

tests, but what you get is worth infinitely more than the price you pay.

Now I can imagine an atheist objecting, "What you say is all very well from a subjective standpoint, but what have you objective for the man on the street who is concrete in his thinking? Men are not satisfied with an unseen, invisible, unheard, inaudible, untouched, intangible God. Their cry has been, 'Oh, if only He would show Himself, speak to us, come to us!'" Now that is precisely what He has done. Two thousand years ago, in the centre of the then known world, at the focal point of history, God appeared, manifesting Himself in the very thing that men know

best—the human body and spirit. The way to see God is to look at Him—in Christ. Nothing is so convincing as direct vision. Ours is a privilege of a heavenly order, to be able to study the thoughts, words and deeds of God exhibited in a Being like unto ourselves.

"But that is a miracle!" you say. Truly, the incarnation was a supreme miracle. Shall we not in our study of the supernatural welcome every evidence of the supernatural? Or shall we join the Jews of Jesus' time in demanding a miracle and, when He showed them many,—conspicuously the miracle of the resurrection—retort, "Impossible, we never heard, saw, experienced any-

thing of the sort. We deny angels, spirit and resurrection." This surely is not the constructive attitude of a serious scientist. The scientific road to assured knowledge leads upward over three ascending levels,—*"I have believed:"* I will accept the statements about God's existence and nature provisionally, hypothetically; *"I know:"* having placed my soul in this new environment, I find all its demands—supremely the demand for new life—just as fully satisfied as are the demands of my body in its present physical environment of air, light, food and sound; *"I am persuaded:"* "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded."

Notes on Biblical Exposition

By J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt. D.,
Professor of New Testament in Westminster Theological Seminary.

XV. "THE APOSTOLIC DECREE"

"But from those who were reputed to be something—of whatever sort they were, it makes no difference to me; God does not accept the countenance of a man; for to me those who were of repute added nothing, but, on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision just as Peter with that of the circumcision (for He who had worked for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision had worked also for me unto the Gentiles), and when they recognized the grace that had been given me, James and Cephas and John, those who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision—only, that we should remember the poor, which very thing also I was zealous to do" (Gal. 2:6-10, in a literal translation).

No Addition to Paul's Gospel

LAST month we treated the beginning of this momentous sentence in which Paul tells of the result of the Jerusalem conference, and we showed what the structure of the sentence is.

Paul began the sentence as though it were to be in the form, "From those who were reputed to be something I received nothing;" but then, after the intervention of several very weighty parenthetical clauses, he concludes it in the form, "To me those who were of repute added nothing."

We must now consider this latter utterance, which, in the course of modern criticism, has been one of the most discussed utterances in the whole of the New Testament.

The meaning of the word which we have translated "added" is fixed by the preceding context. Paul says in verse 2; "I laid before them the gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles." The word translated "added" here in verse 6 is in the Greek exactly the same word as the word translated "laid before" in verse 2, except that here in verse 6 it has prefixed to it a preposition meaning "in addition." What Paul is saying, then, is this: "I laid my gospel before them; and they laid nothing before me in addition. They had nothing to add to my gospel, but recognized it as true and complete and as having been given to me by God."

Thus what Paul is denying in verse 6 is that the pillars of the Jerusalem church made any additions to his gospel; and that is all that he is denying. A clear recognition of that fact would have saved a vast amount of error in the modern study of the New Testament.

Acts and Galatians

Failing to recognize that fact, or failing to understand its implications, many modern critics of the New Testament have found in Paul's words, "They added nothing to me," in Gal. 2:6, a contradiction between the Pauline Epistles and the Book of Acts.

