passages that have been already cited."³ It may be added that Bishop Lightfoot, after referring to this judgment by Renan, as given here and also in another work, expresses his own conviction that the view that St. Luke was the author, "will be the final verdict of the future, as it has been the unbroken tradition of the past."⁴

Zeller, however, also recognises that traces of the same

¹ Cf. Lekebusch, *Die Composition und Entstehung der Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 186-8.

² *Ib.*, p. 79.

³ *Les Apôtres*, pp. x., xi.

⁴ *Essays on Supernatural Religion*. Appendix, p. 291.

hand are to be found throughout the whole of the Acts in such wise that "we have to regard the book as the work of one author, who has impressed upon it a definite stamp of style and composition."¹ And yet he supposes him in the "we" sections to have discharged only the part of an editor.

So far as I know the attempt has not hitherto been made on either side to bring these opposite views to a definite test. The possibility of Zeller's explanation being true would seem clearly to depend on the number of the "Lucan" characteristics (as I may for brevity call them) in the "we" sections being comparatively small. It would be inconceivable that a mere editor should, especially in that age, have virtually rewritten the passages.

Now it has occurred to me to examine these passages word by word, and phrase by phrase, comparing the usage of the remainder of the Acts, of the Third Gospel, and of the rest of the New Testament, except in the case of such very common words as must be constantly employed by every writer, and to tabulate the facts. The result was to afford what, I must confess, appears to me to be an irresistible demonstration that the original writer of these sections is the person who has put forth the Acts as a whole. I did not anticipate that an argument so convincing could be furnished by such an inquiry.

For the sake of definiteness it is best to take as the basis of comparison the exact passages in which the first person plural occurs.² But I must not be understood to mean that the narrator is recording what he himself saw and heard only in these passages. There are portions, at all events, of the contexts of these passages where there would have been no opportunity for the introduction of the first person

¹ *Theol. Jahrb.*, 1851, p. 187.

² See the references p. 338, n. 1.

plural, or no necessity for it, even though he was present. I must further explain that the first three of the sections referred to are the best suited for our purpose. The fourth, owing to the peculiarity of the subject—the account of St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck—is full of words which occur there, and there only, either in the "Lucan" writings or elsewhere in the New Testament. The occurrence of these tells neither for nor against the thesis that the narrator is the author of the "Lucan" writings in general, and they necessarily leave less room for characteristics which would be to the point. Even in the three others there are peculiar words which have to be set on one side as being due to the speciality of the subject or occasion. Nevertheless so far as the fourth and longest passage is capable of being brought into court, it supports the evidence of the three earlier ones.

The space at my disposal does not allow me to give here the tables which I have made for all the passages. I must content myself with exemplifying all by means of the first; and when I have done this I will state the general results. That one of which I give the analysis is not more favourable to my argument than the others. In the left hand column I have given at length the verses examined, in order that the proportion of the characteristic words to the rest, and the nature of the latter (many of them words necessarily common to all writers, others proper names) may be seen at a glance. I have also placed the translation of the Revised Version under the Greek words for the convenience of readers not familiar with the Greek. Where the point to be compared is the construction, or some special sense of a word, I have indicated this in a bracket; but where the frequency of occurrence of the word (not of course always in the same tense or case) is all that is to be noted, I have simply given the numbers. The columns after the first give the usage in the various divisions. In

the last of them it is worthy of remark when most or all the instances occur in a particular writer. His special subject may then account for many of them, or he may have shared the peculiarity in question with the author of the Acts. A good many instances occurring thus in a single other writer will detract less from our impression that the usage in question was a "Lucan" characteristic, than if they were more scattered.

Words which occur but once are, as I have already said, not to the purpose of the argument, but I have put 0's in the succeeding columns as the simplest way of indicating these ἀπαξ λεγόμενα.

Some instances have probably escaped my notice ; but I believe that the following table and the summary at the end of it will be found approximately true, and that any corrections which may be required will not suffice to affect the general result.

