

SOME RECENT EDITIONS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.¹

THE following notes on some recent editors follow strictly the line of indicating how far the present writer has found them useful as guides to a better understanding of the *Acts*. The theological or doctrinal position and prejudices of the various editors may be set aside as of no importance for our immediate purpose. The one question here is, whether their commentaries bring out clearly and completely the meaning of the book regarded as a work of history and as a piece of literature.

1. Dr. Knowling's book is placed first, because it must be pronounced distinctly the best and most useful edition known to the reviewer, as it is one of the largest and fullest.

Undoubtedly, the most striking feature of Dr. Knowling's work is his mastery of the modern literature of the subject and the very full account which he gives of current views. Yet he is not burdened by the weight of learning which he carries. He has thought long over every question. He selects, discriminates, judges. He reports many opinions; he tacitly condemns and omits far more. His own views are often expressed with admirable sympathy and feeling: see an example quoted in another place (below, p. 374).

¹ Prof. R. J. Knowling, D.D., *The Acts of the Apostles in The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1900.

Rev. F. Rendall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1897.

Rev. Jos. Knabenbauer, S.J., *Commentarius in Actus Apostolorum*, 1899.

Meyer's *Kommentar*, new edition, 1899, by Prof. H. H. Wendt.

Prof. G. G. Gilbert, *The Student's Life of Paul*, 1899.

Rev. H. M. Luckock, D.D. (Dean of Lichfield), *Footprints of the Apostles as traced by S. Luke in the Acts*, 1897.

Considering the enormous difficulties that beset the editor of *Acts* at every step, in the present unsettled state of criticism and of historical illustration, it is hardly possible to praise too highly the way in which Prof. Knowling has achieved his task. He has left no part of his duty as an editor unperformed. He has given a marvellously fair and full representation of almost every shade of opinion. He has on all sides shown himself remarkably accurate. He states historical and geographical and archæological illustrations with a precision which is rare and most refreshing among the New Testament commentators—many of whom seem to think it a duty to set in higher relief the accuracy of Luke in all such matters by the errors in details which they make in attempting to prove his accuracy—of which we shall give some illustrations below.

The many questions that emerge as to the settlement of the text have been carefully considered by Dr. Knowling. He is fully alive to the importance of many of the Western readings ; but he does not think that many of them are due to Luke himself. He is a very discriminating follower of Westcott and Hort, and often differs from their text. We might, perhaps, fairly desiderate some clearer statement of his principles in constructing his text. But he is rather an eclectic in text (which is probably the right view, though eclectics will differ on many details from one another); and there can really be no general principle in eclecticism, but each case has to be considered on its own merits. In xvii. 18 one wonders that he does not justify his reading τῶν before Στωϊκῶν, where WH, Tisch., etc., with **N A B E** have no article.¹

It is, however, quite impossible to give any proper account of a book so large, so full of matter, touching so many points of interest, within the compass of a review. One can

¹ Knabenbauer agrees with him in reading and in failure of justification, but Mr. Rendall follows WH.

readily give examples of faults in a book; but it is not easy to give a reasoned account of the merits of a work like this. One can only say, in brief, that *Acts* is at the present time the most difficult book of the New Testament to edit, and that Prof. Knowling has edited it in a way which stands out far beyond all others. The older editions have become antiquated to a far greater degree than editions of the Gospels, owing both to the great change in the point of view from which *Acts* is now regarded, and to the remarkable increase in our knowledge of many subjects that illustrate *Acts*. The recent editions have often great merits on one side or other, but in most cases the merits are counterbalanced by defects or faults on other sides.

He possesses a quality which always seemed to me specially characteristic of the late Bishop Lightfoot, and was the earliest cause of the deep respect and admiration that I have always entertained for that great scholar: he states the opinions of others, even those from whom he disagrees, with conspicuous accuracy and fairness. That may seem, on a superficial view, to be no more than is to be expected from even a beginner in scholarship. As a fact, it is one of the rarest of qualities.

