

whom I have believed." And how many will begin to pour in, even in times of financial depression!

The problems before the Church today are principally those which affect its heart. We are members of this Church. Let each of us pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the larger entrance of God's Word, a truer and more absorbing vision of the true need of ourselves and the world as a whole. Let us start again in a new spirit of humility and expect-

ancy. Let us now rejoice that in these days the Church is again to be revived, and let us expect from God that which is impossible with man. Indeed let each one of us pray:

Awake, O Lord, as in the blessed days of old!

Come Holy Spirit, in Thy power and might;

Through grieving Thee our hearts are strangely hard and cold,

Our minds but blindly groping towards the light. . . .

Make us now on to be what we profess to be;

Let prayer be prayer, and praise be heartfelt praise.

From unreality, Oh! set us wholly free, And let our words be echoed in our ways.

Turn us, good Lord, and then shall we be truly turned.

Let every passion grieving Thee be stilled:

Then shall our race be won, our promised guerdon earned,

Our Master looked-on, and our every joy fulfilled.

# Notes on Biblical Exposition

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## XI. HARMONY OF ACTS AND GALATIANS

*"Then after fourteen years again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking along also Titus; and I went up according to revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles, and privately before those who were of repute, lest perchance I should run in vain or should prove to have run in vain" (Gal. 2:1-2, in a literal translation).*

### Identification of the Second Visit

IN last month's number we finished the discussion of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. It did not take place immediately after the conversion, but three years after, and in connection with it he saw no others of the pillars of the Jerusalem Church except the Apostle Peter and James the brother of the Lord, while with the Judæan churches outside of Jerusalem he had no contact at all. He was with Peter, moreover, only fifteen days.

Then he went away into the regions of Syria and of Cilicia. The Book of Acts tells us, more specifically, that he went to Tarsus, his birthplace, the chief city of Cilicia, and then was brought by Barnabas to Antioch, the chief city of Syria, to engage in the important work which was going on in that city after the gospel had been preached by certain Jewish Christians of Cyprus and Cyrene to the Gentile population.

"Then," says Paul, "after fourteen

years again I went up to Jerusalem."

What does he mean by "after fourteen years"? Does he mean fourteen years after the visit to Jerusalem which has just been mentioned, which visit in turn was three years after the conversion (Gal. 1:18), so that the total period between the conversion and this visit now to be narrated would be seventeen years; or does he mean fourteen years after the conversion—that is, eleven years (fourteen minus three) after the first visit? It is very difficult to answer this question; but the former view is perhaps slightly more probable.

With what visit mentioned in the Book of Acts is this visit narrated in Gal. 2:1-10 to be identified? Our first impulse might be to say that since it is the second visit mentioned in Galatians it is to be identified with the second visit mentioned in Acts.

The second visit mentioned in Acts was the "famine visit" of Acts 11:30; 12:25. Agabus came from Jerusalem to Antioch and prophesied a famine. To relieve the distress which this famine brought or would bring to the brethren in Judæa, Barnabas and Paul were sent up to Jerusalem with the gifts of the Antioch Church; and after the fulfillment of their commission they returned to Antioch (Acts 11:30; 12:25). Was this the visit which is to be identified with the one narrated in Gal. 2:1-10?

### Chronological Considerations

Chronology does not quite interpose a decisive objection to the identification. The famine visit, it is true, is mentioned in the Book of Acts in close connection with the death of Herod Agrippa I, which occurred, as can be established from Josephus, the Jewish historian, in A.D. 44; and since Paul says (according to what we have just held to be the more probable interpretation of Gal. 2:1) that the visit narrated in Gal. 2:1-10 took place seventeen (three plus fourteen) years after the conversion, identification of this Gal. 2:1-10 visit with the famine visit would seem to put Paul's conversion in A.D. 27 (forty-four minus seventeen), which is clearly too early, since it would be earlier than the crucifixion of Jesus.

But, in the first place, it is not clear that the famine visit took place just in A.D. 44. It is true, the Book of Acts does mention the death of Herod Agrippa I, which took place in A.D. 44, between the mention of the journey of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30) and the mention of their return from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 12:25). But that may be merely because at the point where the author (by the mention of the journey of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem) brings the Antioch thread of his narrative into connection with the Jerusalem thread, he

feels the need of bringing the Jerusalem thread up to date by the mention of events like the imprisonment of Peter and the death of Herod Agrippa I, which may have taken place some time before the point where the two threads of narrative are brought together. Thus it is possible that the famine visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem may have taken place not just in A.D. 44, but as late as A.D. 46.

Even so, however, it might seem as though that famine visit can hardly be identified with the visit of Gal. 2:1-10, since this visit of Gal. 2:1-10 took place seventeen years after the conversion and if we subtract seventeen from forty-six we shall get a date (A.D. 29) which is clearly too early for the conversion of Paul.

