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A. H. McNeile

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ST PAUL
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DOCTRINE

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ST PAUL
HIS LIFE, LETTERS, AND
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

BY

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1920

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς ἐστίν μοι οὗτος

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

THE Christianity of to-day is broadly speaking the Christianity of St Paul. The influence which he has exercised on the hearts and lives of men is unequalled by that of any other writer in the world's history. The Apostolic Scriptures to which appeal was made in the perilous times when the early Church was holding her own against Gnosticism were, in the first instance, the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. 'The extent to which "the Apostle," ὁ ἀπόστολος, dominated through the New Testament Canon the Church of the second century has not been adequately realised¹.' Through the third and fourth centuries Christian thought, and Pauline thought in particular, was gradually formulated with increasing distinctness, until it received at the hands of St Augustine the systematized shape in which it was preserved in western Europe, and is largely preserved to this day.

It is natural, therefore, that the Apostle's life and writings have occupied the attention of innumerable thinkers and scholars. This little book is not intended to vie with larger works, but to form an introduction

¹ Turner in Swete's *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, p. 103.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

PREFACE

to them, by gathering together in a small compass the best that has been written on the subject in recent years. The line of thought, however, in Part III is not directly borrowed from any other work on St Paul's doctrine. I have tried to map out, as briefly as possible, the great area of his teaching in the form which suggested itself to my own mind by independent study.

A. H. MCNEILE.

DUBLIN,

July, 1918.

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978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

PART I

THE LIFE OF ST PAUL

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	ST PAUL'S CHARACTER AND PERSON	1
II.	CLASSES OF CHRISTIAN CONVERTS	8
III.	ST PAUL'S CONVERSION	11
IV.	ST PAUL'S MOVEMENTS AFTER HIS CONVERSION	17
V.	ST PAUL AT ANTIOCH WITH BARNABAS	21
VI.	ST PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM	23
VII.	THE DEDICATION OF BARNABAS AND SAUL TO WIDER WORK	28
VIII.	ST PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR	29
IX.	THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM	40
X.	ST PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR	50
XI.	ST PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR	76
XII.	ST PAUL AT JERUSALEM	95
XIII.	ST PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT AT CAESAREA	102
XIV.	ST PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME AND HIS WORK THERE	109

PART II

THE EPISTLES OF ST PAUL

	INTRODUCTION	121
I.	I THESSALONIANS	123
II.	II THESSALONIANS	129
III.	INTRODUCTION TO I AND II CORINTHIANS	135
IV.	I CORINTHIANS	149
V.	II CORINTHIANS	162
VI.	GALATIANS	168

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii	CONTENTS	
CHAP.		PAGE
VII. ROMANS		181
VIII. COLOSSIANS		203
IX. PHILEMON		211
X. EPHESIANS		213
XI. PHILIPPIANS		225
XII. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES		241

PART III

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ST PAUL

SECT.		
	INTRODUCTION	265
1.	ESCHATOLOGY	268
2.	THE HOLY SPIRIT	274
3.	THE CHRISTIAN'S TRANSFERENCE INTO THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM	276
4.	THE NATURE OF MAN	279
5.	THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHRISTIAN	282
6.	THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST	283
7.	'IN CHRIST'	284
8.	CHRISTIANS	286
9.	DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND LAW	289
10.	RIGHTEOUSNESS, GRACE, AND FAITH	293
11.	JEW AND GENTILE	295
12.	THE CROSS	298
13.	THE SACRAMENTS	303
	LITERATURE	308
	INDEX	313
	MAPS: illustrating (1) St Paul's life to the end of the First Missionary Tour, (2) the Second Missionary Tour, (3) the Third Missionary Tour and the Journey to Rome	<i>at end</i>

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(3) only available for download

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

I. **APART** from Jesus Christ, St Paul is the greatest figure in the history of Christianity. His character, his preaching, and his letters made Christianity a world religion. The fountain of the water of life, offered first to Jews, ran to Gentiles through channels cut by him. He appeared, in God's providence, a very few years after the crucifixion of our Lord, when the mind of the Church was still young and plastic, and laid his impress upon it for all time.

