

A NEW SOLUTION OF THE GALATIANS PROBLEM.¹

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THE Problem of the Galatians has two parts: firstly, the question of the date of the Epistle and the identity of the Churches of Galatia to which St. Paul wrote; and secondly, the question whether he ever visited the northern parts of the Roman Province of Galatia (which depends on the interpretation of Acts xvi. 6 and xviii. 23). Of these two questions the former is by far the more important; and though they are to a certain extent inter-connected, they are quite distinct and must be treated separately if any useful conclusions are to be reached. Hence this paper makes no attempt to deal with the less important aspect of the Problem, but confines itself to answering the question: To what particular Churches of his own foundation was St. Paul speaking when he wrote his Epistle to the Churches of Galatia (Gal. i. 2)? And who were his lovable but 'foolish Galatians'? Was he addressing the people of South Galatia whom he converted on his first missionary journey, or the inhabitants of Pessinus and Ancyra in the north of Galatia? Though this question has been debated by students of St. Paul for more than a century, no agreed solution has yet been achieved, in spite of much research, especially by the late Sir William Ramsay, to whom every student of the question is greatly indebted.

The present attempt at a solution is based on a careful survey of the various solutions already propounded, and suggests a compromise view which would seem to weld all the best elements of the North and South Galatian Hypotheses into a satisfactory synthesis.

The North Galatian Hypothesis, which is the ancient and

¹ The substance of a Paper read to the Conference of Ecclesiastical Studies held at Upholland College on April 30th, 1943.

traditional view, asserts that St. Paul, after confirming the Churches of South Galatia on his second missionary journey, visited North Galatia ('passing through Phrygia and the Galatian region', Acts xvi. 6), and that he wrote the Epistle shortly afterwards to the Churches founded by him up there, probably sending it from Ephesus. Thus in the North Galatian view St. Paul's Jerusalem visit mentioned in Gal. ii. 1 is to be identified with the third Jerusalem visit of Acts xv. 2 f.

The South Galatian Hypothesis, on the contrary, asserts that St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Churches which he founded in the course of his first journey through the South Galatian towns of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and the frontier-town of Derbe, all of which were at that time within the borders of the Roman Province of Galatia.¹ The point to seize upon is, that if he really wrote his letter to the South Galatians, it could have been written any time after his first journey, and possibly even before the Council of Jerusalem, Acts xv; whereas, if he really wrote it to the North Galatians, then the letter could not have been composed until at least the latter part of his second journey, and so could not have been written before the Council of Jerusalem. Thus, if you take the North Galatian view, the Epistle could have had nothing to do with the Circumcision Controversy at Antioch which was the cause of the Council of Jerusalem. But if you take the South Galatian view, the Epistle may have been written before the Council; in which case it would give us a wonderful insight into St. Paul's mind at the height of the Controversy which led to the Council.

¹ I have avoided Ramsay's own definition, as leading to confusion, viz. "The South Galatian theory is that no Churches were founded by Paul in North Galatia" (*Historical Commentary on Galatians*, p. 128, 1900 ed.). By 'North Galatia' and 'South Galatia' I mean the northern and southern parts respectively of the Roman Province of Galatia as it existed at the time of St. Paul's journeys, see frontispiece to Ramsay, *op. cit.* A variant of the South Galatian theory is the view of Lattey, Manson and others, who, while agreeing with Lightfoot that Galatians was written after the third journey, hold nevertheless that it was sent to the South Galatians,—though to do so they have to explain away the Apostolic Decrees, and also St. Paul's silence about them in the Epistle.

ST. PAUL'S VISITS TO JERUSALEM.¹

Acts.

First Visit, ix. 26-30. Παρα-
γενόμενος δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ
ἐπείραζεν κολλᾶσθαι τοῖς μαθη-
ταῖς . . . ²⁷ Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐπι-
λαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἤγαγεν πρὸς
τοὺς ἀποστόλους . . . ²⁸ καὶ ἦν
μετ' αὐτῶν εἰσπορευόμενος καὶ
ἐκπορευόμενος εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ,
παρρησιαζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι
τοῦ κυρίου, ²⁹ ἐλάλει τε καὶ συνε-
ζήτην πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς· οἱ
δὲ ἐπεχείρουν ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν.
³⁰ ἐπιγνόντες δὲ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ κατή-
γαγον αὐτὸν εἰς Καισάρειαν καὶ
ἐξαπέστειλαν αὐτὸν εἰς Ταρσόν.

Second Visit (Famine Relief
Visit), xi. 27-30; xii. 25. Ἐν
ταύταις δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις κατήλ-
θον ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων προφή-

Galatians.

First Visit, i. 18-22. Ἐπειτα
μετὰ τρία ἔτη ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱερο-
σόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Κηφᾶν, καὶ
ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δε-
καπέντε. ¹⁹ ἕτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποσ-
τόλων οὐκ εἶδον, εἰμὴ Ἰάκωβον
τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου. ²⁰ ἃ δὲ
γράφω ὑμῖν, ἰδοὺ ἐνώπιον τοῦ
θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. ²¹ ἔπειτα
ἦλθον εἰς τὰ κλίματα τῆς Συρίας
καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας. ²² ἤμην δὲ
ἀγνοούμενος τῷ προσώπῳ ταῖς
ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Ἰουδαίας ταῖς
ἐν Χριστῷ. . . .

