

# Acts and Galatians reconsidered

Colin J Hemer

*Colin Hemer, who is currently engaged in research at Tyndale House, Cambridge, has for many years specialized in the historical geography of Asia Minor, particularly in the New Testament period. His doctoral dissertation on the background to the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 is scheduled for publication in the SNTS Monograph series, and he has published several articles and notes on this area. The following article is adapted from a paper read to the Theological Students Fellowship group in Cambridge in 1975.*

I shall begin by letting the cat out of the bag, by stating directly the position I want to maintain on three complex interlocking problems. There is nothing novel in this position, but the correct solution to a puzzle of this kind is not likely to be novel: the ground has been too often explored. It is more likely to be a matter of judgment between acknowledged alternatives than any radically new combination of the data.

My view then is in essentials that which has been favoured recently by Professor F. F. Bruce in his series of Rylands Lectures entitled 'Galatian Problems'.<sup>1</sup> It argues for (1) an early date for Galatians, (2) a destination in the so-called 'South Galatia', that is, the region of the churches of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and perhaps Derbe,<sup>2</sup> and (3) a direct equating of Galatians with Acts in their reports of Paul's visits to Jerusalem, Galatians 1: 18ff. with Acts 9: 26-30 and Galatians 2: 1ff. with Acts 11: 30.

The last of these three is by far the most questionable, and I am fully aware of my temerity in offering it so baldly. But I feel it is correct, and, since with any view there are acute difficulties to be met, this is the ground on which I choose to meet them. And underlying each of our three theses, and particularly the third, is the deeper question of our evaluation of Acts as a historical source. Again I

will say plainly, and in the face of much recent opinion, that I value it highly.

I have mentioned Bruce's lectures, and they will provide a useful reference point for our discussion. But at the outset I should like to raise two areas of doubt or qualification to which his case may appear open. (1) While stating his argument clearly and persuasively, he does not deal in detail with some of its difficulties. Some will see a decisive objection to the identification of the Jerusalem visits in that the accounts in Galatians 1 and Acts 9 are presented in widely differing terms; but Bruce says they 'may certainly be identified'.<sup>3</sup> (2) On some minor points of exegesis and topography his reconstruction may give occasion for debate.<sup>4</sup> But in any case the answers to these must be tentative.

I purpose to say little here on these minor points which do not affect the basic issue. But the identification of the Jerusalem visits is crucial, and I shall try to face the difficulties.

An analogy may help to clarify the way I see the case. The whole topic is rather like a jig-saw puzzle with so many pieces missing that we cannot hope to make more than a partial picture. Different points of approach may suggest different conclusions about the original whole. We may be tempted to force pieces into any plausible-looking place or even create an imaginary picture to fill the gaps. It may indeed be possible to force data into a superficially complete and impressive whole. Such reconstructions are commonly designated 'brilliant', but may be quite erroneous.

But how does one argue for or against the correctness of any partial or hypothetical reconstruction? Only by exercising judgment, by considering whether this is the simplest and most natural and most convincing explanation of the available data. The strength of any such hypothesis consists in the amount of light it throws on the ramifications of the subject without doing violence

<sup>1</sup> 'Galatian Problems. 1. Autobiographical Data', *BJRL* 51 (1968-69), pp. 292-309; '2. North or South Galatians?' 52 (1969-70), pp. 243-266; '3. The "Other Gospel"', 53 (1970-71), pp. 253-271; '4. The Date of the Epistle', 54 (1971-72), pp. 250-267.

<sup>2</sup> I add the qualification in deference to the arguments urged by G. Ogg, 'Derbe', *NTS* 9 (1962-63), pp. 367-370. J. B. Lightfoot long ago cited Strabo and Pliny for the attachment of Lystra and Derbe to Galatia.

<sup>3</sup> *BJRL* 51 (1968-69), pp. 300.