Nevertheless none of his contemporaries attempted to write his biography. The book of the *Acts* is not a biography, but a summary sketch of the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem until it reached Rome, the head and heart of the Empire. St Paul indeed figures largely in the latter half of it, but in the former half St Peter holds the principal place. It is the 'Acts of the Apostles,' not the 'Acts of Paul,' much less his Life. No records survive of his childhood and youth; and for an account of his death we are dependent upon patristic tradition from the close of the first century and onwards (see pp. 256, 257).

2. **THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE ACTS.** The value of the *Acts* as a trustworthy source of our knowledge is being subjected, at the present time, to minute investigation. It is not necessary here to deal with the matter at length. Some writers who have upheld the historical value of the book have tended to weaken their case by over-stating it. The historical value, especially of the

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A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

portion dealing with St Paul, is undoubtedly high; but probably all will agree that however careful the author may have been to write with accuracy, his work—written several years after the events—cannot command quite the same confidence as the apostle's own statements about himself in his letters. Where *Acts* and epistles agree, our confidence can be complete; where they differ, the latter must be allowed full weight, while the former is used with the recognition that it is a secondary authority. And that recognition must include the speeches and addresses attributed to St Paul in the *Acts*. They may rest, to a considerable extent, upon traditions of his actual words, or at least of the substance of what he said. But there is little doubt that St Luke, whom we may assume to have been the author, followed a well recognised literary method of ancient authors in writing the speeches which he attributed to St Paul and others, as a means of representing his own views of the several situations, and of the character, aims, and circumstances of the speakers.

3. THE 'WE'-SECTIONS. The passages generally known as the 'We'-sections, because in them the narrative falls into the first person plural, are, according to the ordinary text, (a) *Acts* xvi. 10–17, (b) xx. 5–15, (c) xxi. 1–8, (d) xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16. These cover St Paul's movements (a) from Troas to Philippi on the second missionary tour, (b) from Philippi to Miletus on the third tour, (c) from Miletus to Jerusalem at the end of the same tour, (d) from Caesarea to Rome¹.

To what extent the book of the *Acts* as a whole was

¹ The first person occurs also in D and Augustine at xi. 27 (see p. 23) and in D and the Sahidic version at xvi. 10 (see p. 55).

INTRODUCTION

xi

compiled from written documents or from tradition, or both, is a difficult problem which is still a subject of much discussion. But it seems clear that in the 'We'-sections a written document supplied St Luke with at least the main facts. With regard to the extent, and the authorship, of this document opinions differ. It is generally recognised that the style and vocabulary of these sections cannot be distinguished from those of the rest of the book, and that the whole book *in its present form* was the work of one writer. Many have therefore concluded that these sections formed part of a diary or travel-document written by St Luke himself in the actual course of his journeys with St Paul, and that at a later time he introduced some parts of the diary, just as they stood, into his narrative. But the 'We'-sections are not quite as free from difficulties and obscurities as we should expect such a diary to be. And since the narrative in the first person passes in every case without a break into a narrative in the third, the original extent of the 'We'-sections is difficult to determine. The style and vocabulary are not necessarily decisive of St Luke's original authorship of the sections. He was quite capable, as we know from his Gospel, of taking a written document and largely re-writing it, colouring it with his own style and vocabulary. And in doing this he might still preserve the first person plural which he found in his document, much in the same way as the compiler of Ezra-Nehemiah preserved in certain passages the first person singular. The original diary might, therefore, have been made by some unnamed companion of St Paul, and have been either a fairly full narrative or the briefest travel notes. But on this supposition it is a real difficulty that there is not

the slightest indication in the *Acts* or the Epistles as to who this unnamed companion could have been. The facts can best be accounted for by supposing that the original notes, mostly quite brief records of St Paul's movements, but with an occasional anecdote added, were the work of St Luke, and that many years later he made them the basis of the narrative in its present form.