Second Visit (Conference
Visit), ii. 1-10. Ἐπειτα διὰ
δεκατεσσάρων ἑτῶν πάλιν
ἀνέβην εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα μετὰ

¹ The reason for the division of the text of Gal. ii. 3-5 by means of dashes and brackets will be explained later. As to the text of Gal. ii. 3-5, it is well established, although Zahn wished to omit the words *οἷς οὐδὲ* in verse 5. These words are read by all the Greek MSS. (including \aleph B) except D, Irenaeus, Victorinus, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Primasius, and the Old Latin, which omit them. Intermediate stages between these two readings are found in Marcion, some Greek MSS. known to Victorinus and the Peshitto Syriac, which read *οὐδὲ* without *οἷς*, and in Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians* which implies *οἷς* without *οὐδὲ*.

"The inclusion of both words in the text," writes Lake (*The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, The Acts of the Apostles*, Vol. 5, pp. 196 f.), "has in so far a claim to recognition that it has not merely much manuscript support, but provides a sentence so impossible to construe and difficult to explain that it would always invite alteration." In other words, the omission of the words *οἷς οὐδὲ* in the Western Text may here be fairly attributed to the desire of a few scribes to render grammatically intelligible an otherwise hopelessly obscure sentence. Thus there is no solid reason for doubting that by keeping *οἷς οὐδὲ* the bulk of the MSS. have here preserved the true reading. The chief importance of these variants is, as Lake adds, that they "show that from the beginning no one was quite sure what certain details in the passage meant."

Acts.

ται εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν· ²⁸ ἀναστὰς δὲ εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἀγαβος ἐσήμαινεν διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος λιμὸν μεγάλην μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην· ἥτις ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου. ²⁹ τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις, ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς· ³⁰ ὁ καὶ ἐποίησαν ἀποστείλαντες πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους διὰ χειρὸς Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Σαῦλον.

xii. 25. Βαρναβᾶς δὲ καὶ Σαῦλος ὑπέστρεψαν ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ, πληρώσαντες τὴν διακονίαν . . .

Third Visit (Council Visit), xiv. 26-27; xv. 1-5. κακεῖθεν ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, . . . ²⁷ Παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως. . . .

xv. ¹ Καί τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῇτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι. ² γενομένης δὲ στάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, ἔταξαν ἀναβαίνειν Παῦλον καὶ Βαρναβᾶν καὶ τινες ἄλλους ἐξ αὐτῶν πρὸς

Galatians.

Βαρναβᾶ, συμπαραλαβὼν καὶ Τίτον· ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν· ² καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον. —

³ ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἑλλήν ὢν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι· ⁴ (διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδελφούς, οἵτινες παρεισῆλθον κατασκοπῆσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν· ⁵ οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἵξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς [

]])—

⁶ ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναί τι, (ὅποιοί ποτε ἦσαν οὐδέν μοι διαφέρει· πρόσωπον θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει) ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκούντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο, ἡ ἀλλὰ τὸ ὑναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας καθὼς Πέτρος τῆς περιτομῆς, ⁸ (ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐμοὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη), ⁹ καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκούντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομὴν· ¹⁰ μόνον τῶν

Acts.

τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου. ³οἱ μὲν οὖν προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διήρχοντο τὴν τε Φοινίκην καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἐκδιηγούμενοι τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ἐποίουν χαρὰν μεγάλην πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. ⁴παραγενόμενοι δὲ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρεδέχθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ἀνήγγειλάν τε ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ' αὐτῶν. ⁵Ἐξάνεστησαν δὲ τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, λέγοντες ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως.

Galatians.

πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι.

All students of the Galatians Problem recognize that the crux of the whole matter lies in the relation subsisting between the two visits of St. Paul to Jerusalem mentioned in Gal. i-ii and his first three visits mentioned in Acts. All important critics agree in identifying the first visit of Gal. i. 18-20 with the first visit of Acts ix. 26 f., but the two camps are equally divided as to whether the second visit of Gal. ii. 1-10 ought to be identified with the second or the third visit mentioned in Acts (xi. 27 f. ; xv. 2 f.).

The main argument for the North Galatian Hypothesis (and for the above-mentioned variant of the South Galatian Hypothesis), which would, as we have said, identify what Galatians (ii. 1) suggests to be the second visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem with his third visit according to Acts (xv. 2 f.), is said to lie in what Lightfoot called "the striking coincidence of circumstances" between the third visit of Acts and the second of Galatians. "The geography is the same . . . the time is

the same, or at least not inconsistent . . . the persons are the same . . . the subject of dispute is the same . . . the character of the conference is in general the same . . . [and finally] a combination of circumstances so striking is not likely to have occurred twice within a few years" (Lightfoot, *Galatians*, pp. 123, 124, 8th ed., 1884). Now, though I would dispute the argument that 'the character of the conference is the same,' the list of coincidences still remains most striking. Nevertheless Lightfoot had to admit the existence of many discrepancies in the two accounts. One of the most important is the difficulty over the nature of the council in each; according to Galatians the conference was private, according to Acts it was public. The argument of Lightfoot and Lagrange, that St. Paul alludes only to the private history of the conference whose public session is alone described by St. Luke, does not evade the objection that "the whole point of St. Paul's recital in Gal. ii is that the proceedings were not public, but private" (Blunt, *Galatians*, p. 81). It is still more extraordinary, if Galatians was written after the Council of Jerusalem, that it should contain no mention of, or even allusion to, the Apostolic Decrees. For those Decrees were a justification in principle of St. Paul's attitude to circumcision, and it is inadequate to argue, as Lightfoot does, that St. Paul could not have quoted the Decrees in his Epistle to the Galatians without giving them the impression that he was subservient to the Apostles at Jerusalem. All the same, despite these weaknesses, Lightfoot's views held sway until the end of the last century, his commentary on Galatians having been first published in 1865.