It is characteristic of the singular fairness with which Dr. Knowling states opinions contrary to his own, that his notes sometimes are devoted mainly to explaining and justifying a text which he does not approve. In xix. 40 he reads *περὶ οὐ δύνησόμεθα* instead of *περὶ οὐ οὐ δύνησόμεθα* against the agreement of *ℵ B*; yet, while his notes, as usual, state the evidence with precision, clearness, and fairness, they would almost suggest that he preferred the reading of *ℵ B*. His text seems to me right. The insertion of the negative was easy and tempting after *οὐ*, and the true text, "we shall be able to give reason for this concourse," on a superficial view, seemed to want the negative; but the required negative really lies in the preceding clause, "there being no

cause by reference to which we shall be able to give reason for this riotous concourse.”

Again in xiii. 14 he reads τῆς Πρωιδίας against Ν Α Β C, yet in both critical and explanatory notes he justifies the accusative so completely that one wonders why he prefers the genitive.

It is not meant that I always agree with Dr. Knowling, or that he accepts all my published views. But there are many points in the study of ancient literature in regard to which opinion varies with perfect reason. Dr. Knowling seems to me to show good judgment, even where I am not persuaded by him. I cannot agree with him in minimizing the force of ἀρχαίων in xv. 7. Comparing the ἀρχαίω of xxi. 16, I think we are bound to infer that already in 50 or 51 the time [immediately before and after the Crucifixion was called by the Christians “ancient,” and that the episodes of Stephen and Cornelius belong to that time and not to A. D. 37 or 38. But it is quite a reasonable position to follow Dr. Knowling.

As to the print and general appearance, I need only quote a careful and obviously competent unknown reviewer:—¹ “The typography is a remarkable achievement of skill and accuracy.”

In an edition of the Greek Testament good accentuation is a great merit. I have examined a number of pages carefully, and have not observed one false accent. On p. 343 I notice ὑμῖν for ἡμῖν, but such misprints are extremely rare.² Except in some of the books printed at the Oxford or the Cambridge University Press, I have not known an English work so accurate in Greek accentuation; and this remark applies to the entire volume.³ I may be

¹ *Saturday Review*, Sept., 1900.

² I note a few slips: p. 376, for *ix.* read *ix.*; p. 387, insert *u* in *unusal*.

³ It includes also *Romans*, by Prof. Denney; and *1 Corinthians*, by Prof. Findlay.

pardoned for feeling special satisfaction that the Aberdeen University Press has achieved such exceptionally accurate work in the first edition of so large a book (953 pages).

A word on this subject may be added about the other editions. In a similar number of pages selected at random from Mr. Rendall's edition, the following false accents may be noted in the commentary: ¹—p. 113, *έόρτην* for *έορτήν*: p. 123, *λάον* for *λαόν*: p. 127, *άκουσονται* unaccented: p. 148, *Σεβαστηήνοι* for *Σεβαστηηνοί*: also the misprint *Canda* for *Cauda* on p. 152. Now there are few Greek words in the notes to this edition, sometimes not more than five on a small page, whereas Dr. Knowling's large pages contain a very much greater number of Greek words.

Dr. Knabenbauer's edition is very correct in accents. I observe on p. 47 *τās* for *τās*: twice on p. 429 *Φοίνιξ* for *Φοίνιξ*: on p. 444 *μεταβαλόμενου* is misprinted for *-λόμενοι*, and on p. 446 *έκατονάρχας* for *-πάρχας*: on p. 133 *αύτοίς* wants a breathing, and on p. 50 *ούδέ* needs an accent. He three times uses *Syracusa*, pp. 444, 446, in the singular instead of the plural form (following the bad Latin form of the Vulgate text). His Latin is often very harsh and awkward: see for example the last sentence on p. 404.

Dr. Wendt's commentary, being in its eighth edition, cannot fairly be compared with Dr. Knowling's first edition: it is of course accurate in this respect.