The Book of Acts, these critics insist, in the account which it gives of this meeting between Paul and the Jerusalem Church, says that the Jerusalem leaders did "add" something very important—namely, "the Apostolic Decree" of Acts 15:20, 23-29; 21:25. The Book of Acts, according to these critics, says that the Jerusalem Church, while not requiring the Gentile converts to be circumcised and to keep the whole of the ceremonial law, did require them to keep a part of the ceremonial law; it did require them not only to refrain

from the sin of fornication, but also to refrain from "things offered to idols and from blood and from things strangled" (Acts 15:29). Thus, according to the Book of Acts, say these critics, a compromise was effected at the Jerusalem conference; circumcision was not required—in that Paul's position was endorsed—but, on the other hand, Paul's teaching was modified to the extent that certain portions, at least, of the ceremonial law were imposed upon the Gentile converts. Could there be, these critics ask, any clearer example of an addition to Paul's teaching? Paul said, "Believe in Christ and you do not need to keep the ceremonial law;" the Jerusalem Church said, "Believe in Christ and, while you do not need to keep all of the ceremonial law, you do need to keep certain particularly necessary parts of it."

A Critical Lever

In Galatians, say these critics, any such compromise is entirely excluded; in Galatians, Paul says of the Jerusalem leaders, "They added nothing to me." In Acts, on the other hand, say these critics, Paul is represented as submitting tamely to a compromise, which certainly does involve a modification of, or addition to, his gospel. Thus Acts is found by these critics to be in conflict with Galatians. But if so, Acts must be wrong; since scholars of all shades of opinion recognize Galatians as being a genuine epistle written by an eyewitness and therefore true. But if Acts is wrong at this point, where it can be tested by comparison with a recognized authority, then—so the argument runs—it is presumably wrong elsewhere as well, and the whole account which it gives of the apostolic Church is discredited. But the Third Gospel evidently was written by the same author as the author of Acts; therefore, if Acts is discredited, so is the Third Gospel; and since the Third Gospel gives essentially the same account of the life of Christ as do the First and Second Gospels, their account also is discredited; and thus the entire New Testament account of the events at the basis of the Christian Church is shown to be unhistorical.

Such is the reasoning when it is reduced to its simplest terms. Of course, many other considerations are adduced against the New Testament books; but such is the importance of these words, "They added nothing," in the whole discussion that it may be said with a rather high degree of truth that it was at this point that modern negative criticism of the New Testament applied its lever to throw the entire edifice of historic Christianity to the ground.

But is the lever rightly applied? Is the Book of Acts really in contradiction with the Epistle to the Galatians at this point?

There are three ways in which that question may be answered in the negative—three ways in which Acts and Galatians may be shown to be in harmony with respect to the Apostolic Decree.

Galatians Before the Council?

In the first place, it may be held that the Epistle to the Galatians was written before the Apostolic Council, according to the hypothesis which was discussed in the November, 1931, number of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, and that the meeting with the Jerusalem leaders which Paul describes in Gal. 2:1-10 was entirely different from, and earlier than, the "Apostolic-Council" meeting of Acts 15:1-29. Obviously if the Epistle to the Galatians was written before the Apostolic Council, Paul could not in Galatians mention a decree which the Council *afterwards* passed; and the silence of Galatians about the Decree would show only that when Galatians was written the Decree had not *yet* been passed; it would not show that the Decree was not afterwards passed, and passed exactly in the way which the Book of Acts describes.

Something is to be said for this way out of the difficulty; it is followed by certain noteworthy modern scholars, and it may possibly be correct. If it were the only way to avoid admitting a contradiction between Acts and Galatians, then we should be thoroughly justified, in accordance with scientific historical method, in adopting it, because there is a great weight of independent evidence

to show that Acts was written by a companion of Paul who could not have been mistaken about so central a matter as the Apostolic Council. To treat that weight of independent evidence as though it did not exist, just because, on the basis of one of several possible ways of interpreting Gal. 2:1-10, Acts is in contradiction with Paul is not merely contrary to the Christian Faith, but is contrary to the sound scientific methods of study which are constantly employed in other fields of historical research.

The Text of the Decree

The second possible way of showing Gal. 2:6 to be in harmony with Acts 15:29 is to adopt the reading of the so-called "Western text" at Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25. The text or wording of the Book of Acts can be shown to have been handed down in the Church at an early time—say, in the second century—in two different forms. One was the form, called by modern scholars the "Neutral text," which has been preserved for us in our two earliest and best New Testament manuscripts, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus, together with a number of other less important documents. The other was the form, called by modern scholars the "Western text," which has been preserved for us especially in one Greek manuscript, the Codex Bezae, and, with varying degrees of clearness, in certain remnants of the "Old Latin" translation of the Book of Acts and in certain quotations from the Book of Acts in early Christian writers.