### Inclusive Method of Reckoning?

This argument is not, however, quite decisive. In New Testament times an inclusive method of designating periods of time was often used. By this inclusive method, which counts both the year in which a period begins and the year in which it ends, 1933 would be "three years" after 1931. Thus "three years" in such designations would sometimes mean what we should call two years or even less; it would mean one full year and parts of two other years.

If Paul is using this method, then the "fourteen years" of Gal. 2:1 may be what we should call thirteen years, and the "three years" of Gal. 1:18 may be what we should call two years; so that if the visit of Gal. 2:1-10 be identified with the famine visit, and the famine visit be put not in A.D. 44 but in A.D. 46, we should obtain as the date of the conversion forty-six minus thirteen minus two, or A.D. 31—which, although uncomfortably early, is not quite impossible.

Moreover, it is by no means certain that Paul is reckoning the "fourteen years" of Gal. 2:1 from the first visit rather than from the conversion. Quite possibly what he means to do is to contrast the first visit, which occurred only three years after the conversion, with the Gal. 2:1-10 visit, which occurred fourteen years after that same event. If so, we should be obliged (on the assumption that the visit narrated in Gal.

2:1-10 is to be identified with the famine visit, and that the famine visit occurred in A.D. 46), to subtract only fourteen (or, with the inclusive method of reckoning, thirteen) from forty-six to get the date of the conversion, which would thus be A.D. 32 or 33—both quite possible dates. Indeed, we might even put the famine visit as early as A.D. 44, the actual year of the death of Herod Agrippa I, and still not obtain a prohibitively early date for the conversion.

It remains true that chronological considerations do on the whole favor the identification of the visit narrated in Gal. 2:1-10 with some visit later than the famine visit; but what we have just maintained is that they do not actually preclude identification with the famine visit, if other considerations make that identification natural.

### Identification with the Apostolic Council

Perhaps the chief argument against the identification with the famine visit is to be found in the marked similarity between what is recorded in Gal. 2:1-10 and what is recorded in Acts about a visit other than the famine visit—namely, the visit at the time of the "Apostolic Council" of Acts 15:1-39. One of the similarities holds also, indeed, with reference to the famine visit as well as with reference to the Apostolic Council—Barnabas is represented in both places as being present with Paul. But other features are found only in Acts 15:1-39 and not in Acts 11:30; 12:25. In both Acts 15:1-39 and Gal. 2:1-10, the circumcision of Gentile converts is under discussion, and in both the result is the same—namely, approval of the position taken by Paul.

This argument for the identification of the event of Gal. 2:1-10 with that of Acts 15:1-39 and against the identification with the event of Acts 11:30; 12:25 is not, indeed, quite decisive. Even if Paul had discussed the matter of Gentile freedom privately with the pillars of the Jerusalem Church (as Gal. 2:1-10 may be interpreted to mean that he did discuss it), there would still be room, some years later, for a public pronouncement against the Judaizers like that which is recorded in Acts 15:1-39. Nevertheless, as we read Gal. 2:1-10 in comparison with Acts 15:1-39, it cannot be denied

that our first impression is that they refer to the same event. That is at least the *prima facie* view of the matter.

In the following discussion, this *prima facie* view will be adopted provisionally in order that we may see how it works in detail. We shall endeavor to see how Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-39 fit in together on the assumption that they refer to the same event. The momentous implications of this whole comparison will appear more clearly in the sequel.

### The Famine Visit Not Mentioned?

Just at the beginning, we encounter what is often regarded as a serious difficulty. Paul says, after he has narrated his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, "Then after fourteen years again I went up to Jerusalem." Could he have passed over unmentioned a visit to Jerusalem that took place in that interval, as we are compelled to hold that he has done if we identify the visit narrated in Gal. 2:1-10 with the Apostolic Council and hold that the famine visit had taken place in between?

This question is often answered in the negative, and either one of two conclusions is drawn from that answer. Some of those who hold that Paul could not have passed over the famine visit here without mention draw the conclusion that this visit of Gal. 2:1-10 is itself the famine visit, and that the identification of it with the Apostolic Council of Acts 15:1-39, which we have adopted provisionally, must be given up after all. Others, insisting still on the identification of this visit with the Apostolic Council, draw the conclusion that the famine visit never occurred at all, and that therefore the information in Acts 11:30; 12:25 is incorrect.

But is the assumption upon which these two conclusions are based so well grounded as the advocates of it suppose? Is it true that Paul would have been obliged to mention the famine visit if it had really occurred between the first visit and the one narrated in Gal. 2:1-10?