2. Mr. Rendall's edition contains many noteworthy and interesting suggestions. His brief appendix on *ὅστις*, asserting that Luke always uses that relative in a different sense from *ὅς*, is worth careful study. But he has not convinced me that in xiii. 43 "the Jews and Proselytes . . . urged them (*i.e.* Paul and Barnabas) to abide by the grace of God." Nor has he persuaded Dr. Knowling to follow this interpre-

¹ I have not inspected the text, but only the commentary; the text may be assumed to be reprinted from a printed copy, corrected to the form that the editor prefers.

tation. In fact it seems to be hardly consistent with the force of the tenses (present participle and imperfect indicative), which suggest a continued process, lasting, as Prof. Blass remarks, over all the ensuing week. This objection however, is not conclusive: the imperfects might probably be explained satisfactorily of the action of many individuals separately urging the Apostles "to cleave to the doctrine of the free grace of God in their next address." Mr. Rendall's explanation, however, is worthy of consideration; and Dr. Knowling thinks it worthy of recording, though he pronounces against it.

Prof. Blass several times points out, in contradiction to Mr. Rendall's doctrine, that *ἵστίς* is used by Luke as purely equivalent to *ἵς*, and that sometimes it merely serves the purpose of avoiding the awkward concurrence of *οἱ* with a participle, e.g. in xvii. 10 *οἱ παραγεγόμενοι* would suggest (when accents were not written) *οἱ παρ.*, and Luke therefore says *οἵτινες παρ.* A question of grammar like this is a subject in which Prof. Blass's opinion is most weighty.

The arrangement of Mr. Rendall's book is not convenient. The Greek text with a brief commentary fills pp. 31-159, and an English translation, with another slightly fuller commentary, pp. 167-354; and there are appendixes to both parts. The reader has to consult two separate parts before he can gather the editor's opinion, or absence of opinion, on any point. Brief as both commentaries are, there are necessarily very many difficulties on which the editor is silent. While there are many good and elucidative notes, and some novel suggestions that deserve careful consideration, the edition is in practical usefulness far inferior to Dr. Knowling's. The advanced scholar will find much to think over; but most people will complain of the want of guidance.

One criticism is needed. Mr. Rendall states all his opinions, whether they be matters of general acceptance;

or novel and hazardous, with equal dogmatic certainty. In cases where a new interpretation is suggested the use of the first personal pronoun would be like a danger signal, advertising the reader that the subjective element must be noted. But Mr. Rendall avoids absolutely the egoistic form. The use of the first personal pronoun is often blamed as egotistical. In reality, it may be used with a very different feeling by the true scholar, who feels that he ought not to place before the reader his own suggestions as if they were matters of certainty.

One contrast between Prof. Knowling and Mr. Rendall is worth noting. The former is most careful in noting the authorship of every opinion that can possibly be assigned to an individual, and giving the reference precisely: which makes the book all the more useful to those who wish to study, verify, and compare. Mr. Rendall, just as he never uses the first personal pronoun, so also never refers to any other scholar by name. Even Mommsen's brilliant interpretation of the Stratopedarch and the Augustan Band, which springs from him and owes most of its weight to his single authority, is veiled under the vague quotation "modern criticism," which might suggest to the unwary reader that the interpretation is due to a New Testament critic instead of the greatest of Roman historians.

This reticence, certainly, gives an air of distinction and dignity to the book; but in practice the reader will often wish for some help in order to investigate the subject further.

3. Dr. Knabenbauer's edition forms part of a *Cursus Scripturæ Sacræ*, containing the whole Bible, and dedicated to Pope Leo XIII. Conformably to the purpose of the series, the commentary is largely directed to edification on doctrinal points. It leaves many real difficulties unexplained, but it discusses at length the bearing on later Church history of the fact that Philip's four daughters were virgins.

In many passages of *Acts* it is undoubtedly useful to see what opinion is held by a scholar trained to look from a widely different point of view; and the commentary is the work of a scholar. But from the point of view from which we are writing this edition is unsatisfactory. It is old-fashioned in most questions of history and archæology.

4. Wendt's new edition needs no recommendation. It stands already firm and tried on its own merits. It is thoroughly revised, and recent works have been carefully weighed. Prof. Wendt's opinion will always command respect; but in some questions, as for example the relation of *Acts* to Josephus, we cannot admire his handling of the arguments. Personally, I find myself more often listening to Dr. Knowling than to him.