Then came the challenge of Ramsay, who convinced himself after first-hand exploration of Asia Minor on foot that the traditional view so ably expounded by Lightfoot did not at all square with the historical geography of that part of the world. Ramsay felt convinced that the South Galatian Hypothesis was in fact the correct one, and his powerful advocacy soon obtained it a fresh hearing.¹ After showing quite conclusively that in

¹ Cf. *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, 1st ed., 1895; *Studia Biblica*, Oxford, 1896, "The 'Galatia' of St. Paul and the 'Galatic Territory' of Acts"; *Historical Commentary on Galatians*, 1899-1900.

the time of St. Paul the Roman Province of Galatia embraced not only the region inhabited by the Gauls in the north (from whom the Province had derived its name) but also those parts of Phrygia, Pisidia and Lycaonia to the south which were evangelized on the first missionary journey, he felt convinced that the second visit of Galatians corresponded with the second visit of Acts. He not only thought he could prove that St. Paul's Galatians were the actual converts of the first journey, but he was also sure that the second visit of the Apostle was a private consultation undertaken in order to avoid future misunderstandings and not the public disputation which we find at the third visit of Acts. The North Galatianists denied the validity of the former argument, and in reply to the latter retorted that verses 4 and 5 of Gal. ii (about the false brethren) clearly describe a public quarrel and not a private dispute; and this being so, they pertinently inquired why, if the whole question of circumcision had really been settled beforehand by the Apostles at the second visit, the latter should have pretended to argue it all *de novo* at the meeting described in Acts xv, as though they had never discussed, much less settled, the problem. And to this retort Ramsay was never able to give an effective reply despite the extraordinary attractiveness of his hypothesis in other respects. Thus each side was capable of dealing the other a knock-out blow; for while Ramsay could prove that the conference described in Gal. ii was a private one and bore no resemblance to the Council of Jerusalem, Lightfoot's supporters argued just as soundly that the dispute mentioned in that very chapter was a public dispute identical with that of Acts xv, and that no one with an historical sense could believe that the same situation could happen twice within the space of three or four years in the same manner, place and so on. Ramsay, it seems, relied chiefly on verses 1 and 2, and 6-10 of the second chapter of Galatians, Lightfoot more on verses 4 and 5. The consequence is an apparent contradiction. Each was right as far as he went, and ever since commentators have taken sides according to their estimate of the relative importance of the secondary arguments advanced by the one side or the other.

The dilemma has been most clearly seen and stated by

Kirsopp Lake. This scholar, believing that St. Paul, as a first-hand authority, must be preferred to St. Luke when the two differ, follows Schwartz in holding (though not without some qualms) that Luke has quite unnecessarily separated the single visit described in the second chapter of Galatians into two distinct visits. Hence Lake is prepared to argue that the visit of Acts xi (the Famine Relief Visit) and the visit of Acts xv (the Council visit) are both descriptions of the visit referred to in the second chapter of Galatians, derived from different sources and described from different points of view (*The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. 5, p. 201). Now, although this theory seems to me to be incompatible with belief in the historical reliability of Acts, it does at all events bear witness to the reality of the difficulty of reconciling Acts with Galatians.

Some have thought to avoid the dilemma by inventing a visit of St. Paul to Jerusalem which has not been disclosed either in Acts or Galatians. But while it is conceivable that Acts may not give us the full total of St. Paul's visits to Jerusalem, there is no possibility of inserting an unrecorded visit in the vital place, viz., between ch. xi and ch. xv. As to Galatians, it is an essential part of the autobiographical argument of the first two chapters to mention *every* occasion on which he came into contact with the Jerusalem leaders, and to keep back nothing of his relations with them. If he had done so, he would stand convicted of falsehood (cf. i. 20; also Blunt, *Galatians*, 1925, pp. 51 f.).

What is now the position? We cannot postulate an unrecorded visit and we cannot accept the fatally compromising view of Lake and others. Is there any other loophole which can save us from frustration? There does remain one possibility which it is surprising that no one has seen before. Instead of saying, with Lake, that St. Luke has made two visits out of one, it will be worth while examining the exactly opposite hypothesis, viz., that St. Paul has misled us into making one visit out of two.