Acts xvi. 10-17.	" We " sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
ὡς δὲ <i>and when</i>	8	20	1	6 (5 of them being in the Fourth Gospel).
[comp. other uses of ὡς as a temporal conjunction]	0	1	18	12 (11 in Fourth Gospel, ὡς οὖν, which is peculiar to it, being common).
τὸ ὄραμα <i>the vision</i> εἶδεν <i>he had seen</i> εὐθείως ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελθεῖν <i>straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia</i>	2	9 For the whole phrase τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν cf. x. 17 ; xi. 5 ; xii. 9.	0	1

Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
συμβιβάζοντες <i>concluding</i> ὅτι <i>that</i>	1	2 In ix. 22 approximately in same sense; in xix. 33 a different sense.	0	4 (but sense different from either of those in the Acts; all in Epp. of St. Paul).
προσκέκληται <i>had called</i> (of Divine call)	1	2 (xiii. 2 is a specially close parallel).	0	0
ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς <i>us God</i> εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοὺς <i>for to preach the Gospel unto them</i> (accusative of those evangelised)	1	5	2	2
ἀναχθέντες <i>setting sail</i> (in this meaning)	10 (frequency explained by subject).	3	1	0
(other meanings) οὖν ἀπὸ Τρωάδος <i>therefore from Troas</i>	0	4	3	3
εὐθυδρομήσαμεν <i>we made a straight course</i>	2	0	0	0
εἰς Ξαμοθράκην <i>to Samothrace</i>				
τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ <i>and the day following</i>	3	2	0	0
εἰς Νέαν πόλιν <i>to Neapolis</i>				
κακεῖθεν <i>and from thence</i> (comp. κακεῖ, which is also characteristic)	6	3	0	0

Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
ἥτις ἐστὶν πρώτη <i>which is the first</i>				
τῆς μερίδος <i>of the district</i>	1	1	1	2
Μακεδονίας πόλις <i>a city of Macedonia</i>				
κολωνία <i>a Roman colony</i>	1	0	0	0
Ἔμμεν δε <i>and we were</i> (substantive verb with participle)	5	favourite construction.	do.	much less common.
ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει <i>in this city</i>				
διατρίβοντες <i>tarrying</i>	2	7	0	2 (both in Fourth Gospel).
ἡμέρας τινάς <i>certain days</i> (διατρίβειν, with accus. of period)	2	4	0	0
τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων <i>and on the Sabbath day</i> (ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ σαββ. or τῶν σαββ.)	1	1	4	0 (John xix.31 is not an instance).
ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης <i>we went forth without the gate by a riverside</i>				
οὐ <i>where</i>	4	5	6	12
ἐνομίζομεν <i>we supposed</i>	1	6	2	6
προσευχὴν <i>place of prayer</i> (special sense)	2	0	0	0
εἶναι <i>there was</i> [This construction of the acc. with infin. after				

Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
νομίζω is also characteristic. See <i>Lekebusch</i> , p. 76.]				
καὶ and				
καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν we sat down and spake (participle joined with verb to picture the position of a speaker or actor)	2	favourite form of construction. See <i>Lekebusch</i> , p. 76.	do.	
ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν unto the women which were come together. (Close parallels to the phrase as a whole) (Verb, <i>συνέρχασθαι</i>)	2	see i. 21; and x. 27. 15	2	13 (5 being in Gospels and 8 in 1st Ep. to Cor., mostly in one passage).
καὶ τις γυνή And a certain woman (τις before the word which it qualifies)	4	11	3	23
ὀνόματι named	4	18	5	2
Λυδία <i>Lydia</i>				
πορφυρόπωλις a seller of purple	1	0	0	0
πόλεως Θιατείρων of the city of Thyateira (πόλις in apposition with name of city, and preceding it)	2	1	1	0
σεβομένη one that worshipped (the participle, name for proselytes)	1	5	0	0

Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ κύριος <i>God, heard us, whose the Lord.</i>				
διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν <i>opened heart.</i>				
(metaph. of heart or mind	1	0	2	0
" of scriptures	0	1	1	0
non-metaph.)	0	1	1	2
προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπο Παύλου		cf. close parallel at viii. 6.		
<i>to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul</i>				
(τὰ λαλούμενα, λαληθέντα, and λεγόμενα;	3	3	4	2
the making of a substantive out of a participle is in itself characteristic)				
ὡς δὲ <i>and when</i>				
(see above)				
ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ <i>she was baptised and</i>				
ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς <i>her household</i>		x. 2, xi. 14, xvi. 31, xviii. 8, are close parallels, such as are not elsewhere found.		
παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα <i>she besought us, saying</i>				
εἰ κερίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ Κυρίῳ εἶναι				
<i>if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord</i>		comp. xiii. 4, 6.		
εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε				
<i>come into my house and abide there.</i>				

