AGAIN: PAUL'S VISITS TO JERUSALEM

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One of the most perplexing problems in the reconstruction of early Christian history is that of the relation between the visits of Paul to Jerusalem recorded in Galatians 1) and those in Acts 2).

The very nature of the problem demands an independent decision from every student of Christian origins. This decision in turn affects almost every other judgment made about the apostolic age. The solutions which have been proposed are legion 3). Virtually every combination has been tried. The output of effort, however, has not issued in any general agreement 4). In light of the lack of any

1) Gal. i 18 ff., ii 1 ff.
4) Some scholars want to talk about their position being a matter of general agreement. F. W. BEARE, "The Sequence of Events in Acts ix-xv and the Career of Peter", JBL, LXII (1943), 297, n. 3, not only speaks of general agreement that Gal. ii equals Acts xi equals Acts xv, but also thinks it is the "only possible solution". (Compare, however, W. KÜMMEL, "Das Urchristentum", TR, XVII (1948-49), 30-31) J. N. SANDERS, "Peter and Paul in the Acts", NTS, II (1955), 136, however, says he is following "the generally received opinion" when he assumes that Gal. ii 1 ff. equals Acts xi 29-30, xii 25. It seems better, however, to speak of a "stalemate among conflicting reconstructions". (C. E. FAW, "The Anomaly of Galatians", Biblical Research, IV 1960, 26).
scholarly consensus and in light of necessity for independent decision, it would seem that yet another attempt at the solution of this age-old problem is not entirely out of order.

This article will argue the thesis that the problem of the relation between Paul's visits to Jerusalem in Galatians and those in Acts finds its most adequate solution as a result of a proper understanding of the occasion of the Epistle to the Galatians. Our argument will unfold in four stages: (1) the Galatian errorists, (2) the Pauline response, (3) an unanswered question, and (4) two related problems.

The Galatian Errorists

We must ask first of all about the identity of Paul's opponents in Galatia. In 1929 a noted American scholar could claim that his day took for granted that the situation reflected in Galatians was entirely clear and easy to understand 1). Only one point of view was possible. The problem children of Galatia were Judaizers from Jerusalem 2). Since that time, however, this view has ceased to function as a scholarly assumption. It has had to stand under the searchlight of detailed examination.

A number of arguments have been directed against the claim that Paul's opponents in Galatia were Judaizers from Jerusalem. In the first place, there is no evidence in Galatians that Paul's opponents were from Jerusalem 3). Moreover, two factors make a connection with Jerusalem difficult to believe. Paul speaks kindly of the churches in Judea (Gal. i 22-24; I Thess. ii 14, 16). This is strange indeed if the churches of Judea were doing their best to prevent the success of Paul's mission to the Gentiles 4). Also, there is no suggestion of any Jerusalem emissaries active in the Pauline churches in the narrative of Acts. This is amazing if there actually were such since there is a Lucan tendency to see Jerusalem supervision of new churches elsewhere 5). In the second place, the evidence of Gal. vi 13 indicates that Paul's opponents were not even Jews,

2) Ibid., p. 16.
5) For example, at Samaria (Acts viii 14) and at Antioch of Syria (Acts xi 22).