5. An example may here be given of the help which these various editors have to give. In *Acts* xvii. 10, "the brethren (of Thessalonica) privately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who when they were come *thither* went away into ¹ (ἀπέεισαν εἰς) the synagogue of the Jews." Why does Luke say "went away" or "departed"? Why not simply "entered"? From what or from whom did they depart? and what need is there for saying that they "went away" from them or it?

Dr. Knabenbauer ignores the difficulty. He simply uses the Vulgate text *introierunt* in his commentary, as if the Greek text were εἰσῆλθον or εἰσῆεσαν.

Dr. Knowling says "it may imply that on their arrival Paul and Silas left their escort and went into the synagogue." But what is the point of recording that? It is obvious that they would not remain always with their escort. Can the point be that the escort consisted of Greeks, and therefore the Apostles went away from them in order to enter the synagogue? That would be a telling

¹ "Went into," A.V. and R.V.; and so the Vulgate *introierunt*.

example of Paul's eagerness to conciliate the Jews, and to appeal to them first in every case. The common course of events followed: the Jews of Thessalonica came and fomented a disturbance. On the whole that seems, perhaps the simplest and most natural interpretation.

Dr. Zöckler, followed by Dr. Wendt, thinks that the synagogue was outside Berœa on the banks of the Haliacmon, the neighbouring river (in the same way as the Jewish place of prayer at Philippi was on the banks of the river outside the gates of the city); and that Paul and Silas went right on through the city away to the Haliacmon.¹ But this is obviously a false explanation for two reasons:

(1) The Haliacmon was five miles from Berœa, and the Berœan Jews would never build their synagogue on its banks so far away from the city, and *v.* 13 shows clearly that Paul preached in Berœa, and not five miles away. At Philippi the Jews were too few to have a synagogue, and they went out to a quiet shady place on the bank of the stream that flows through the city.

(2) The meaning which is taken from ἀπήεσαν on this theory is wrong; ἐξήεσαν would have been used if Luke intended to say that they went out from the city to the banks of the stream.

Mr. Rendall offers a novel and interesting interpretation. He takes this as an example of his principle regarding the difference between οὔτινες and οἱ, saying that οἱ would mean Paul and Silas, and οὔτινες must therefore mean the escort.

This involves a change in the meaning of the preceding sentence, which he renders: "the brethren conducted (ἐξέπεμψαν) Paul and Silas away by night to Berœa, and when they had come to the synagogue of the Jews, went away." The narrative then follows the same form as at the close of the next paragraph, "they that conducted Paul

¹ *Durch die Stadt hindurch ans Wasser des Haliacmon, in dessen Nähe die Synagoge jedenfalls lag* (vgl. xvi. 13).

brought him as far as Athens, and . . . departed." In both cases the escort brings Paul and Silas to their destination, and then leaves them and returns home.

This seems a tempting interpretation, though Dr. Knowling has evidently weighed and rejected it. One remembers that it is wise to think over a new interpretation for months before definitely deciding for or against it. The objections to it which suggest themselves are: (1) That the verb (*ἐκπέμπειν*) is not elsewhere quoted in *Steph. Thesaurus* in the sense of "escort"; but this is no serious objection, for both the simple verb *πέμπειν*, and the compounds *προπέμπειν*, *παραπέμπειν*, occur in the sense of "conduct," "convoiy," "escort." (2) It seems strange that the Thessalonican brethren, who were almost certainly Greeks, should present themselves at the synagogue in Berea.

This proposed sense adds perhaps to the appropriateness of *ἐκπέμπειν* in the only other place where Luke uses it; xiii. 4, "the brethren sent Barnabas and Saul away (*ἀπέλυσαν*); and they, being sent forth (*ἐκπεμφθέντες*) by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleuceia." Mr. Rendall would here interpret that "they being brought forth (or conducted) by the Spirit, went down to Seleuceia." This avoids the apparent discrepancy between the brethren sending them forth in *v.* 3¹ and the Spirit sending them forth in *v.* 4. On Mr. Rendall's interpretation the Spirit went with them, convoying and guiding them—a distinct improvement. One might rather look for the present participle to give the sense of continuously convoying; but the aorist is used in xvii. 10, and that may defend xiii. 4.