Has it ever struck you that verses 3, 4 and 5 of Gal. ii form a parenthesis almost unconnected with verses 1-2, 6-10? What I am suggesting is, that verses 1-2, 6-10 all refer to St. Paul's

second visit to Jerusalem (which Ramsay identifies with the Famine Relief Visit of Acts xi) and that verses 4-5 refer to the Circumcision Controversy at Antioch which was the cause of St. Paul's third visit to the Holy City (Acts xv). If this is the case, the dilemma is solved. The very simplicity of this solution to some extent explains why it has been overlooked, but two other reasons may be given: firstly, the natural obscurity of the whole passage, especially of verses 3, 4 and 5; secondly, the failure of commentators to grasp the part played by Titus in the argument of St. Paul. The best way to find out if verses 3-5 form a parenthesis is to see if the remainder of the passage makes good sense without them.

Gal. ii. 1-2. Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus¹ also with me. And I went up by revelation;² and I laid before³ them⁴ the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately before them who were of repute⁵ lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.⁶

¹ The Greek construction suggests that Titus was in a subordinate position.

² Better, 'in obedience to a revelation': a *private* revelation, not the one made to Agabus, as Ramsay thought.

³ The Greek ἀνεθέμην suggests that he did not submit his Gospel for their approval, but consulted them as an equal (cf. Lagrange, *Épître aux Galates*, in *loc.*, giving an excellent quotation from Ambrosiaster).

⁴ 'them' in this context seems to be the Apostles rather than the inhabitants of Jerusalem (but cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, on i. 19).

⁵ 'them who were of repute' does not here have a depreciatory sense, but means 'the recognized or accepted leaders', i.e., the authorities (cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, in *loc.* ³, Ramsay, *op. cit.*, p. 301).

⁶ The clause does not imply that St. Paul had any fears as to the outcome of the Conference. He, of course, had no doubt whatever of the truth of his own Gospel which he had received direct from God, but the divine revelation reminded him of the necessity of keeping in step with the Apostles in Jerusalem. He was quite sure in advance of the answer, but the assurance of the support of Peter, James and John would greatly strengthen his hand in his future missionary enterprises. Ambrosiaster comments: "Now he could not learn anything from them, because he had been taught by God: but it was ordained by God that he should act thus for the sake of peace and concord, in order that any scruple or suspicion of his brethren and fellow-apostles might be removed and that the Gentiles might have the benefit of knowing that his Gospel agreed with the teaching of the great Apostles" (quoted by Lagrange, *op. cit.*). He consulted them, therefore, solely that there might be one policy as well as one doctrine in relation to the reception of Gentile converts.

. . . 6-10. But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me : God accepteth not man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute, imparted nothing to me : ¹ but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with *the gospel* of the circumcision (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles) ; and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision ; only *they would* that we should remember the poor ; which very thing I was also zealous to do. ² (R.V.)

It is obvious that these verses by themselves afford a coherent and logical account of St. Paul's second contact with the Apostles at Jerusalem, and it is also clear that if this procedure be legitimate we have removed the principal obstacle to the identification of this visit with the Famine Relief Visit (Acts xi. 27-30) ; for it is the so-called attempt to get Titus circumcised which is at the root of the whole trouble. (See Appendix for discussion of certain other objections to equating these visits.) If, therefore, we prescind from verses 3-5 the remainder becomes a perfectly straightforward account of St. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem.

I ought, perhaps, at this stage to remind you that by this recital of his Jerusalem visits St. Paul seeks to prove that he was not in any way subordinate to the authorities at Jerusalem and that he was an Apostle in as full a sense as any of the original Twelve ; indeed, he declares that his own mission was straight from God, just like St. Peter's (i. 12 ; ii. 7, 8 ; cf. Chapman, *Revue Bénédictine*, 1912, pp. 141 f.). He is able to show that whenever he came into contact with them they added nothing to his doctrine (cf. ii. 6), though they were in complete doctrinal and social harmony with him on the

¹ i.e., imparted no fresh knowledge to me (so Lightfoot and Blunt, against Lagrange).

² The Greek ἐσπούδασα ποιῆσαι probably means ' I then did '.

question of the Gospel which he preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles.

You will, I think, agree that it would be highly convenient to put verses 3-5 in a watertight compartment, but at first sight the text seems very much against this procedure and would seem to demand that the parenthesis begin only at verse 4. My next step is to show that the parenthesis not only can but must begin at verse 3. Verses 3-5 run as follows:

But not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you. (R.V.)

Now though some critics maintain that St. Paul did not give in and allow Titus to be circumcised, nearly all would agree that an attempt was made at the time of that visit. Most translations suggest this.¹ The modern commentators, who are equally divided, usually argue the matter in this way. Did St. Paul mean to say that Titus was *not* circumcised in spite of pressure brought to bear to have him thus treated? Or did he mean to say that Titus was not *compelled* to be circumcised, and that he yielded only by way of concession? It is in this connexion that Burkitt remarks (*Christian Beginnings*, p. 118): "Who can doubt that it was the knife which really did circumcise Titus that has cut the syntax of Gal. ii. 3-5 to pieces?" Nevertheless I think the balance of probability is against any such action having been taken. For if Titus had really been circumcised to appease popular clamour it is unreasonable to suppose that St. Paul would have chosen to remind the Galatians

¹ In the R.V. quoted above the words 'and that' are a gloss and require the mental addition of some such words as 'although an attempt was made to circumcise him because of . . .'. A recent American translation, issued by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (U.S.A., 1941), renders more explicitly: "But not even Titus, who was with me, Gentile though he was, was compelled to be circumcised, although *it was urged* on account of false brethren who were brought in secretly . . .". Here, 'it was urged' is the translator's gloss implying an attack on Titus.