Now the Western text at Acts 15: 20, 29; 21:25 omits the word meaning "what is strangled" or (as it appears in 15:29) "things strangled." If the Western text is right in this omission, then what the Gentile converts were told to refrain from, according to the Book of Acts, was "things offered to idols [or "pollutions of idols," as it is in Acts 15:20], blood and fornication." If this short text, without "what is strangled" is correct, what is the meaning of the Decree? The answer to that question depends largely upon the meaning of the word "blood." "Blood," as a thing to be refrained from, may mean one of two things: (1) it may mean the *shedding* of blood, or murder;

or (2) it may mean the *eating* of blood, or disobedience to the Mosaic food-law which forbids the eating of meat with the blood in it.

This second meaning seems to be fixed for the word "blood" if the word meaning "what is strangled" is included in the Decree as it is included by the Neutral text; or, at least, if "what is strangled" is included in the text, then, whatever be the meaning of "blood," the Decree does contain a direction about foods, since a prohibition of "what is strangled" can only mean a prohibition of the eating of what is strangled.

If, however, the word translated "what is strangled" be omitted, then "blood" may mean the shedding of blood or murder, and the three things prohibited in the Decree may be simply the three deadly sins; idolatry ("things offered to idols" or "pollutions of idols"), murder ("blood") and fornication. But if the ceremonial element was thus absent from the Decree, the Decree did not constitute any addition to Paul's gospel, since Paul of course had told his converts as clearly as anyone else had done that they must refrain from these three deadly sins. Indeed, the negative part of the Decree, like the positive part, would be a way of rebuking the Judaizers and of agreeing with Paul. "You have been told by the Judaizers," the Jerusalem Church would be saying to the Gentile converts, "that you must be circumcised and must keep the ceremonial law; but, as a matter of fact, all the things that you need to refrain from are sins like idolatry, murder and fornication." According to this view, the prohibition of idolatry, murder and fornication would be only a particularly forcible way of saying that the abstinence from other things which was insisted upon by the Judaizers was *not* required.

But the Western text of the Book of Acts, upon which this solution of the problem is based, is usually incorrect, and in all probability it is incorrect here. A few noteworthy modern scholars have, indeed, adopted the Western text of the Decree, and the decision with regard to it is not perfectly easy; but on the

whole the solution which it provides for the problem of Acts and Galatians is to be regarded as inferior to either of the other two.

The Best Solution

On the whole, the best solution is the one which we must now consider—namely, the one which admits that Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-29 refer to the same visit of Paul to Jerusalem and that the Neutral text of the Decree is correct, but insists that the Decree, rightly interpreted, did not constitute an addition to Paul's gospel and so did not need to be mentioned by Paul at Gal. 2:6.

What was the real meaning of the Apostolic Decree according to the Book of Acts? Was it a part of the gospel, or was it something entirely different; were its prohibitions something to be added to faith in Christ as among the conditions of salvation, or was their purpose of entirely different kind?

The answer to this question, and the key to the whole problem, is probably to be found in Acts 15:21. In that verse, James the brother of the Lord, immediately after advocating the Decree with its four prohibitions, goes on to say: "For Moses from ancient generations has in the several cities those who proclaim him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Various interpretations, indeed, have been proposed for this much discussed verse. But surely the most natural interpretation is that which makes James here give a reason for the four prohibitions in the Decree by pointing to the fact that there are many Jews in the cities to which the Decree is to be sent. "There are many Jews in those cities," says James; "they hear the law of Moses read in the synagogues every Sabbath; from the reading of the law they come to abhor especially certain things in Gentile life; and in order to win them the Gentile disciples of Jesus ought to refrain from those things."