Without pronouncing definitely between Mr. Rendall's and Dr. Knowling's views, it seems clear that they both are

¹ I adopt the accepted rendering of *ἀπέλυσαν*; but it is pointed out in *St. Paul the Trav.*, p. 67, that *ἀπολύω* does not mean "send forth," but rather "set free from their duty in Antioch, and give liberty and charge to a new duty"—like *dimitto* in Latin.

far preferable in insight and accuracy to that of Dr. Zöckler and Dr. Wendt; while Dr. Knabenbauer merely repeats a mistranslation.

6. I have read over most of Prof. Gilbert's *Student's Life of Paul* without being struck by any novel or suggestive thought. Probably this dearth of illuminative sympathy is due to a mistaken conception of what is proper for "students." It is a widely current opinion that a book for students ought to be pre-eminently "safe": nothing that is striking, nothing that has not found general acceptance, should be admitted to it. Presumably this consideration has prevented Prof. Gilbert from applying real independent judgment and insight to his task.

The book contains numerous references to authorities, and the authorities are not always well selected. Any statement, however far wrong, is accepted on such authority, mistaken for good. Not many books of recent times have come before me that contain so many obvious mistakes in regard to the facts and lands and circumstances in which St. Paul lived. Yet the intention is to present "the facts, or the nearest possible approximation to the facts," of St. Paul's life, "entirely apart from a study of his theological teaching."

Prof. Gilbert applies his principle of "approximation to the facts" very liberally. Often, when one sees what he intends to say, his expression of it is so loose that even the least captious critic must object to it. "Alexandria was founded in part by Jews," p. 5, is of this class. Throughout the book one feels that the writer gets his facts from outside, and has not before his own mind a clear picture of ancient society.

The brief description of Tarsus at the beginning of the book is a mass of errors. "Tarsus was 60 miles west of the field where Alexander defeated Darius (333 B.C.), 129 miles west of Antioch, and 515 north-west of Jerusalem." Where

was Issus? Where was the battle of Issus? Sir Charles Wilson puts the battle much nearer to Antioch than to Tarsus. Whence comes that minute accuracy as to distances in cases where it is notorious that accuracy is unattainable by the most experienced travellers?

“Tarsus had been a free city for a century before Paul’s birth.” It was made a free city either by Antony or by Augustus (authorities vary) ¹ less than half a century before Paul’s birth. Then follows an inaccurate definition of the rights of a free city, taken, and mistaken, from Marquardt and from Mommsen.

“The natural inference from xxiii. 34, 35, is that Cilicia was a separate province.” No such inference follows from the passage.

“Strabo ranked Tarsus above Athens and Alexandria in philosophy and general education.” This statement is common in modern books on the New Testament; but it is often taken in a sense not intended by Strabo, as if he regarded that university as superior to all the others. After saying that the Tarsians have excelled both Athens and Alexandria, Strabo defines wherein the Tarsians have surpassed those other cities: the Tarsian school is filled with home students, and no foreigners go to it, whereas other universities are filled with students from outside, and few natives attend. He is exalting the eagerness of the Tarsians to learn above that of the people of other university cities (Alexandria excepted). He speaks, of course, on the authority of the Tarsians whom he met in Rome, where they were very numerous.

Tarsus “was the home of the poet Aratus.” This is a false inference of Prof. Gilbert’s from the common modern (correct) statement that Aratus was a fellow-countryman

¹ The variation evidently means that Antony gave the right, and Augustus, after defeating Antony, confirmed the act of the usurper (as Antony now was).

of Paul. He was born at Soli in Cilicia, and lived mostly in the Ægean world.

“In later years Paul must have known the name and works” of Apollonius of Tyana “well.” This is too absurd! Apollonius was to a large extent an invention of later times. Perhaps Prof. Gilbert takes the Apollonius of Philostratus as historical.

“A little before the time of Paul Strabo studied in Tarsus (54 B.C. to 24 A.D.), and with him the Stoic philosopher Athenodorus Cananites.” The date assigned to Strabo is inaccurate. Strabo did not study in Tarsus. Athenodorus belonged to an older generation than Strabo, probably, for he died aged 82 under Augustus and the date 7 A.D. given by Eusebius must refer to his death. Strabo’s account of him would suggest an even earlier date.

