

**LUKE THE PHYSICIAN: THE  
AUTHOR OF THE  
THIRD GOSPEL AND THE  
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

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Luke the physician: the author of the Third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles by Adolf Harnack & W. D. Morrison

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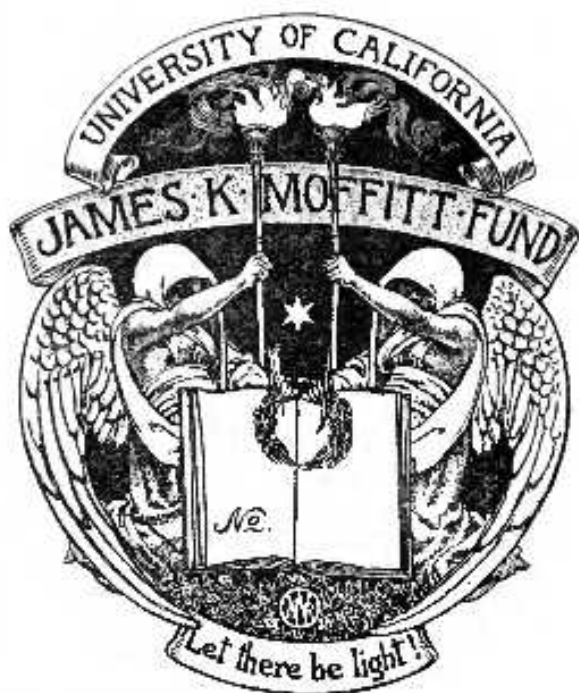
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New Testament Studies

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# LUKE THE PHYSICIAN

THE AUTHOR OF THE THIRD GOSPEL  
AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It was my original intention that the following treatise should be included in the third part of my "History of Early Christian Literature." However, it grew under my hands to such an extent that I now publish it in a separate volume. It must form the first of a few other treatises on the subject of Introduction to the New Testament which will appear shortly, for some of the cardinal problems of this branch of Biblical study are still far from being set in so clear a light as to permit of their being dismissed in a short essay.

The genuine epistles of St. Paul, the writings of St. Luke, and the history of Eusebius are the pillars of primitive Christian history. This fact has not yet been sufficiently recognised in the case of the Lukan writings; partly because critics are convinced that these writings are not to be assigned to St. Luke. And yet, even if they were right in their supposition, the importance of the Acts of the Apostles at least still remains fundamental. However, I hope to have shown in the following pages that critics have gone astray in this question, and that the traditional view holds good. The Lukan writings thus recover their own excellent value as

*b*

historical authorities; for they are written by a Greek who was a fellow worker of St. Paul, and companied with Mark, Silas, Philip, and James the brother of the Lord.

Ten years ago, in the preface to the first volume of the second part of my "History of Christian Literature," I stated that the criticism of the sources of primitive Christianity was gradually returning to the traditional standpoints. My friends have taken offence at this statement of mine, although I had already in part established its truth. I now offer them a new proof, and I beg for their impartial criticism. With my opponents, on the other hand, my statement has fared much more sadly. I saw myself suddenly brought forward as a witness to testify that in historical criticism we are returning to the conservative point of view. I am not responsible for this misapprehension of my position; indeed, in that very preface I took care to guard myself against it—as it seems, to no purpose. Let me, therefore, now express my absolute conviction that historical criticism teaches us ever more clearly that many traditional positions are untenable and must give place to new and startling discoveries. We do, of course, recover something of the old ground, in that we can now more accurately circumscribe the home and the time of the formation of the most primitive and fundamental Christian tradition. We can now assert that *during the years 30-70 A.D., and on the soil of Palestine—more particularly in Jerusalem—this tradition as a whole took the essential form which it presents in its later development, and that the only other factor which*

has played an important part in this formation is the influence of Phrygia and Asia, with their populations so strongly intermixed with Jewish elements. This result of research is becoming clearer day by day, and is steadily replacing the earlier "critical" hypothesis which assumes that the fundamental development of Christian tradition extended over a period of some one hundred years, and that in its formation the whole Diaspora played a part as important as that of the Holy Land and its primitive churches.

In regard to the chronological framework, the majority of the leading personages who are named, and the scene of action, the report of ancient tradition stands firm; but when we proceed further—*i.e.*, when we attempt to realise historical situations—we are thrown back upon our own groping judgment, and are often unable to accept the conceptions and explanations of the primitive annalists. Indeed, the problems which present themselves are rendered the more difficult by the shortening of the period of fundamental development and by the weight which must be assigned to the testimony of persons who still belong to the first generation. If, for instance, St. Luke and not some other unknown compiler is the author of the third gospel and the Acts, we are then left with a psychological and historical problem of extraordinary difficulty—scarcely less difficult, indeed, than that which the author of the fourth gospel presents when he includes in his narrative both the Miracle at Cana and the Final Discourses.

The method which I have followed in this book is little in accord with the impressionism that is the