of a fact so extremely damaging to his whole case ; he would surely have kept silent about it. No ; Titus was obviously well known to the Galatians and his name seems to have been introduced as an argument for Gentile freedom. If, then, St. Paul did not circumcise Titus, why has he dragged the latter's name into this context at all ? There must be a definite reason. " But not even Titus, who was with me, Gentile though he was, was compelled to be circumcised." Does the text state that an attack was made on him ? No, it does not. Suppose, then, for a moment, that commentators have too hastily assumed that the question of circumcising Titus arose on the occasion of the second visit. As Ramsay pointed out (*op. cit.*, p. 298), had the question been raised formally, it would have been a test case, as Titus was distinctly a person of standing in the Church, and if the Apostles had solemnly and officially decided that Titus need not accept the rite, that would practically have decided the present case in Galatia.

Since, then, St. Paul does not actually say that the case of Titus was raised, is it not possible that he is interpolating a remark to the effect that the authorities in Jerusalem had once deliberately refrained from making a test case of Titus precisely because they had no quarrel with St. Paul's views on circumcision ? Such a remark would enormously strengthen his whole argument ; and it would also follow as a corollary that there was never any *real* connexion between the presence of Titus in Jerusalem at that time and the Circumcision Controversy which inspired Galatians. The only connexion between these two matters is, on this supposition, the purely *logical* one given to them here by St. Paul for the purpose of the argument of the Epistle.

Why, then, does St. Paul suddenly interject this parenthetic remark about Titus if he is not referring to an event that really happened on that second visit ? Because whilst he was dictating the Epistle, indignant at the challenge to his authority, it suddenly struck him as a forcible argument with which to refute the Judaizers of Galatia that the fact that the Apostles did nothing about the Gentile Titus (with his Galatian acquaintances) on that occasion showed that they agreed with him in recognizing

"the freedom of the Gentiles" from the burden of the Mosaic Law. And so, forsaking all of a sudden the train of thought he has pursued in verses 1 and 2, he breaks in with this new debating point against his Judaizing opponents, for all the world as if he were afraid he would forget it if he did not set it down there and then.

In summing up so far, I should like to paraphrase verses 1-3 somewhat after this fashion: "I went up to Jerusalem after fourteen years, with Barnabas, by divine command—taking Titus too—to make quite sure that I had the full approval of the chief Apostles before undertaking the conversion of the West, and that my policy regarding the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church was in full harmony with theirs. The following fact will prove this to you, and may impress you in your present wavering mood, viz., that on that occasion the Apostles tacitly approved of my having Titus as a collaborator, uncircumcised Gentile though he is. For you will readily understand that these Apostles would not have allowed me to bring Titus into association with them unless they were already committed in principle to the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Christian fellowship. Thus you see that all that while ago the authorities in Jerusalem approved of my attitude."

If I have succeeded in making my meaning clear, you will now be demanding an explanation of verses 4 and 5 which appear to contradict much of what I have just said. In the first place the particle *δέ* at the beginning of verse 4 obviously connects it with verse 3. But before the connexion between verse 3 and verses 4-5 can be grasped, the meaning of the latter must first be determined. Here is a further difficulty, since these two enigmatic verses form one long involved sentence without subject or main verb. The omission, as we have seen, cannot be attributed to the error of a copyist, for the manuscript tradition solidly supports the existing text. Omissions of this sort are in fact a not too uncommon trick of St. Paul, other examples of which may be found in Rom. viii. 3 and 2 Thess. ii. 7. But while we may justly surmise that the Galatians were able to supply the omitted subject and verb, they did not succeed

in handing down their exegesis to posterity, as the divisions among the commentators prove. The omitted subject and verb ought surely to be traceable from the context, or St. Paul (we may reasonably hope) would not have left them out. Now the conjunction $\delta\epsilon$ in verse 4 indicates a contrast between the matter of verse 3 and that of verse 4. Our previous exegesis of verse 3 at once suggests that the contrast is between the tolerance of the Jerusalem Apostles (who made no attempt to impede the liberty of the Gentiles from circumcision when they had had a good opportunity to make a test case of Titus) and the subversive action of certain false brethren who were making a great effort to enslave them. The master impulse which dictated the composition of Galatians was St. Paul's resolve to safeguard at all costs this 'liberty of the Gentiles'. This liberty, as St. Paul tells us by implication in verse 3, had been respected by the authorities at Jerusalem in the case of Titus, but it is abundantly clear that it was being endangered among the Galatians when he wrote to them. Let us therefore watch the effect of restoring the omitted subject and main verb by the words 'the liberty of the Gentiles is now in danger'.