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Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
καὶ παρεβιάσατο <i>And she constrained</i> ἡμᾶς. <i>us.</i>	1	0	1	0
ἐγένετο δὲ <i>And it came to pass</i> (Elsewhere we have καὶ ἐγένετο, which more exactly corresponds to the Hebrew phrase. The Third Gospel has this also many times, perhaps from the influence of the parallels; it is rare in the Acts, and does not occur after the first few chapters.)	4	12	17	0
(Construction with the infin. following is also characteristic):— πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα <i>As we were going to the place of prayer that a certain maid having a spirit</i>	3	10	3	0
πίθωνα <i>of divination</i>	1	0	0	0
ὑπαντῆσαι ἡμῖν, ἧτις <i>met us which</i>				
ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρείχεν <i>brought much gain</i> (ἐργασία, παρέχειω)	1 2	comp. xix. 24. 3 3	1 4	1 7
τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς <i>to her masters</i>				
μαντευομένη <i>by soothsaying.</i>	1	0	0	0

Acts xvi. 10-17.	"We" sections.	Remainder of Acts.	Third Gospel.	Rest of New Testament.
αὕτη <i>The same</i>				
κατακολουθοῦσα <i>following after</i>	1	0	1	0
τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν ἔκραζεν <i>λέγουσα, Οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι</i> <i>Paul and us, cried out saying, These men the servants</i>				
τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου <i>of the most high God</i>	1	0	1	2
(comp. ὁ ὑψίστος)	0	1	4	0
εἰσίν, οἵτινες <i>are, who</i>				
καταγγέλουσιν <i>proclaim</i>	1	10	0	7 (all in Epp. of St. Paul).
ὑμῖν <i>unto you</i>				
ὁδὸν σωτηρίας <i>the way of salvation</i> (ἡ ὁδός, etc., as designa- tion of Christian faith and practice.)	1	8	0	0

I must leave any of my readers who care to do so to pursue the investigation for themselves; and must content myself with conveying as well as I can by a few general statements the impression which the tabulation of the facts, if completed, would make. I have counted no less than 39 characteristic words or constructions in Acts xvi. 10-17; 39 in xx. 5-15; 33 in xxi. 1-18. Moreover, in this reckoning I have not taken account of the general fondness displayed for participles, and for their accumulation, and for compound verbs, which could not be numerically represented.

Again, among the words characteristic of the "Lucan"

writings, some are not even in them very numerous; yet one or more instances of many of these occur in the "we" sections.

Once more, in the case of many of the "Lucan" words and phrases noted, the ratio of the number of times that they occur in these sections to the number of times that they are found elsewhere in the Acts is much greater than the ratio of the length of the sections in question to that of the remainder of the work.

It has often been remarked that the proportion of "Lucan" phrases in the Acts is considerably greater than in the Third Gospel, and that this is accounted for by the larger use in the latter of the writing or the words of others. A further following out of such investigations as I have indicated might reveal similar differences within the Acts of the Apostles itself. But, at all events, the evidence which I have adduced and referred to can leave no doubt that the "we" sections were the original composition of the general author. The "Lucan" characteristics form the very warp and woof of their style.

The authenticity of the Acts has, I am aware, been attacked on the ground of alleged historical discrepancies between this work and the Epistles of St. Paul, and secular historians. But even when the most is made of these apparent inconsistencies, they are not surely greater than would be found to exist between different trustworthy accounts of the same events, contemporary with the events which they relate, in all periods of history, or in our own times. Objections of this nature cannot countervail the linguistic facts to which attention has been called—facts not one whit less remarkable than those which have won virtually universal agreement for the proposition that the Acts and the Gospel are by the same author.

I consider it, therefore, certain that the composition of the Acts, and consequently, also, of the Third Gospel, is the

work of a companion of St. Paul, who visited Palestine with him, and left it in his company, and who may, therefore, have spent the whole or a considerable part of the interval in that country.¹ This being established, the universal tradition of the Church, that this companion was St. Luke, will readily be accepted, though that is a matter of secondary importance.

