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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Luke of Antioch in Pisidia.

BY THE REV. W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D., PRESTON.

They returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting [them] to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.—Ac 14^{21, 22}.

THE 'we-passages' in the Book of Acts have often been studied to outline the history of their author; but Acts 14²², the earliest of them, has generally been left out of the group, although Alford, Lumby, and others have, with hesitation, inferred that Luke accompanied Paul on his first journey. The purpose of this paper is to advocate the theory that Luke was actually converted at Pisidian Antioch on that journey.

First, we observe that the word [them] is not warranted by the Greek, though neither of our versions prints it in italic; from the context we ought to supply [us]. From the occurrence of the ἡμᾶς we must infer, as in similar passages, that Luke was a disciple at Lystra, or Iconium, or Antioch. The alternative is that he clumsily dovetails into his narrative a short quotation verbatim. Of such a literary procedure by Luke there is no other instance, nor is there any apparent reason for its occurrence here. It is true that a few instances may be found of change from indirect to direct quotation, as often in Greek; but comparing Lk 5¹⁴, Ac 1⁴ 17³ 23²², all fail to show the peculiarity here, that the transition is to the first person, not the second. They show that Luke could alternately summarize and quote, not that he interpolates into a summary a phrase written from the standpoint of neither speaker nor recorder, but hearer.

Second, we turn to the report of the previous address at Antioch (Ac 13¹⁶⁻⁴¹), and again find traces of an ear-witness. It is the longest report of any speech by Paul, the only other to compare with it is that before Festus, which was certainly heard by Luke (Ac 27¹). Now, for this long report there is no reason in the occasion, or the town, or the speech, or the speaker. There was nothing crucial in the occasion: Paul had been working in synagogues for fourteen years, and in most there would be Gentile sympathizers, as was notorious at Antioch in Syria; the address was

delivered at the invitation of the rulers, as usual; it went upon Jewish lines; it was not a turning point as if it was the last ever delivered under such conditions, for at Iconium shortly afterwards, he spoke again in the synagogue. There was nothing remarkable about the town; it was only a Roman colony, of respectable size, and perhaps the most important in Galatia, but hardly more important than Salamis and Paphos, evangelized on the same journey. It will not compare with Syrian Antioch, Ephesus, or Corinth. Luke records no speech delivered by Paul at these ancient capitals where he worked for years, and Luke was not present when Paul opened his campaigns at them; does not this suggest why he made an exception for Pisidian Antioch? If it be rejoined that he made another for the address at Lystra on this same journey, there are two good reasons; this was a typical address to Jews, that a typical address to Gentiles; the latter was in a town whence came Timothy, Luke's frequent companion, whose minute knowledge can be traced in the notices of Lystra, while those of Iconium and Derbe are general. There was nothing remarkable about the speech, which is on the same general lines as that of Peter at Pentecost, an argument on Jewish premises that the Messiah was come in the person of Jesus. There was nothing special about the speaker. Paul was certainly the chief speaker, but the dramatic reversal of rôles had taken place at Paphos; where Barnabas had fallen to the rear. If, then, neither the occasion nor the town nor the speech nor the speaker will account for the lengthy report, must we not suppose some reason personal to the reporter?

This is confirmed by a few difficulties in the address. The chronology of the Judges' period and of Saul's reign, the fusion of quotations at 13²², have made Alford and Knowling conclude that the speech is reported verbatim, for a revision or condensation would have made these rough

places smooth. So both from the length and from the peculiarities natural with an oral address reported faithfully, we may infer an ear-witness.

Third, there are a few traits in the context that indicate an eye-witness. There is a delicate shade in the word *ἐλθόντες* at 13¹⁴. Six other times Luke mentions people entering a synagogue; on these occasions he was absent, and he uses other words. The variation at this place harmonizes with the theory that he was already seated in that synagogue when they entered.

Again, if we compare his story of Christ speaking at Nazareth, we observe that there was no mention then of more than one reading, or of the ruler sending an invitation to speak, and that our Lord sat down for the address, while Paul in this place stood for the purpose. The details, which are given in the Gospel, few as they are, are more numerous than those in Matthew and Mark; that may be due to a Gentile describing foreign customs to a Gentile; the incidental mention of differences here is surely due to an observer.

Similarly we read that Paul beckoned with the hand. This gesture is mentioned by Luke three times more, and by him alone. Peter thus silenced the prayer-meeting in the house of Mary, mother of John Mark; the latter was probably Luke's informant (Ac 12¹⁷). Alexander tried thus to obtain silence in the theatre of Ephesus (Ac 19³⁹); 1 Co 16 shows that Timothy was there, about to pass through Philippi, where his friend Luke was staying. Paul thus secured silence in the temple-court, where Luke possibly was standing (Ac 21^{40, 18}). Considering the three people thus mentioned, we cannot assume that the gesture was characteristic of Paul. Neither can we dismiss the phrase as a mere flourish of Luke's rhetoric. He records other speeches at third or fourth hand, four of Peter and one of Stephen, and makes only such a general remark as that he 'opened his mouth.' And when he has to report Paul at Athens, or saying good-bye at Ephesus, or defending himself before the Sanhedrin and Felix, there is no word of this gesture. But before Festus it is noted that Paul stretched forth his hand, and the mention by the apostle of his bonds confirms the accuracy of Luke the eye-witness. It seems, then, most reasonable to suppose that at Pisidian Antioch also Luke saw and noted the movement.