So interpreted, the observance of the four prohibitions in the Decree was to be regarded not as necessary to salvation but only as a means of avoiding offence in certain mixed communities

where there were many Jews. Not being necessary to salvation, it was not an addition to Paul's gospel; and not being an addition to Paul's gospel, it is not excluded by Paul's words in Gal. 2:6. "I laid my gospel before them," says Paul, "and they made no addition to it." These words of Paul remain true even if the Apostolic Decree was issued by the Jerusalem Church.

Was there a Compromise?

But could Paul ever have agreed to such a measure, even if it was intended in the way that we have just indicated? Could he have agreed to such a method of avoiding offence to the Jews?

About one hundred years ago, the scholars of the so-called "Tübingen school" were ready with their answer. "Of course Paul could never have done any such thing," they said. "Paul was no compromiser or time-server; he would have insisted on full Gentile freedom without any concessions to Jewish narrowness; and when the Book of Acts represents him as agreeing to such concessions the Book of Acts clearly is wrong."

But the general trend, at least, of subsequent scholarship is somewhat away from such a conclusion as that. The plain fact is that there are in the Pauline Epistles themselves, the very authorities to which the Tübingen scholars appealed, elements which show that on occasion Paul was perfectly ready to advocate exactly the kind of concession to Jewish feeling that is advocated in the Apostolic Decree. In I Cor. 9:20, for example, Paul says that he became to the Jews as a Jew, in order that he might gain Jews, and that he became to those who were under the law as under the law (though not being himself under the law), in order that he might gain those who were under the law. It would be difficult to imagine a more complete agreement than that passage contains with the purpose of the Apostolic Decree as it is explained in James' words in Acts 15:21.

The truth is that where no principle was involved, where it was only his own convenience that was at stake, Paul, the heroic and uncompromising defender of

Christian liberty, was the most concessive of men. One thing is clear—he would never have agreed to the Apostolic Decree if it had been, as it is often represented as being, a “compromise.” Paul was no compromiser either at Jerusalem or anywhere else. If the prohibitions of the Apostolic Decree had been intended as being necessary to salvation, they would have been an addition to Paul’s gospel, and Paul would never have agreed to them in the world. But if they were merely an effort to win the Jews in mixed communities to the Lord Jesus Christ by avoiding unnecessary offence under certain special circumstances, then they were quite in accord with Paul’s practice, and Paul could well have accepted them in the sense in which they were meant.

The Limited Address

It should be observed that this Decree, according to Acts 15:23, was not addressed to Gentile converts everywhere, but only to those in “Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.” It is true, that Paul did, according to Acts 16:4, give the Decree over to converts in certain cities not in Syria or Cilicia but in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia; and it is true that in Acts 21:25 James, in his reference to the Decree, does not mention the geographical limitations of the address. But these observations cannot obscure the significance of the fact that the Decree was formally addressed by the Jerusalem Church only to the converts in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. It was not a piece of formal legislation for all Gen-

tile converts everywhere—if it had been, Paul might well have been less ready to accept it—but it was a direction given, in view of certain special conditions, to certain mixed communities in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, where, presumably, there were many Jews and where the congregations were probably in a relation to the Jerusalem Church much closer than that which prevailed in distinctly Pauline churches.

The outstanding fact, however, about the Apostolic Decree which shows it to be in harmony with Galatians is not the limitation of its address but the fact that it was not an addition to Paul’s gospel; it was not an addition to what he had said about the way of salvation. Paul had said: “Believe on the Lord

(Concluded on Page 19)

Why I Am a Fundamentalist

A Sermon by

The Rev. J. A. Schofield, Jr.

Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Gouverneur, N. Y.

“Another gospel which is not another.”
(Galatians 1:6-7)

WE have all heard a great deal about Fundamentalism and its opposite, Modernism. We have heard preachers who have strongly aligned themselves on one side or the other. We have all heard how the conflict between the two has threatened to disrupt every Protestant Church, and still threatens to do so. And consequently, I need make no apology at all for the position that I assume nor for my frank discussion of it. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul was telling them how surprised he was that they had left the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that he had preached unto them and had been called unto “another gospel which is not another.” That is to say, Paul was telling them that the thing they were adopting, which called itself another gospel was really not another gospel, for it was no gospel at all. And his remarks about the false gospel of his day may well be applied to the Modernism of this day, which while calling itself another gospel is no gospel at all.