This fact—as I will unhesitatingly call it, challenging examination and refutation of the line of argument which I have indicated—this fact as to the position and the opportunities of the author of the Third Gospel ought to be borne in mind in all the theories that we frame about its composition. It would be most likely that such a writer would make large use of information collected by himself, and he clearly implies that he has done so (Luke i. 1-4). And the phenomena of his Gospel are, I venture to think, far more reasonably explained in this manner than either by the “Two-document” hypothesis, or the “Three-document” hypothesis, if I may be allowed to coin a name for the view to which Dr. Weiss, Dr. Ewald and Dr. Sanday incline.²

Whether the design either of the Third Gospel or the Acts of the Apostles had already dawned upon his mind when he visited Palestine in St. Paul’s company, we cannot say. But as he was evidently a man of a literary turn, he may early have begun the practice of keeping a diary of his journeyings with the Apostle, and may have formed the habit of recording matters of interest relating to the history of the Faith which he learned from others, for his own satisfaction if for no other purpose. During his stay in Palestine he would make inquiries both as to the life of our Lord and the history of the Church in the first years after Pentecost. And he might transcribe portions of the written

¹ The time of their arrival was most probably the summer of A.D. 58, and of their departure the autumn of A.D. 60.

² See EXPOSITOR for March, p. 181.

accounts of discourses, sayings, and events, which were beginning to be made. Whether he ever was in Palestine again we do not know; but he must have met many Palestinian Christians in other parts of the world who had travelled in the same way that Jews had long been accustomed to do, or who had been scattered through the troubles in Palestine, and who could give him highly reliable, and some of them first-hand, information concerning "those matters which had been fulfilled" in the generation which was passing away. There is, as I have said, strong reason to believe that St. Luke made use of the Gospel according to St. Mark. The latter probably wrote soon after St. Peter's death, say about A.D. 65; St. Luke's work may be placed soon after A.D. 70.¹ He felt that he possessed much additional information which deserved to be recorded, and which, no less than his predecessor's narrative, was derived from "eye-witnesses of the word." A considerable portion of this additional matter is peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel, and there can be absolutely no reason to suppose that it is not the fruit of his own collection of material. The Third Gospel contains however, as we have seen, a certain number of passages which are almost word for word the same as passages in the First Gospel,² while for the most part the context and setting in these very instances are quite dissimilar in the two Gospels. The most natural account in these cases seems to be that there must ultimately here be documentary links between the two, but that the written accounts in question passed into the two Gospels by different courses. They had been obtained by St. Luke in a fragmentary form independently, and without the

¹ The more exact correspondence between his record of the prophecy of the siege and the actual events, as compared with the parallels in the other Gospels, seems to be most naturally explained on the hypothesis that the fulfilment of the prophecy had given precision to his version of the language used. Luke xix. 43, and xxi. 20.

² See *EXPOSITON* for March, p. 189.

knowledge of the manner in which they were arranged by St. Matthew. In a still larger number of passages, in which the first and third Evangelists give narratives and discourses that are in substance the same, there is no need to assume any common written element. Indeed the amount of differences seems to point clearly to the view that, though St. Luke may have derived what he gives from documentary records, these records and those contained or used in the First Gospel were the embodiment of the original oral accounts by different hands.

I have only professed in these papers to consider "some points in the Synoptic problem." I am not prepared to enter at present into the discussion of the difficult question of the composition of the First Gospel and its relation to a Hebrew original, and I am therefore unwilling to express any opinion upon the subject.

V. H. STANTON.

PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

V. THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS—ITS AIM.

THIS Epistle is distinguished from those already considered belonging to the same group by broadly marked characteristics. In the first place it is more placid in tone. If it be indeed a contribution to the vindication of Paul's Gentile gospel against Judaism, it contains few traces of the controversial spirit. Polemic passes into calm didactic statement. Then, secondly, while the present Epistle contains much in common with the Epistle to the Galatians, we find that the same truths are set forth here in a more expanded and elaborate form. In the third place, to the old materials amplified the Epistle adds a new phase of Pauline thought, in the important section in which an