<sup>4</sup> This division of viewpoints is not of course rigid. It is perfectly possible, for instance, to combine a South Galatian view with a later date for the Epistle, or a North Galatian view with a high view of the historicity of Acts. But these positions have other difficulties, and seem at variance with the most natural patterns of synthesis. See further Bruce, *BJRL* 52 (1969-70), pp. 265f.

to the evidence. If one solution tends to permit the answers to interlocking problems to explain each other, that is a strong point in its favour. But if it has to depend largely on fundamental gaps in the evidence, this should render it suspect. We may not be able to say it is wrong. It may indeed be very hard to disprove. But it does not explain so much so naturally.

The first big problem in our present complex is to decide where to begin. I propose to start with the question of the destination of Galatians because I think it gives the simplest potential key, and because the most fundamental polarization of opinion results from the answer given to this question. On this answer hinges the possibility or probability of an early dating of the Epistle, and upon the early dating hinges the easiest reading of the relationship of the Epistle with Acts.

### 1. The destination and date of Galatians

Who then were these Galatians? The story must take us some way back into the history of Asia Minor.

King Nicomedes of Bithynia in 278/7 BC invited a horde of marauding Celts across into Asia to serve him as mercenaries. They quickly escaped his control and plundered the cities and states of the area mercilessly until defeated in about 230 by Attalus I, king of Pergamum, and restricted to a territory in North Central Anatolia around Ancyra, now Ankara, the capital of modern Turkey. These people were of the same stock as the Celts of Gaul (France), and their territory, once part of Phrygia, became known as 'Galatia', the Greek for 'Gaul'.

When Rome acquired extensive territories in Asia Minor after 133 BC she came into contact and alliance with the Galatian Celts. Galatia became a client-kingdom of Rome in 64 BC, but in 25 BC Amyntas, its last king, fell in battle against the fierce brigand tribes of the Pisidian Taurus, on the southern border of the territory he had won at that date. Augustus promptly organized his kingdom as a Roman province. This province had no organic unity, ethnic or otherwise. Its boundaries were quite arbitrary, a sheer accident of history. They were evidently unsatisfactory from a purely military and political point of view, for to our knowledge they were repeatedly modified during the first 150 years of the Empire.

The most urgent military problem was the chronic menace of the Pisidian mountaineers. Augustus established a key fortress at Antioch, on the Pisidian border of Phrygia, elevating the older town to the status of a Roman colony, and eventually developing a chain of military colonies

eastward to Lystra, linked by a great military road.

Under the ensuing peace, Pisidian Antioch<sup>5</sup> dominated what became the great route to the east from Ephesus and Laodicea across the Anatolian plateau. Ancyra was the provincial capital and the natural focus of the northern part of the composite province. But that whole northern region was less important under the early Empire than it had been in primitive times or would become again when the routes came to focus upon Constantinople. And the two principal districts of the province were sharply distinct. The intervening ground is largely arid steppe and seasonal salt-marsh bordering the great salt-lake in the central depression of the plateau. The terrain was, and is, some of the emptiest in Asia Minor, and it now appears that the official route between Ancyra and Antioch actually ran indirectly across the province of Asia.<sup>6</sup>

The northern and southern districts were accordingly somewhat different also in race and culture. The southern had never had an admixture of Celtic people: the Roman colonies there were superimposed upon a superficially hellenized Phrygian culture, but the great road brought a cosmopolitan character and prosperity to the main centres, Antioch and Iconium. And the Jewish synagogues at both, if we may accept Acts 13: 14 and 14: 1, offered an opening for Christian evangelism.

Now we can look at the alternative views of the Epistle in the light of this outline of the geographical background.

#### (a) *The North Galatian theory*

The traditional position has seen in 'Galatia' the apparently strict and natural sense of the territory of the old Gaulish kingdom around Ancyra. There is no record in the Acts to suggest that Paul could have visited that area before his second missionary journey, when Acts 16: 6 speaks of his going 'throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia' (AV)—whatever in fact that means. Unless then we assume the licence to postulate unrecorded journeys, we must conclude that the Epistle was written later than the event of Acts 16: 6 (which

<sup>5</sup> The name is thus rendered in the preferable text of Acts. The city was strictly 'Antioch (in Phrygia) near Pisidia'. The Western reading 'Antioch of Pisidia' (cf. AV) reflects a later situation.