4. THE TEXT OF THE ACTS. For some years after its composition the *Acts* was not considered a sacred writing, and scribes therefore felt at liberty to treat its text very freely. In the manuscripts D, E, and some others, in one or two Old Latin versions, some early Latin writers, and in the margin of the Harclean Syriac, a number of more or less interesting variants appear, which are often referred to by the general description of the 'δ' text. Various suggestions have been made as to their origin, among them that of Blass¹ who conjectured that they represent the first edition of the book, made by St Luke for Roman readers, while the ordinary text, which is often slightly shorter, was a revised edition which he made for Theophilus. Few writers have accepted this solution. But several have treated these variants very seriously as being, in many cases, nearer to the original than the readings in the ordinary text. Of recent years, however, it has been thought more probable that they were made gradually by a succession of scribes or editors. They would not call for special mention were it not that they are more numerous and striking in the *Acts* than elsewhere, and that they occasionally add what is very possibly reliable information. The more noteworthy readings are recorded in the footnotes.

Philology of the Gospels, p. 101.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xiii

5. **CHRONOLOGY.** The reader will not find dates scattered throughout this volume; *relative* dates and the succession of events are all that is required in the chronology of St Paul's life. But a short discussion of the subject must be made here. The exact dates cannot yet be determined, because no quite certain date has been discovered in non-Biblical sources which coincides with an event in his life. But fortunately, with regard to the dates during the period of his missionary activity the margin of uncertainty has been reduced to a single year. A large number of the variations in the schemes supported by different writers are noted by Moffatt, *Introd. to the Literature of the N.T.* p. 62 f. Most of the material is collected by Turner in his useful article in *Hastings' Dict. of the Bible*, i. 403-425. He bases his dates on ten considerations, of which the following may be mentioned: (1) Aretas was probably not in possession of Damascus (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 32) before 37 A.D. (2) The famine under Claudius (Acts xi. 28) was not before 46. (3) The expulsion of Jews from Rome under Claudius (xviii. 2) was perhaps in 49 or 50. (4) Felix married Drusilla (cf. xxiv. 24) not before 54. (5) Felix was succeeded by Festus (xxv. 1) in one of the years 57-59, probably in 58. Turner's scheme, accordingly, is as follows:

	A.D.
The Crucifixion	29
St Paul's Conversion	35-6
1st visit to Jerusalem	38
2nd visit to Jerusalem	46
1st missionary journey	47
Council at Jerusalem, 2nd journey	49
Corinth reached late in	50
4th visit to Jerusalem, 3rd journey	52
Ephesus left	55

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A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

	A.D.
5th visit to Jerusalem, arrest at Pentecost	56
Rome reached early in	59
<i>Acts</i> closes early in	61
Martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul	64-5

The date of the Crucifixion need not here be discussed. But Turner's second and third dates are open to serious doubt, because he identifies the second visit to Jerusalem (of Gal. ii. 1-10) with the visit for the Council (49), not with the visit to take relief for the famine (Acts xi. 29 f.) which is much the more probable (see pp. 23-8). St Paul says (Gal. ii. 1) that he went up to Jerusalem 'after fourteen years,' which Turner feels compelled to understand, against the natural meaning of the words, to be fourteen years after his conversion; hence reckoning back from 49 he dates the conversion in 35-6. It is true that to take the words in their natural meaning of fourteen years since his previous visit causes difficulty. It throws that previous visit back to 35, which is impossible if Aretas was not in possession of Damascus till 37. Conversely, if on this account the first visit is dated in 37, fourteen years later brings the second visit down to 51, which throws St Paul's missionary life altogether too late. Thus it will be seen that to give the words 'after fourteen years' their natural meaning, and at the same time to identify the Jerusalem visit of Gal. ii. 1-10 with the famine visit of Acts xi. 29 f. lands us in a dilemma. But an escape from it is offered by a conjecture revived by Kirsopp Lake¹ which deserves serious consideration, that St Paul originally wrote 'after *four* years².' If the two Jerusalem visits were

¹ *Expositor*, Nov. 1912.