So, I am a Fundamentalist. But what is a Fundamentalist? There are several definitions. Originally a Fundamentalist was one who belonged to an organization that adopted that name. Today the word has a much wider application. It refers to all those who adhere strictly to the funda-

mentals of the Christian faith, to the great central doctrines and historical facts of Christianity. A Fundamentalist, then, is one who accepts certain great truths, doctrines that the Bible teaches and that every Christian Church, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic, has always included in its official teaching. A Modernist, on the other hand, is one, not necessarily modern at all, who denies one or several or all of the great foundation doctrines of Christianity; such as the Virgin Birth of Jesus, His true Divinity, His resurrection, His oneness with the Father, the Trinity, the sinfulness of man, salvation through the vicarious death of Christ, regeneration through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Why, then, am I a Fundamentalist? Before I list my reasons for being what I am, I desire to say that I am not judging the eternal destiny of Modernists, in saying what I am about to say. Only God is their judge. I cannot say that this one or that one has not true faith in his heart. I can say, however, that what they teach is not Christianity. What they believe is a matter between them and their God. What they teach is open to all to see and consider and know. And so if I say bluntly that such a person or some other is not teaching Christianity in his pulpit, I do not care to be

understood as saying that down deep in his heart he may not have a saving relationship to Christ.

With this word of caution, we are ready to begin to list our reasons. I am a Fundamentalist, in the first place, because I believe that the Bible is the very Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. That is to say, I believe that it was given to man by God. I believe that God saw to it that it was perfect and complete. I believe that, when rightly understood, it will be found to be infallible, without error, the only Divinely given rule of faith and practice. I believe the Bible to be God’s Word. I accept it and try to follow it.

Modernism, on the other hand, does not so view the Bible. It does not accept it as authoritative. It does not accept it as coming from God with His divine sanction on every part of it. Modernism not only dishonors the Bible but page by page, chapter by chapter, book by book, it destroys it. The most famous radio preacher in America, Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, does that every time he speaks over the air. Now a passage from Genesis, now a passage from Thessalonians, now a part of Daniel and now a part of John is discarded with a glibness that is nothing short of astounding. A mutilated and bleeding Bible is the result, Modernists accepting and believing and following only those parts of it that appeal to

"(2) It is the opinion of the Moderator that the Judicial Commission of the Synod of Pennsylvania did not exercise its powers wisely in directing the Moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia to execute its verdict of Admonition prior to action of the General Assembly on two complaints now pending before the Assembly against the action of the Synod of Pennsylvania in receiving the Barnhouse Case, when the case was in process of trial before a Judicial Commission of the Presbytery. The ends of justice are not usually secured by hasty action in executing a Judgment prior to its final settlement in the supreme judicatory.

"(3) It is the opinion of the Moderator that the Judicial Commission of the Synod of Pennsylvania did not exercise its powers wisely in recording on page 3 of its official report that the Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of Philadelphia did not proceed to hear and decide the case submitted to it; or that the Presbytery of Philadelphia, convinced of the inability of its Judicial Commission to try the case, voted to refer the case to synod. The real facts should be ascertained as they seem to be at variance with these statements.

"(4) It is the opinion of the Moderator that the Judicial Commission of the Synod of Pennsylvania did not exercise its powers wisely in refraining to record on page 5 of its official report the real reasons, as reported by the Stated Clerk of Presbytery, why the special committee, urged by Synod and directed by Presbytery, did not get together in efforts to close the case and withdraw it from the Judicial Commission of Synod. These reasons, it would seem, should be stated in full in the report, for the information of Synod and to complete the record in the case.

"(5) It is the opinion of the Moderator that the Judicial Commission of the Synod of Pennsylvania did not exercise its powers wisely in exacting a promise or pledge of secrecy from all the witnesses testifying before it; and, also, in sending its official report of the case to the secular press of the city simultaneous with the lodging of the official report with the parties in the case, both of which would seem to be without precedent in judicial procedure in ecclesiastical courts.