<sup>6</sup> See W. M. Calder and G. E. Bean, *A classical map of Asia Minor* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1957). No direct attested road of the Roman period is there shown, and the old route west of Lake Tatta traverses a desolate land almost devoid of identified settlements. But the route through Asia seems to have been the responsibility of the governor of Galatia (*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* 7.193).

followed the Council of Jerusalem) at earliest—or, more probably, later than the event of Acts 18: 23 (the second visit to 'Galatian' territory in Acts), for Galatians 4: 13 probably implies that Paul had already made two visits when he wrote to them,<sup>7</sup> that is, after about AD 52.

Many commentators have followed J. B. Lightfoot in seeing confirmation of a dating about AD 55 in the literary and theological affinity between Galatians and the great Epistles of that period to the Corinthians and the Romans.

If, however, we argue that Galatians was written at any time after the events of Acts 16: 6, problems immediately follow. In Galatians 1 and 2 Paul describes his relations with the Jerusalem apostles. He insists he is telling the truth (1: 20).<sup>8</sup> Since his conversion he has visited Jerusalem only *twice*. His argument depends on that: he must give no handle to anyone to come back at him and say he is hiding something, however innocent. Yet Luke in Acts represents him as having made *three* significant visits to Jerusalem by the date of Acts 16: 6. If Paul is right, and surely he must be, Luke is evidently wrong.

This, however, is not the only possibility. The impasse means no more, I think, than that we may have been on the wrong track. We must explore a different assumption about the references to Galatia in Acts.

But before we do that we must glance at one important argument which the traditional view has thrown up. Is it in fact necessary to assign Galatians so closely to the same stage of Paul's ministry as Corinthians and Romans? The themes of justification by faith and of the background of Judaistic legalism are prominent in the whole group, and recent study of Galatians has shown particular interest in the Galatian opposition rather than in the older questions as providing a key to the letter.<sup>9</sup> But what is either of these factors likely to prove?

<sup>7</sup> 'Through infirmity of the flesh I preached to you at the first.' But to *proteron* may not necessarily have to mean 'on the earlier of two occasions', or, if it is so taken, the two occasions may have been (on a South Galatian view) Paul's visit and return (Acts 14: 21) in the course of his first journey.

<sup>8</sup> Note however J. T. Sanders, 'Paul's "Autobiographical" Statements in Galatians 1-2', *JBL* 85 (1966), pp. 335-343, where he questions the historicity of Paul's own account. But 'the subordination of historical fact to theological aims in this situation would have defeated Paul's purpose in writing' (Bruce, *BJRL* 51 (1968-69), p. 296n.).

<sup>9</sup> The traditional view that the opponents were Judaizers from Judea has faced several challenges: (a) that Paul had to fight on two fronts here, as later at Corinth, against legalists and against libertarians who taunted him with submissiveness to the Jerusalem apostles (W. Lütgert, J. H. Ropes); (b) that the opponents were Gnostics (W.

I feel personally that we shall not find a decisive lead in either direction from these considerations. Paul's grasp of a matter so central to his message as justification was surely matured even before the earliest feasible dating of Galatians. And its setting in controversy with Jewish legalistic opposition is likely to have been chronic and recurrent, even if the focus of debate shifted somewhat with the passage of time. One might indeed argue that 1 Corinthians, for instance, reflects a later stage of the controversy (see next section). The issue of the circumcision of Gentile converts had apparently been settled at the Council of Jerusalem, according to Acts 15: 24, and that aspect of the dispute does not arise at Corinth.

### (b) *The South Galatian theory*

If Paul's 'Galatians' are understood to be the Christians of the area round Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and perhaps Derbe, in the southern part of the extended province of Galatia, a different synthesis becomes likely. Paul had visited and returned through these cities on his first journey, and the controversy and the Epistle could be dated almost immediately afterwards (*cf.* Gal. 1: 6), about 49-50 on the probable chronology. Then Paul's third visit to Jerusalem, on the occasion of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, is omitted from Galatians 1, 2 for the simple, but cogent, reason that it had not yet happened. Two visits in Galatians correspond to two in Acts.