“Two centuries after Paul’s day we find such eminent men studying in Tarsus as Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 429).” The arithmetic is here defective.

Several times in the first few pages we find a strange statement in similar terms. “Manumitted slaves were frequently presented with citizenship.” A manumitted slave could not be presented with citizenship. If he was set free in the proper legal form by a Roman master in Rome, he thereby *ipso facto* acquired the Roman citizenship (apart from certain disabilities from which his descendants were free): if not, he could not be presented with it.¹ Prof. Gilbert quotes Schürer, ii. 537; but the German scholar, though putting a sentence in his text not quite accurately, explains the situation clearly in a footnote.

7. The Dean of Lichfield’s book may be compared on one side with Dr. Knabenbauer’s, for both regard the explanation of *Acts* as merely a preliminary to edification, and on

¹ In some rare cases the Emperor overrode the law, perhaps; but he would only do so with persons brought into relationship with the court.

another side with Prof. Gilbert's, as both are addressed less to scholars and more to a general circle—the Dean's expressly to a popular audience, the Professor's to "students" presumably not versed in Greek, as no Greek word occurs in the book. The restriction of our view at present removes much of the Dean's book from our consideration. Regarded merely as an explanation of *Acts*, the book is far from being so inaccurate as the one which we have just criticised; but still there are not a few things which we should gladly see corrected in a new edition.

The historical reflections often stand in need of reconsideration; and there is a tendency to find historical confirmation of the truth of *Acts* in inaccurate accounts of contemporary events. To take an example or two. The Dean might reconsider whether the reflection (ii. p. 210), *apropos* of Paul's touching at Cos, the birthplace of Apelles, should not be excised. "It may have just reminded St. Paul of the greatest picture he had ever seen, painted by him, of Alexander grasping the thunder, which hung in the temple of Diana at Ephesus." While Paul is probably understood by Luke to have surveyed with appreciative eye the wonders of Athens (xvii. 23), it seems inconceivable that he, while carrying to Jerusalem the offerings of his new Churches in order to cement the unity and harmony of the Christian world, would bear in mind Apelles's picture which he had not seen for years, if at all, when he touched for a night at the harbour of the island where Apelles was born.

Again, in ii. 189, the reference to "proconsuls" in the plural (xix. 38), whereas only a single proconsul governed the province, suggests the following reflections: "There are reasons to believe that it is a strictly accurate statement and testifies to wholly exceptional circumstances. Agrippina had poisoned the proconsul Julian by the hands of Celer and Aelius, who assumed and exercised a joint authority for

some time after his removal." On this it must be pointed out that (1) Celer and Helius (such is the true name, not Aelius) are not said to have taken over the authority of Julianus, which would naturally remain in the hands of his three deputies (*legati pro pratore*), until his successor came from Rome. (2) Even if they had been commissioned by the Emperor (though an illegal and unparalleled and most improbable interference¹ with the machinery of government) to administer Asia for a time, they could not possibly have done so as "proconsuls," for Celer was only a knight and Helius a freedman. (3) The murder of Julianus took place in November or December 54. Now the Dean follows the ordinary chronology, made classical by Lightfoot's support (see ii. p. 305); and therefore he can hardly date the speech of the Town Clerk in Ephesus earlier than the spring of 57. Even if Celer and Helius had assumed command of Asia in 54, they could not have still held it in 56.

It is not possible to accept the suggestion in ii. p. 127 that *μερίς* in *Acts* xvi. 12 means "the borderland of Macedonia," on the ground that *μερίς* in Hellenic² Greek is often used for frontier. Such a usage is unknown to me, and no example of it is quoted in *Steph. Thesaurus*.

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¹ Quite inconceivable in the early part of Nero's reign, when government was administered so successfully in the provinces.

² Presumably a slip for "Hellenistic." The Greek word is falsely accented *μέρις* in the same line. False accents occur also in ii. p. 206, i. p. 252; *ἀθειώρης* p. 307 is a slip for *ἀθειότης*.