"(6) It is the opinion of the Moderator that the Judicial Commission of the Synod of Pennsylvania did not exercise its powers wisely in prescribing the form of Admonition and the very words to be used in the execution of its Judgment. There is no form prescribed in the Book of Discipline for Admonition, which is the mildest form of censure. It would seem to have been better, in this case, to have omitted the form to be used, inasmuch as a portion of the prescribed words does not seem to be applicable or necessary."

After the statement had been read, Dr. Fulton read to Mr. Barnhouse the admonition in the very form prescribed by the Commission. Then he gave a few fatherly words of encouragement to Mr. Barnhouse, and told him that, having now been admonished he was a "free man." Prayer was then offered by Dr. C. A. Herrick, President of Girard College, and Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery.

After this, a resolution was offered and adopted by an overwhelming vote commending Mr. Barnhouse for his loyalty to the Word of God, the conspicuous character of his services, and his zeal for the purity of the Church. A minority opposed it, and asked to be recorded as voting "no." A number also filed a dissent and protest against the illegality of inflicting the censure before the Presbytery.

Just before being admonished, Mr. Barnhouse made the following statement:

"I have appeared before the Presbytery today to receive the admonition in this case in the same spirit which animated my refusal to appeal. It must be understood that my attitude contains no admission of guilt whatsoever. I have not been asked to retract any statements, and I do not retract any statements in this case. As far as I can see today, in the presence of God, I would repeat any or all statements made by me under like circumstances."

Notes on Biblical Exposition— Concluded

Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved quite apart from the works of the law." The Jerusalem leaders said: "That is entirely right; we have nothing to add to it; salvation is, as Paul has told you, by faith alone and not by faith and works."

This great result of the Jerusalem conference was not invalidated at all by the solution which the Apostolic Decree found for the problems of certain mixed communities, where there were many Jews whom both Paul and the original apostles desired to see won for Christ.

The foregoing treatment of the Apostolic Decree must be regarded only as a summary. For a fuller treatment the reader is referred to the book by the same writer, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, where also the entire comparison between the Book of Acts and the first two chapters of Galatians is treated in

greater detail than in the present series of expository studies.

Next month we shall turn to easier matters, and shall be able to make much more rapid progress.

Philadelphia Presbytery Overtures Regarding Minority Rights

AT its meeting in March 7, the Presbytery of Philadelphia adopted an overture offered by the Rev. H. McAllister Griffiths asking that minority rights be conserved in the proposed union with the United Presbyterian or other churches. After some debate the overture received what appeared to be a unanimous vote. It is as follows:

"TO THE VENERABLE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A., REQUIRED TO MEET IN DENVER, COLORADO, THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF MAY, 1932, GREETINGS:

"The Presbytery of Philadelphia, in regular session this seventh day of March, 1932, respectfully overtures the General Assembly, praying that:

"In accordance with well-recognized reformation and Presbyterian principles, provisions be inserted in the plan of union with the United Presbyterian Church of North America, or any other church or churches, when and if submitted to the presbyteries, providing for the rights of minorities who may not be able, in good conscience, to enter the proposed union; guaranteeing the right of any congregation, if voting not to enter the proposed union at a meeting duly called, to retain its properties, free from any control by or right of reversion to the said united Church; to the end that the said proposed union, when and if consummated, may be free from the intense bitterness and strife occasioned in other countries by the un-Presbyterian attempted application of coercion and force."

Presbytery of Cayuga Overtures Assembly Regarding "Union"

THE Presbytery of Cayuga, on Feb. 16th, overtured the 144th Assembly concerning the proposed basis of union with the United Presbyterian Church, as follows:

"The Presbytery of Cayuga, having considered carefully the basis of union presented in the 'Documents Relating to the Proposed Organic Union of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the United Presbyterian Church of North America,' is impressed by the radical departures from the policy and constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which will be brought about if the union is effected on the present form of the proposed basis.