This assumption will at once explain the *raison d'être* of Galatians itself. Why should this closely reasoned letter have been necessary if its case had already been conceded at the Council? Was it not rather the activities in South Galatia of teachers like those of Acts 15: 1 which prompted the Epistle as they occasioned the subsequent Council? The circumcision question has to be argued in Galatians because the Epistle antedates the Council, but that particular issue was dead and buried before the Corinthian correspondence.

This 'South Galatian' hypothesis is economical and attractive. But is it fair? Is this simpler account convincing? I intend to discuss a few controverted points in a little more detail, and to conclude with an attempt to tackle the problem of the Jerusalem visits.

(i) The North Galatian view has great authority on its side. It held the field from patristic times. It

Schmithals); (c) that they were Gentile converts from within the church (J. Munck). See the discussion by Bruce in his third lecture, *BJRL* 53 (1970-71), pp. 253-271. Note also the recent contribution by R. Jewett, 'The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation', *NTS* 17 (1970-71), pp. 198-212.

was presented afresh in the classic commentary of J. B. Lightfoot, and it has continued to receive strong support, especially in Germany.<sup>10</sup> The South Galatian view was put on a solid basis through the researches of Sir William Mitchell Ramsay in Asia Minor. It was easily shown that the Fathers assumed that New Testament Galatia was the same as in their own day, which was not so. But the influence of Lightfoot persists.

It should be emphasized that the first edition of Lightfoot's *Galatians* appeared in 1865, the tenth posthumously in 1890. Lightfoot died in 1889. Ramsay's earliest statement of his South Galatian argument was published in 1893.<sup>11</sup> So Lightfoot died before the modern form of the debate was initiated. (It is fruitless to speculate about the might-have-beens of history. Dare I claim that a scholar with Lightfoot's sense for historical evidence would have become a 'South Galatian' had he lived long enough to get a favourable opportunity to be so?)

(ii) I want to stress strongly the importance of thorough study of the data in breadth and depth. It is deeply regrettable that scholars are ready to use historical data as ammunition in defence of preconceived positions without immersing themselves in a sympathetic appraisal of the whole context. Rigorous study will not hurt us, and it is more likely to help than otherwise in reaching the truth of the matter. It is important to get the 'feel' of the thing.

The 'North Galatian' view has in fact been upheld at a high level of scholarship by men like James Moffatt.<sup>12</sup> But the point is that their views, right or wrong, did attempt to grapple with the hard, intractable problems of the texts and facts, whereas in the modern preoccupation with theological interests, important as these questions are, the textual and factual framework of the case is too easily conceded by default to the prevalent hypothesis.

<sup>10</sup> Thus recently W. Marxsen and W. G. Kümmel. J. Moffatt and A. D. Nock were notable 'North Galatians' on the British side.

<sup>11</sup> *The church in the Roman Empire before AD 170* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893). Ramsay was by no means the first to hold this view. It was propounded by G. Perrot in a Latin dissertation, *De Galatia Provincia Romana* (Paris, 1867), and popularized first by Renan.

<sup>12</sup> *An introduction to the literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918), pp. 90-101. On some recent opinion cf. Bruce in *BJRL* 52 (1969-70), p. 261: 'It is disquieting to see how superficially the North Galatian hypothesis is defended by many of its champions nowadays, when we think of the careful arguments adduced by scholars of two and three generations ago—especially disquieting to see how little attention is paid to the relevant data of historical geography.'

It is upon such basic study that I would wish to rest my case for the South Galatian view. My plea is that evidence shall be admitted and heard. And it has been said: 'It is significant that all those who know the geography of Asia Minor well are "South Galatianists" to a man.'<sup>13</sup>

(iii) There is not space here to practise what I preach; I can do little more than state a position on a few geographical details in the texts whose reference is disputed.