3.—But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised 4 but because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privately to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into servitude, 5 to whom we yielded not by subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you, *the liberty of the Gentiles is now in danger*—.(D.V.)¹

“—But because of false brethren unawares brought in, *the liberty of the Gentiles is now in danger . . .*”. With this simple addition the whole passage now makes sense without any straining of the text. Indeed, it gives new meaning to the whole of Gal. ii. 1-10. The cause of St. Paul's anger and alarm about the Galatians is the fact that the 'liberty of the Gentiles' in Galatia is in danger from false brethren stealthily brought in,

¹ I quote this time from the Douay Version which here at least preserves more faithfully than any other rendering the ambiguity and broken grammar of the original Greek.

who are striving to pervert his recent converts and bring them into Mosaic servitude. The thing that the great Apostles did not dream of doing when St. Paul took Titus up to Jerusalem was now being impertinently attempted by certain bogus interlopers in an underhand manner at the very time of his writing. Hence his Epistle. Moreover, it is to be noted that though he can say that he has stoutly resisted their machinations, his words imply that he has not yet effected their discomfiture. I submit, therefore, that the necessary translator's gloss in verses 4 and 5 must be the words "the liberty of the Gentiles is now in danger". The mental addition of this simple clause not only explains the otherwise grammatically impossible verses 4 and 5 but also explains the difficult statement of verse 3. We now see not only that verses 3-5 (inclusive) are parenthetic but that verses 4 and 5 form a parenthesis within the parenthesis—with the additional complication that the inner parenthesis lacks both subject and main verb! The advantage of this solution is its extreme simplicity; it involves no emendation or alteration of the existing text, but merely a revision of the punctuation followed by modern editors, together with the italicized insertion of the gloss "the liberty of the Gentiles is now in danger".¹

We are now in a position to understand why both North and South Galatianists have been able to claim the second chapter of the Galatian Letter in support of their views; for we see that while verses 1-2 and 6-10 describe his second visit to Jerusalem (cursorily mentioned in Acts xi. 27-30), verses 4 and 5 describe the tense situation at the time of writing, just before the Council of Jerusalem, verse 3 being the logical connexion between the two sections. It also explains why the proponents of each theory have stuck to their guns and refused to quit their positions. For there is truth on both sides; and though the lion's share undoubtedly goes to the South Galatianists, the North Galatianists were entirely right in refusing to allow their

¹ Whether we supply 'our liberty' or 'the liberty of the Gentiles' is immaterial since St. Paul is certainly speaking for the Gentile point of view, though he himself seems to have freely chosen to conform to the strictly Jewish way of life in order to disarm the criticism of his Jewish brethren and opponents. For some further details of the exegesis of Gal. ii. 3-5, see *J.T.S.*, Oct.-Dec., 1942, "A Note on the Meaning of Gal. ii. 3-5".

opponents to explain away the parenthesis about the "false brethren", and in claiming that they were identical with the Judaizers of Acts xv. Now at last there seems to be good reason for a final demarcation between the claims of the opposing hypotheses. To the South Galatian Hypothesis must be conceded the identification of the second visit in Acts with the second visit in Galatians. To the North Galatian Hypothesis, on the other hand, it must be conceded that verses 4 and 5 of Gal. ii must refer to the Circumcision Controversy at Antioch, as related in Acts xv, and not to an incident alleged to have taken place at the second or some later visit; and so it may be conceded that verses 4 and 5 allude indirectly to the third visit of Acts.

If the foregoing explanation is correct, it throws an entirely new light on the origin of the Galatian Epistle and on the Circumcision Controversy generally. For the situation which Gal. ii is now seen to describe for us can surely be no other than that found at the beginning of Acts xv, seen, however, from the angle of St. Paul himself. Some of the Judaizers who had gone down to Antioch must have gone on to Galatia unknown to St. Paul, and, without his permission, started to preach their false doctrine among his recent converts. When this news came to his ears his indignation and dismay knew no bounds, for his own conflict with these false brethren was so very recent (cf. Gal. ii. 4; Acts xv. 1, 2) and the issue still undecided. Unable to visit them himself at the moment (iv. 20), he at once sat down and dictated our Epistle. As to the date of writing, it must have been despatched sometime between the Controversy at Antioch and the opening of the Council of Jerusalem, that is to say, in the course of his leisurely journey from Antioch to Jerusalem, described in Acts xv. 3; for our new gloss will allow of no other supposition. Galatians is therefore the earliest of St. Paul's Epistles and was written at the height of the Circumcision Controversy of Acts xv.

The acceptance of this view of the harmonization of Acts and Galatians carries with it some very interesting corollaries. In the first place, we see that Galatians throws much light on the Famine Relief Visit of Acts xi (which St. Luke dismisses

so briefly) and explains its real significance in the divine plan of Church expansion. In a momentous hour, Peter, James and John not only recognized and accepted St. Paul's credentials to having a mission direct from God, like Peter himself, but cordially agreed to the allotment of spheres of influence in the mission field—"that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision". In the course of their conversations it was found that their views coincided with his on the principles and practice of the admission of Gentiles into the Church, and they parted with handshakes and on the best of terms. As a result of this complete understanding with the Three Pillars of the Church, as he calls them, he had secured himself against any future opponents of his missionary activity within the Churches founded by himself, and also against stay-at-home intriguers in the Mother Church at Jerusalem. The private agreement with the Three Apostles forearmed him precisely against that tampering with his own converts which Galatians reveals. If I may be pardoned the lapse into modern jargon, I would say that the Axis established between the Three Apostles and himself was proof against this insidious attempt to drive a wedge between them. Thus our hypothesis shows that the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem were in complete agreement with St. Paul on what we may term "the missionary policy" of the Church towards the Gentiles, and that this agreement was reached before St. Paul opened his great missionary campaign.