At first sight, it might seem as though that were the case. In this passage, it might be said, the Apostle Paul is tracing in the most careful way his relations with the Jerusalem Church, by way of answer to bitter opponents who would

have been quick to seize upon the slightest weakness in his argument. He has just narrated his first visit to Jerusalem with careful attention to detail and with asseveration of his complete accuracy. He has dealt with all possibilities of contact with the original apostles, in order that the Judaizers might not be able to say that he has left anything out. In Jerusalem, he is careful to tell us, he saw only Peter and James, and he did not visit the Judæan churches at all. Could he possibly lapse so soon from this completeness and carefulness of statement as actually to omit mention of a second visit to Jerusalem? Would not the Judaizers have been quick to seize upon so significant an omission? Would they not have said that there, at that second visit, which Paul (as they would have charged) was afraid to mention, was to be put the meeting with the Jerusalem leaders which showed Paul to be no independent apostle but a mere disciple of those whom Jesus had originally chosen?

#### The Transition in Paul's Argument

This argument, plausible though it may seem at first sight, is not decisive. It ignores the fact that there is a transition in Paul's argument between the first chapter and the second chapter of Galatians.

In the first chapter, Paul is arguing that at the beginning of his Christian life there was not even such contact with the original apostles as could have made him a mere disciple of theirs. To how late a period in Paul's life would this exhibition of lack of contact with the apostles have to be continued? Only, it seems natural to say, to the point where Paul was already well launched upon the preaching of his gospel. But that point was surely reached some time before the time of the famine visit, supposing the famine visit to have taken place as the Book of Acts says it took place.

What did Paul do when he was in or near Tarsus between the time when he left Jerusalem three years after his conversion and the time when Barnabas brought him to Antioch? Surely he preached there; and in all probability both the Galatians and the Judaizing opponents knew that that was the case, so

that all the original readers of the Epistle to the Galatians would understand that when Paul says in Gal. 1:21 that he went to the regions of Syria and of Cilicia that meant that at that time he was launched very definitely upon the preaching of his gospel.

But if he preached his gospel before he had the kind of contact with the original apostles which could have made him a disciple of theirs, he could not have derived his gospel from them. Therefore, when in the Epistle he has traced his life up to the point where he was fairly launched upon the preaching of his gospel, the first part of his argument is over, and it no longer remains necessary for him to trace in any such detail the subsequent history of his relations with the Jerusalem leaders.

#### Conference With the Apostles

He proceeds, therefore, in the second chapter, to an entirely different argument. The point of this new argument is that when the original apostles, the very men to whom the Judaizers appealed, finally did have a conference with Paul about the content of his gospel, they took completely Paul's view of the matter, admitted gladly that Paul needed no endorsement from them and his gospel needed no addition, gave him the right hand of fellowship, and recognized the fact that his gospel had already been given him, without any mediation of theirs, by God Himself.

It is true, Paul is careful to say when this important conference took place. It took place, he says, fourteen years after the first visit (or, by another interpretation of his words, fourteen years after the conversion). But the point of this mention of the time of the conference visit is not to show that it was after an interval of so many years during which Paul had made no visits to Jerusalem, but rather to show that the first real conference with the original apostles, at which the content of Paul's gospel was discussed with them, did not take place at the first visit after the conversion, as apparently the Judaizers said that it did, but at a visit many years later.

The "after fourteen years" of Gal. 2:1 stands, therefore, in relation to the "after three years" of Gal. 1:18. "The first contact of any kind that I had with

the original apostles," says Paul, "took place three years after the conversion; and the first real conference with them at which they expressed themselves about my gospel took place fourteen years later still."

#### The Apostles and the Famine Visit

Rightly regarded, therefore, Paul's argument does not demand that the famine visit should be mentioned, supposing it took place prior to the visit recorded in Gal. 2:1-10, unless it involved the important event of a real conference between the original apostles and Paul regarding the content of Paul's gospel and an expression of opinion by the original apostles about that gospel and about Paul's right to preach it.

But it is very improbable, from the account of the famine visit in Acts, that that visit, if it did really take place, involved anything of the kind. It is said in Acts 11:30 that the gifts were sent to the "elders" at Jerusalem; no mention is made of apostles as being there; and, indeed, it is quite possible that at the time of the persecution by Herod Agrippa I and for a time after his death the apostles were all out of the city. James the brother of the Lord was, indeed, no doubt there; but still, if the apostles were away, there would be no real opportunity at that time for the kind of pronouncement upon Paul's gospel which Paul would have been obliged to mention at this point in his argument in Galatians.

We must remember, moreover, that in the first two chapters of Galatians Paul is not constructing an argument which would hold against all possible objections, but rather is meeting specific objections of the Judaizers. Apparently it was that first visit to Jerusalem which they had seized upon for their purposes. Paul was obliged, therefore, to set them right in detail about that visit. But if the famine visit gave them so little color of support that they had not even tried to bring it forward, then Paul was not obliged to mention it in his argument, and his omission of mention of it before Gal. 2:1 does not prove either that the visit narrated in Gal. 2:1-10 is to be identified with it or that the Book of Acts is in error in representing it as having occurred.