In *Galatians* itself the crux is in the actual address. The 'churches of Galatia' (1:2) would certainly apply to those of the south, and exclusively so if they were the only ones yet established, but could their members have been appropriately addressed as 'Galatians' (3:1), which ethnically they were not? One may ask what other comprehensive term could have been used. 'Phrygian', for example, connoted 'slave'. Of course we have no attestation in support, but for that matter we have no other extant instance, to my knowledge, of any other form of address to a comparable grouping of peoples of the area. We have to be guided by probabilities and sensitivity to contemporary feeling. The indications are that a strong attempt was made at this period to foster a provincial identity, even if in the long run that proved abortive. Thus an inscription of AD 57 has been cited as showing that the citizens of Apollonia, south-west even of Antioch, regarded themselves as 'Galatians', and perhaps that they were even designated as belonging to the Trocmi, one of the three specifically Celtic tribal divisions.<sup>14</sup> There is in fact a surprisingly large body of material in the inscriptions to give circumstantial confirmation of the wider usage of the ethnic 'Galatian'.

And so to Acts. The references here pose questions which are from some points of view independent. We may accept 'South Galatia' and an early date, and still debate the meaning of Acts 16:6 and 18:23. In fact I think the weight of probability here is that neither refers to North Galatia; indeed I doubt whether we have grounds for believing that Paul ever visited North Galatia. The 'southern' view, then, is not necessarily embarrassed by any interpretation of these verses, but the 'northern' may be.

I regard the phrase *tēn Phrygian kai Galatikēn*

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Findlay, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: SCM, 1934), p. 166, cited by Bruce in *BJRL* 52 (1969-70), p. 252n.

<sup>14</sup> W. M. Ramsay, *The first Christian century* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), pp. 172-174, and *A historical commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), p. 135. The text is accessible in *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* 4. 140.

*chōran* (16:6) as referring to one entity, 'the Phrygio-Galatic country' or 'Galatic Phrygia', the district of Antioch and Iconium, 'Galatic' as belonging to the province of Galatia and as opposed to the much larger part of Phrygia which lay in the province of Asia. It will be objected that this term and sense is otherwise unattested. That is not surprising, for the materials we are dealing with are extremely fragmentary and their interpretation often extremely difficult. Much of our knowledge or belief in these areas necessarily rests on the cautious appraisal of a single attestation. And here I think usage favours the interpretation I have offered, linguistically (a pair of adjectives<sup>15</sup> with a common article), analogically (comparable terminology can be adduced, including 'Galatic Pontus'), and contextually (to summarize a return visit bringing the Apostolic Decree to settle the issues argued in the Epistle). Incidentally I think *kōlythentes* ('having been prevented') here amounts to no more than *kai ekōlythēsan* ('and they were prevented'), with little emphasis on the relative time of the intimation.<sup>16</sup>

About the rather different phrase *tēn Galatikēn chōran kai Phrygian* in Acts 18:23 I am hesitant. Ramsay is, I think, over-subtle, as though determined to find ground for denying a foothold to the North Galatians. But a strong case does not need dogmatic overstatement. This seems to mean 'the Galatian country and Phrygia'. I am open to persuasion about what exactly that implies. But I doubt whether 'Galatian country' here means anything especially different from what it meant in 16:6. It is likely to resume the same essential usage, and in context to summarize yet another pastoral visit to the same district. But that supposition militates alike against Ramsay's 'Lycaonia Galatica' and against North Galatia.

(iv) May there not however be a mediating view, a 'Pan-Galatian' or 'Mid-Galatian' view? I mention the point because the weighty authority of Kirsopp Lake sought a solution on these lines.

<sup>15</sup> *Phrygian* is, I think, to be taken as an adjective, though the form is identical with that of the noun. Cf. the close parallel *tēs Itouraias kai Trachōnitidos chōras* in Luke 3:1, where *Itouraias*, elsewhere a substantive, is used adjectivally. *Phrygios* is well attested as an adjective both of three, and of two, terminations. See C. J. Hemer, 'The Adjective "Phrygia"', *JTS* 27 (1976), pp. 122-126. The existence of the separate feminine adjective *Phrygia* has been unwarrantably denied in a series of commentaries from Lake to Haenchen, though in fact it is well attested throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

<sup>16</sup> The usage of this aorist participle has been keenly debated. See most recently K. L. McKay, 'Syntax in Exegesis', *Tyndale Bulletin* 23 (1972), pp. 39-57, for a most interesting study of the aspectual, as opposed to the temporal, element in the Greek verb.