Secondly, it shows that St. Paul's rebuke of St. Peter (Gal. ii. 11-14) certainly happened before the Council of Jerusalem, and in all probability took place before St. Paul's second Jerusalem visit. The most likely time is during St. Peter's enforced absence from Jerusalem between Herod's persecution and the Famine Relief Visit, i.e. A.D. 42-46. (The rebuke appears last in the list of St. Paul's arguments for his independence of the other Apostles, not for any chronological reason, but because it is his trump card.)

Thirdly, it follows that the Council of Jerusalem then publicly promulgated what had already been privately recognized by the four Apostles, viz., the doctrine that the Gentiles

as well as the Jews were saved in virtue of Faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law of Moses (cf. Acts xi. 18; xv. 11). The four Decrees (Acts xv. 2, 29) were temporary measures issued for the benefit of the weaker brethren, the Christian Jews, in those areas where the controversy had formerly raged.

Fourthly, it rules out the theory of the North Galatianists (and of those South Galatianists who hold that the Epistle was written after the Council) that the Decisions of the Council (Acts xv. 11, 28-29), seemingly so explicit and definitive in themselves, were in fact sufficiently ambiguous to permit of a recrudescence of the same controversy, some four to six years later, in a form violent enough to inspire the Galatian Epistle. It follows that Galatians itself furnishes no grounds whatever for the theory that the Church was ever again troubled with a similar agitation.

One final word. I have deliberately tried to simplify the treatment of the whole problem and have consequently omitted many small points of exegesis which figure largely in the chief treatises on the Galatians Problem.¹ There is, however, no need to deal with these points since Kirsopp Lake (*op. cit.*) has shown that neither individually nor collectively are they decisive for the North or the South Galatian view. Hence no useful purpose would be served by rehearsing all the arguments again here. The root of the whole matter lies in the interpretation of the vital passage in Galatians. Once this has been rightly understood and set in its proper perspective the lesser problems

¹ For example, the precise meaning of τὸ πρότερον, in Gal. iv. 13. The passage runs thus: οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον. Much has been made of this remark by the North Galatianists, who used to assert that τὸ πρότερον here has its ordinary classical meaning, viz., "on the former of two occasions". If this were true then it would follow that St. Paul had already preached the Gospel to the Galatians on two separate occasions and that the Epistle was written after the Second Journey. But unfortunately for this conclusion the recovery of thousands of Greek papyri has immensely increased our knowledge of the type of Greek spoken and written in the time of St. Paul, and Moulton and Milligan in their great dictionary say that in the time of St. Paul τὸ πρότερον had come to mean no more than "formerly", "at a former time". I conclude therefore that the meaning of this passage is to be determined by our view of the date of Galatians, and not vice versa.

either resolve themselves (like the question of the meaning of τὸ πρότερον) or are seen no longer to affect the main solution.¹

As to the problem of whether St. Paul ever preached among the North Galatians, it is now clear that Galatians itself has nothing to tell us about it, and the question can only be decided from the study of the XVIth and XVIIIth chapters of Acts.

These, then, are the elements of the Galatians Problem, and if this solution is deemed satisfactory it will have helped to clear the ground for the far more important task of interpreting St. Paul's message of Christian Freedom to the modern world.

APPENDIX.

The identification of the Conference Visit of Gal. ii. 1-2, 6-10, with the Famine Relief Visit of Acts xi. 27-30.

Since the solution proposed requires the identification of these two visits, it may be as well to deal with some of the objections often raised. Now that we no longer have to fit in the details furnished by Gal. ii. 3-5, the chief difficulty comes from the paucity of information given by Acts as compared with Galatians. The objections may be classed under the following heads: those arising from (1) the alleged different reasons assigned for the journey, (2) the omission of Titus's name in Acts, (3) the apparent absence of the Apostles at this time in Acts, (4) the lack of all reference to the Galatians Conference in Acts, (5) considerations of chronology.

As regards the first point, whilst Galatians says that the Second Visit was in obedience to a revelation, Acts merely states that Barnabas and Paul were commissioned by the brethren of Antioch to take their relief fund to Jerusalem. These statements are, however, not in the least incompatible. We may well suppose that Paul first had the private revelation (Ramsay's view that the revelation is identical with the prophecy of Agabus cannot, I believe, be sustained) and that since he had to go up to Jerusalem for this reason, the brethren of Antioch not unnaturally made use of his services for the famine relief. Whether or not this be the true explanation there is certainly no contradiction between the respective statements of Acts and Galatians.

The second point, the omission of Titus's name from St. Luke's account of the visit was a source of much difficulty to Ramsay (*St. Paul the Traveller*,

¹ For example, the meaning of διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν, Gal. ii. 1. The problem here is now narrowed to the point that there were 'fourteen years' (whatever that may mean) between either St. Paul's first and second visits to Jerusalem or his conversion and his second visit. According to the latest research the Famine Relief Visit must be attributed to the winter of A.D. 45-46 or 46-47, cf. K. S. Gapp, *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 258-265; cf. also, *Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. 5, pp. 452-455.

pp. 58-59, 390, 3rd ed.), but the difficulty altogether vanishes now we know that there was never any question of circumcising him. Apart from the fact that even in Galatians Titus is only a junior lieutenant of Paul, the whole objection is founded on the old misunderstanding of the passage, which we have already cleared up. St. Paul mentions Titus by name in Galatians solely because he was known to the Galatians as an uncircumcised Gentile Christian whose presence in his company in Jerusalem on a former visit had raised no adverse comment from the leaders of that Church. Why then ought St. Luke to have gone out of his way to drag his name into Acts?