It would certainly have been possible to expect other traces of his presence, as that vv.^{48, 48}

should have read, 'Many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to us, urged us to continue in the grace of God. . . . And as the Gentiles heard this, we were glad,' etc. But without any plea from modesty or from grammar, we may say that Luke is strictly accurate, and that he was not, and did not claim to be, one of the first converts there. That he was converted before their departure is, however, additionally probable from the remark that the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit, which seems rather more personal and experimental than the colourless summaries at Lk 24⁵², Ac 9⁸¹ 12²⁴.

Comparing these touches with the meagre account of the long and successful work at Iconium, the short but graphic account of the doings at Lystra seen by Timothy, and the one line about Derbe, there seems further probability in the theory that Luke was actually present in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch.

The full description of the conference at Jerusalem (Ac 15) is the more natural if Luke was one of those very Gentiles whose future was trembling in the balance, and whose conversion was described by Barnabas and Paul. The speech of Peter, with its reference to the Law as a yoke that could not be borne, would specially interest a man whose Church in Galatia had a letter from Paul mentioning his expostulation with Peter as not himself keeping the Law. The general information could easily be acquired by Luke when he stayed at Jerusalem with Mnason and met James; the text of the apostolic letter was delivered at Pisidian Antioch by Paul and Silas on the second journey.

The silence about the town on this occasion accords with Luke's custom of narrating the breaking of new ground, but not the subsequent steps of consolidation, unless there was something critical. This there was in the circumcision of Timothy, as was seen by the subsequent misunderstandings in the Galatian Churches. But Pisidian Antioch is passed over as briefly as the churches in Syria and Cilicia, or as those in Macedonia on the third journey (Ac 20¹⁻⁵). After passing Pisidian Antioch on this second journey, Paul's party wandered silently through Asia, and Luke did not join them till Troas (Ac 16⁶⁻¹⁰). Young Timothy had no ties to delay him, but a physician would need a little time to decide on throwing up his practice and

arranging his affairs. From Antioch it was easy to reach Troas.

Ramsay has shown that Luke's allusions to the geography of Asia Minor are singularly accurate. But the allusions are restricted. Tarsus and Cilicia are barely mentioned, and the same is the case with Pamphylia, Mysia, and Bithynia; in Asia we only have recorded the stoppages of a company of pilgrims in which Luke travelled. His minute allusions are to the cities of Lycaonia and the region of Galatic Phrygia, exactly the district in which Pisidian Antioch was a chief town. The same detailed accuracy is to be seen in the references to Macedonia, where admittedly Luke laboured, while his geographical references to Achaia are not minute, though accurate. Such facts give further probability that Luke knew well 'the region which was called Phrygian geographically and Galatic politically.'

It may be worth mentioning that Paul's first presence in Pisidian Antioch was due to an infirmity of the flesh, so that his meeting a physician there was very desirable. But we may not insist on Luke's presence in the great company bearing

money to Jerusalem. Gaius of Derbe and Timothy could represent all Galatia, and no other representative of Philippi is hinted at, unless it be Luke, who had stayed there on the second journey, and rejoined Paul there on the third.

Certainly he is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians, but that is not extraordinary. He was not an elder (Ac 14^{22, 23}); no Galatian at all is mentioned; he was not with Paul when the letter was written; indeed, Ramsay thinks that the letter was penned before Luke came into any close connexion with Paul.

The only letters that do mention Luke were sent to the Colossians and to Timothy at Ephesus, to the province of Asia, whence a high-road ran through Pisidian Antioch, and to a man from another Galatian town.

There seems, then, no reason to be gleaned from the New Testament against the theory that Luke first met Paul at this colony in Galatia, and that he was converted on the outward half of the first journey. Many trifling touches confirm it, and the language of Luke himself implies it in his usual modest fashion, but plainly.

In the Study.

Q Study in the Sphere of Supposition.

THE latest volume of sermons by the Rev. G. H. Morrison, M.A., is called *The Return of the Angels* (Hodder & Stoughton; 5s.). The last sermon in it is called 'The Sphere of Supposition.' Mr. Morrison has taken the word 'supposing' out of three places in which it is found in the New Testament, and made it the subject of his sermon.

It is a manner of preaching that is not so common as it might be. The objection to it is that it is so easy. But when trouble is taken with it, as Mr. Morrison takes trouble, there is no manner of preaching that is at once so interesting and so edifying. It has the interest of variety; it has the edification of systematic theological instruction.

Mr. Morrison's word is 'supposing.' It is not a strong word. It is not the word of strong people. 'I suppose so'—but why do you not think? why do you not find out?

I. The first text is Lk 2⁴⁴—'Supposing him to have been in the company.' It is taken from the story of the visit of Jesus to the Temple when He was a boy. It is a story of singular charm. It is both natural and supernatural. There are other stories of His infancy, but they are only supernatural, and therefore incredible.

When the Feast was over, Joseph and Mary turned home again. They were with their friends. It was a large company. And, 'supposing that Jesus was in the company' also, they went a day's journey. They were a little to blame. They should have found out. But do we not ourselves sometimes suppose that we have what we have not? Do we not sometimes suppose that we have Christ?

Where is He? He is about the Father's business. He is always about the Father's business. We can therefore always tell whether we have Him or not. We have Him if we also are about the Father's business. If we are not about the Father's business, we have Him not.