I have drawn attention to the double focus of the province and the arid emptiness and poor communications of the central lands. A rigorous study demands a convincing reconstruction of possible routes and places. It is now apparent that Lake's suggested route lay almost entirely through the province of Asia.<sup>17</sup> Bruce quotes a letter from a great Anatolian scholar, the late Professor Sir W. M. Calder. Why should Paul have made the suggested detour, asks Calder, 'unless he had a prophetic vision of what Luke was going to say in the fulness of time, and some interest in proving him right?'

Drawing lines on maps is easy, but has been a bane of this study. We are probably all familiar with the maps in old Bibles which show Paul's journeys tacking in acute zig-zags across the whole land surface of Asia Minor to take in Ancyra at their most eccentric apex. But because Paul was obedient to the Spirit there is no reason to suppose his progress was arbitrary. He followed great routes to strategic centres, or perhaps sometimes for special reasons he followed emergency paths through lesser places. The itinerary offered in Acts is to be open to reasoned interpretation and criticism.

It is unnecessary to dwell here on the many indecisive or two-edged arguments which are often debated. One may merely suggest in general terms that surviving evidence points to an earlier and stronger penetration of south than north by Judaism and Christianity alike, 'an earlier and stronger development of great hellenized cities in the south, and that the evangelization of the north may more probably have been effected along the natural lines of communication from the west and north-west. Paul's strategy was essentially directed to work through social patterns which I take to have been better represented in the south.'<sup>18</sup>

## 2. The Jerusalem visits

The bulk of my paper has been devoted to one question within the complex, and that, you may feel, a pedantic argument about geography; surely a theological student is called to higher things! My aim in this has been simply to try to establish the part of the jig-saw which I think gives us our clearest interlocking fragment of the picture. There

<sup>17</sup> See the map by Calder and Bean; cf. Bruce, *BJRL* 52 (1969-70), pp. 257-258. Orcistus, for instance, was in Asia, and inscriptions found in the neighbourhood show that the indigenous language was Phrygian.

<sup>18</sup> See further Ramsay, *A historical commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and Cities of St Paul* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907). Cf. also E. A. Judge, *The social pattern of Christian groups in the first century* (Tyndale Press, London, 1960).

are many points of approach, and while some will be impressed with an answer where the difficulties explain each other, others will only feel that this approach bypasses their real problems. But I stand by my fragment, and will try to accept the difficulty of considering in conclusion whether I can enlarge my fit to include the Jerusalem visits. Any theory is in honour bound to do something about them, and the various difficulties are well known. On our present synthesis we have arrived at the convenient *prima facie* position that two equals two, that Galatians 1 equals Acts 9 and Galatians 2 equals Acts 11. But is that possible?

Here is a brief summary of the recorded details of these visits, set out for comparison of these provisional identifications:

(a) (i) *Galatians 1*: After his conversion Paul did not go up to Jerusalem, but to Arabia (verse 17). Three years after returning to Damascus he went to Jerusalem to 'interview'<sup>19</sup> Cephas, and stayed fifteen days. He saw no other apostle save James, the Lord's brother (verses 18, 19). He was then unknown by face to the churches of Judea (verse 22).

(ii) *Acts 9*: After his escape from Damascus Paul came to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him and did not believe he was a disciple. Barnabas brought him to the apostles, telling them of his conversion and his bold preaching in Damascus. He stayed 'going in and out among them', speaking boldly in the name of Jesus and debating with the Hellenists, but they sought to kill him, and the brethren took him down to Caesarea (verses 26–30).