² ΔΙΑΔΕΤΩΝ, which an early scribe wrote as ΔΙΑΙΔΕΤΩΝ.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xv

separated by only four years¹, and the second is identified with the famine visit, the first visit (reckoning back from Turner's date 46) was in 42, and the conversion three years previously (Gal. i. 18) was in 39.

Turner's last date is uncertain. St Paul's martyrdom may have occurred at any time after the 'two whole years' of Acts xxviii. 30 until the Neronian persecution which broke out in 64 (see p. 257 f.). If St Peter's martyrdom at Rome is historical, which there is no good reason for doubting, it cannot have been earlier than the persecution.

For the intervening events (from the second Jerusalem visit to the close of the *Acts*) one piece of evidence has been discovered since Turner wrote which enables us to fix the dates with the uncertainty of only one year throughout. In 1905 Bourguet² published four fragments of an inscription found at Delphi, which is thought to have stood originally on an outer wall on the South side of the temple of Apollo. It appears to contain the words of a friendly letter from the emperor Claudius to the city of Delphi, in which Gallio is mentioned as the proconsul of the country, i.e. Achaia. Many similar letters from emperors have been preserved, by comparison with which some of the lost portions can be

¹ It should be noticed that if there were ten years between them nearly nine of them must have been spent at Tarsus, for only 'a whole year' was spent at Antioch (Acts xi. 26) before the famine visit. A man of St Paul's temperament, filled with his new Christian zeal, is very unlikely to have passed nine years in quiet retirement at home; and if he preached during that time, St Luke would probably have given some account of it, since he is so careful to relate the one year's work at Antioch.

² *De rebus Delphicis imperatoriae aetatis capita duo.*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

restored with some probability. It is much mutilated, as will be seen from the following transcription¹:

TIBEP		ΑΙΣ	ΟΣ Γ
ΣΙΑΣ		Ο·ΚΕΙΠ	ΑΤΡΙ
ΠΑΛ	ΤΗΠ	ΤΩΝΔΕΛΦ	ΥΜΟ
ΧΗΣΑΕΠΕΤΗΡΗ		ΝΘΡΗΣΚΕΙ	ΟΥΑΠΟ
ΝΥΝΛΕΓΕΤΑΙΚΑΙ		ΕΙΤΩΝΕΡΙ	ΚΕΙΝΑΙΩ
ΝΙΟΣΓΑΛΛΙΩΝΟΦ		ΜΟΥΚΑ	ΠΑΤΟΣ
ΕΤΙΕΞΕΙΝΤΟΝΤΡΟ		Ο	Ε
ΛΩΝΠΟΛΕΩΝΚΑ			
ΑΥΤΟΙΣΕΠΙΤΡΕ			
ΦΩΝΩΣΠΟΛΕ			
ΤΑΙΜΕΤΩΚΙ			
ΥΤΟΥ			

For our purpose only four lines are important, with regard to which there is fairly general agreement. Deissmann² restores them as follows:

1. *Τιβεριος Κλαυδιος Καισαρ Σεβαστος Γερμανικος αρχιερευς
μεγιστος δημαρχικης εξου*
2. *σias το ·ιβ' αυτοκρατωρ το ·κς' πατηρ πατριδος υπατος το
·ε' τιμητης Δελφων τη πολει χαιρειν*
5. *Λουκιος Ιου*
6. *νιος Γαλλων ο φιλος μου και ανθυπατος της Αχαιας*

'Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Pontifex Maximus, in the twelfth year of his tribunician authority, saluted as Emperor *the twenty-sixth time*, Father of his country, Consul the fifth time, Censor, to the city of Delphi greeting... Lucius Junius *Gallio my friend and proconsul of Achaia...*'

The words in italics are certain, and provide the necessary clue. The emperor's tribunician authority was reckoned each year from Jan. 25th. The number of the year originally given in the inscription is lost; but other

¹ It is printed thus for convenience of space, but the lines in the original inscription were at least twice as long as line 1.