In the third place, it is objected that if Peter, James and John had been in Jerusalem for the Famine Relief Visit of Acts we would have found the relief handed over to them instead of to 'the presbyters', as in fact we read. But it is a highly dangerous and usually misleading proceeding to base any inference on the silence of St. Luke, and this is a case in point. It may of course be true, as Lake thinks, that the 'presbyters' of Acts xi. 30 stand for the Apostles, but preferable is the opinion of Blunt who thinks that the context does not allow us to say for certain who they are. Indeed, if we collate all the references to Christian presbyters in Acts we shall find that in every case they form a distinct group (cf. xi. 30; xiv. 23; xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23; xvi. 4; xx. 7; xxi. 18) and that in all the references in chapters xv and xvi the presbyters are distinguished from the Apostles. What evidence there is, therefore, would seem to suggest that the presbyters to whom Paul and Barnabas delivered the famine relief were a body of men functioning separately from the Apostles. It is also to be noted that the relief was 'for the brethren dwelling in Judea', and not only for the poor of Jerusalem, so that distribution must have involved the employment of a good many presbyters. Nor does Gal. ii. 10 in any way imply that the Apostles had themselves handled the relief or ever had any intention of personally handling it. On the contrary, Galatians gives the impression that the Apostles held themselves aloof from practical ministrations of this sort. Hence the objection comes down to the assertion that Paul and Barnabas would not have delivered the relief to the presbyters if Peter, James and John had really been in residence at the time. This assertion is of course purely gratuitous, and the evidence of Acts, scanty as it is, would rather suggest the contrary. For right from the beginning it seems to have been the policy of the Twelve to refuse to burden themselves with the organization of the financial side of Church life. Consider their reply in connexion with the relief of the widows of the Greeks: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables". It is not unreasonable, therefore, to think that if the ordinary care of the needy was left to the deacons, the extraordinary provision of relief necessitated by the famine may have been entrusted by the Apostles to the college of presbyters. Thus the omission of the names of Peter, James and John in this connexion proves only that they had nothing to do with the reception of the famine relief,—and proves nothing more. It does not prove, nor even imply, their absence from Jerusalem at this juncture. Further, their presence there is quite compatible with what we can learn about their movements from other parts of Acts. James seems already to be permanently in residence there, Acts xii. 17. Peter may well have returned from 'the other place' soon after Herod's death in 44. At any rate he was again in residence some time before the Council of Jerusalem in 48-49. As regards

the movements of John, Acts tells us no more after viii. 25, though his name is mentioned in connexion with the martyrdom of his brother James in xii. 2. But his close association with Peter in Acts makes his presence by his side in the Galatians account of the Second Visit no matter of surprise. Since, however, he does not appear in the Acts account of the Council proceedings, it is generally assumed that he had by that time quitted Jerusalem for the mission field. (The notion that John was martyred along with his brother James by Herod in A.D. 42 is based on no solid evidence and needs no refutation here. Indeed, the early date which we assign to the Galatian Epistle is another argument for the falsity of the theory. A full discussion may be found in J. Armitage Robinson's *The Historical Character of St. John's Gospel*, 1929, pp. 70-84, and also in *Introd. to St. John's Gospel* (Westminster Version, pp. xii-xv).

In the next place, there is the silence of Acts regarding this important conference between St. Paul and the Three Apostles. The purpose of this meeting was not to promote agreement between them but to forestall disagreement, which it most effectually did. That St. Paul and the other Apostles were in complete doctrinal and social harmony was not a fact St. Luke needed to underline. The reason why St. Luke omitted all the details of this Second Visit with which St. Paul furnishes us is surely because they are a piece of private history made public by him only on account of a particular crisis in the Galatian Churches. Seeing that he ends by affirming that the Three Apostles in fact 'added nothing' to him, and seeing that the question of circumcising Titus never arose, St. Luke, writing a brief summary of St. Paul's early career, may well be absolved for this omission.

Lastly, there is the supposed chronological difficulty. The best authorities (*Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. 5, Note xxxiv; Jacquier, *Actes des Apôtres*; Lattey, *Acts*, in loc.; and many others) are now fairly agreed that the Famine Relief Visit fell in the winter of A.D. 46-47. Now St. Paul says that his second visit to Jerusalem was made 'after fourteen years'. This may mean either fourteen years after his previous visit or fourteen years after his conversion, and the context alone can determine which is right. If we identify the visits we are able to adopt the second meaning only. Thus St. Paul would have visited Jerusalem three years after his conversion and again fourteen years after it. In this way his conversion would have taken place in 32-33, a likely date. But for those who, with Fotheringham, hold that 33 is the only possible year for the Crucifixion, our identification of the visits still holds good if (a) we take 'fourteen years' in the Hebrew fashion as some fraction more than twelve years, (b) we place St. Paul's conversion in 34, since it is quite possible, as Manson urges ("St. Paul in Ephesus", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Vol. 24, No. 1, April, 1940, p. 63), that barely a year or even less elapsed between the Crucifixion and his conversion.