(b) (i) *Galatians 2*: After fourteen years Paul went up to Jerusalem in obedience to revelation, accompanied by Barnabas and taking Titus. There he communicated to the men of repute in the church the gospel he preached to the Gentiles, so that his work should not prove to have been in vain. But not even the Gentile Titus with him was compelled to be circumcised; that issue arose only through the activities of false brethren. The men of repute—not that Paul judged in terms of personalities—recognized Paul's divine calling to the Gentiles as they recognized that of Peter to the Jews, and James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be 'pillars' among them, pledged their fellowship and agreed that he and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles while they concentrated on the Jews. They asked of him only to continue remembering<sup>20</sup> the

poor, a matter of which Paul had made a special point<sup>21</sup> (verses 1–10). Afterwards Cephas came to Antioch (verse 11).

(ii) *Acts 11*: When Paul was at Antioch prophets came down from Jerusalem. One of them, Agabus, foretold a world-wide famine, which indeed happened in the reign of Claudius. The disciples, each according to his resources, determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea. They sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (verses 27–30).

These accounts display a patent diversity of detail throughout. But the few explicit notes of time, place and circumstance are not inimical to our pairings, whatever we make of the other details. In both versions of (a), Paul went to Jerusalem from Damascus after some period of 'many days'/'three years', and in both he appears to be making his first personal contact with the Jerusalem church. Both versions of (b) presuppose a considerable lapse of years: the 'fourteen', however reckoned, will suit a date under Claudius, when widespread and recurrent famines certainly occurred, as we know from Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius, perhaps in about AD 46 and again later.<sup>22</sup> In both cases the implication is that Paul was resident at Antioch at the time (*Galatians 2*: 11 with *Acts 11*: 25–27); in both his journey was made in response to divine revelation and in company with Barnabas.

In my judgment these pairs of accounts correspond. But are they incompatibly contradictory as accounts of the same events?

I am often amused to recall an instructive little incident. I had been obliged to leave a certain meeting early to keep another appointment. The next day one of those present gave me a rather surprising account of what had happened after my departure. A couple of hours later another person gave me his account. They were totally different. There was no point of contact. I was fortunate later to get further details from an independent witness. Otherwise I should have been utterly baffled. Knowing the first two as I did, their reactions then proved revealing, more perhaps about themselves than about the meeting.

Such an illustration must not be pressed too far. It is much harder than some would suppose to

<sup>19</sup> Gk. *historēsai*. Thus Bruce, *BJRL* 51 (1968–69), p. 299. rsv renders it 'to visit', NEB 'to get to know'.

<sup>20</sup> Note the present subjunctive *mnēmoneuōmen* (Gal. 2: 10).

<sup>21</sup> Note the very emphatic expression, which suits the occasion of the visit as recounted in (b) (ii). We may suppose that Paul writes with this in mind. On this interpretation the injunction is not a problem for the identification of (b) (i) and (b) (ii), but is explicable within the larger situation to which both refer. Cf. the rendering in Bruce, *BJRL* 51 (1968–69), p. 302.

<sup>22</sup> Jos. *Antiq.* 20.2.5.(51); Tac. *Ann.* 12.43; Suet. *Claud.* 18.2. See further K. S. Gapp, 'The Universal Famine under Claudius', *HTR* 28 (1935), pp. 258–65.

analyse the minds and motives of writers of the distant past who cannot answer back. But my point is that different accounts of the same event may be very different indeed without thereby being contradictory. Summarized impressions, as embodied in different sources, are liable to be consciously and unconsciously selective in a far greater degree than we may realize. Human events and motives are complex things, and none the less so if we postulate the direction and guidance of God in the processes. It may be a mistake to look for simplistic harmonizations or simplistic contradictions. We are too little informed about the whole sequence of events. We might have the ingenuity to think of a dozen plausible harmonizations or a dozen possible contradictions, and perhaps all would be wrong—only there is nobody to tell us so.

So I concur with Bruce here in finding no insuperable problem in these identifications, having regard to the circumstances. The historian has to make do with the evidence he has, evaluating his sources as best he may. And here I think we have fundamentally good ones.