² *St Paul*, Appendix 1.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xvii

inscriptions enable us to say with certainty that it was either 11 or 12, i.e. A.D. 51 or 52. The 26th and 27th imperial salutations of Claudius are known to belong to the 12th tribunician year, and the 22nd, [23rd], and 24th to the 11th. The 25th also probably fell in the 11th, and just possibly the 26th also. The emperor's letter to Delphi was therefore written in 52, after (or possibly just before) Jan. 25th. And Gallio's year of office consequently included part of A.D. 52.

The inscription, however, does not help in determining the exact date of his *entry* upon office, to which there is little doubt that St Luke refers in Acts xviii. 12. The proconsulate normally lasted a year. In A.D. 43 Claudius made a rule that every proconsul must leave Rome not later than the middle of April to take up his office¹. Deissmann therefore places Gallio's arrival at Corinth at about the beginning of July. We may roughly call it midsummer. But the question which cannot at present be solved is whether it was the midsummer of 52 or 51, since we do not know on what day in the year 52 Claudius received his next (27th) salutation; it may have been either shortly after Gallio entered upon office or after he had vacated it.

We can now, in the light of the narrative of Acts xviii., date forwards and backwards from the midsummer of 52 or 51. The trial took place soon after Gallio's arrival, some time say in July—September. St Paul 'tarried after this yet many days' (v. 18), i.e. probably over the winter, before he started, as soon as the sailing season began, to journey hurriedly *via* Ephesus to Jerusalem (perhaps for the Passover) in the spring of 53 or 52. Before Gallio's arrival he had spent 18

¹ Dio Cassius ix. 17, 3.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

months in Corinth (*v.* 11) since his vision (*vv.* 9, 10); so that the vision occurred at the beginning of 51 or 50. And he had been for a little time in Corinth before that (*vv.* 1-7); he therefore arrived in Corinth in the late autumn of 50 or 49 (or possibly at the beginning of 51 or 50 if the 18 months is intended to include his whole time in Corinth before the trial). This was soon after the arrival of Priscilla and Aquila from Rome owing to the edict of banishment (*v.* 2). Assuming that they travelled without delay from Rome to Corinth this might seem to give a fixed date, for Orosius¹, quoting a certain Josephus², dates the edict in the 9th year of the reign of Claudius. This should be A.D. 49; but Ramsay claims that Orosius is always a year behind in his dates³, while Deissmann thinks that the very fact of his giving 'Josephus' as his authority shews that he was not reckoning the date for himself. The matter cannot at present be settled, so that we are still left in uncertainty to the extent of one year.

St Paul, then, was in Corinth from the late autumn of 50 or 49 till the early spring of 53 or 52; and the principal dates of his life till his arrival at Rome may be calculated as follows, with the alternative of one year earlier throughout:

	A.D.
The Conversion	39
1st visit to Jerusalem	42
2nd visit to Jerusalem	46
1st missionary tour	47

¹ vii. 6, 15.

² The passage does not occur in the histories of Josephus that we possess.

³ Taking 50 as the year of the edict Ramsay unnecessarily delays the arrival of Priscilla and Aquila at Corinth till the spring of 51.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64929-3 - St Paul His Life, Letters, and Christian Doctrine

A. H. McNeile

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xix

	A.D.
Council at Jerusalem, 2nd tour	49
Corinth reached late in	50
4th visit to Jerusalem, 3rd tour	53
Ephesus left	56
5th visit to Jerusalem, arrest at Pentecost .	57
Rome reached early in	60

On this basis the epistles, apart from the Pastorals, can be dated as follows:

	A.D.
1 and 2 Thessalonians	51
1 Corinthians	55 or 56
2 Corinthians	56
Galatians	56 (?49)
Romans	57
Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians	<i>c.</i> 61
Philippians	<i>c.</i> 62 (?54–56)