But in deference to those who will certainly think I ought to find a problem here, I will offer at least a speculative attempt to show the possibilities for harmonization.

The second visit is probably the easier. Paul in Galatians 2 is concerned only with his relations with the Jerusalem apostles. His account centres upon his discussion with them on a point of basic importance for the justification of his apostleship for the Galatians. This discussion was doubtless an important outcome of the visit, but there is no need to think that a conference with the apostles was the original or principal object of the journey. Paul went 'by revelation', by divine command, not because summoned by authorities in Jerusalem to account for his actions. Luke tells us only of the occasion. The 'revelation' may plausibly be identified with the prophecy of Agabus. The occasion was impending famine. The divine prediction and the response in love of Gentile to needy Jew were a testimony to the transforming presence of God in this Christian movement, and so properly belonged to the story of the primitive church. Granted the occasion, it was natural that Paul should take the opportunity of conference with the Jerusalem leaders. And their injunction to remember the poor, as Paul phrases it, fits the supposition that this had been the very occasion of the visit.

The first visit involves sharper differences. In Galatians 1 Paul went to see Peter, and saw no other apostle except James; in Acts 9 Barnabas brought him to 'the apostles'. In Galatians 1 he

remained unknown by face to the churches of Judea, but in Acts 11 he apparently moved openly among the apostles, preached and debated boldly, and was finally conducted by Christians to Caesarea.

The point of the two accounts differs. Luke is giving a generalized account of this visit. Only in Paul do we sense the underlying tension in his personal relations with the Jerusalem apostles. And here he is at pains to specify the precise limits of his contact with them at this time. Peter and James were representative of 'the apostles'. It is, I think, needless to quarrel with Luke's vaguer expression, or to ask how many constituted a quorum of the whole body. Luke says Paul had apostolic contact: Paul tells us who he saw. The other matter goes deeper. Here we find at least one suggestive implication common to both accounts, that Paul's introduction to the church was oddly limited and difficult. In the one case he met few individuals and was unknown to the church at large, in the other the church feared him and disbelieved his conversion. It seems very likely those two things go together. One of the tragedies of Christian missions in the Middle East today is that established Christians will reject converts from Islam whose sincerity is suspected though they may have lost everything through their conversion. Paul first came to Jerusalem not to a welcome as a mighty evangelist of the future, but as a virtual outcast, rejected by both communities. Barnabas broke the ice, and representatives of the apostles responded, perhaps fearfully. Paul declared Christ in the synagogues, but the bulk of the church shunned contact with him.

That is but a guess. But we should beware of being hypercritical. If we were to submit the works of a single known modern writer to an over-rigid analytical criticism, he might not survive the treatment.

I should see the real difficulty of my view elsewhere, in its chronology. If we make Galatians as early as suggested in this paper the question is raised whether there is enough time available to contain the primitive history of the Jerusalem church before the conversion of Paul and to accommodate the periods of three and fourteen years to which he refers (Galatians 1: 18; 2: 1). On one side this hinges on the uncertainty of the dating of the crucifixion and resurrection, on the other on the uncertain chronology of Paul's conversion and subsequent activities.

The events in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 1-9 may well have happened within a space of months. The three and fourteen years are probably both to be reckoned from Paul's conversion, concurrently

rather than consecutively: ancient practice regularly reckoned fractions inclusively. The whole period from the crucifixion *may* have been no more than fourteen years of our reckoning. The Acts account need not be taken as rigidly chronological. Herod Agrippa I died in 44, but the famine-relief visit is likely to have happened in about 46 (*cf.* Josephus), even if the proclamation of Agabus and the preparation of assistance had occupied some considerable time. The crucifixion was perhaps in 30,

or might be as late as 33.<sup>23</sup>

There are many variables here, and no dogmatic chronology can be offered. It must be allowed that the dating would be very tight on some *possible* permutations of these data: but I suggest that on a variety of *likely* readings of them there is sufficient time to fit the reconstruction I have offered.

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<sup>23</sup> G. Ogg, *The chronology of the public ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge University Press, 1940).