

## PAUL AND HIS TEACHING IN GALATIANS 2:11-21.

By PROFESSOR MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS, D.D.,  
Hartford Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn.

THE purpose of this article is to give a careful interpretation of a passage which is significant for the light it throws, in general, upon the problems of the early apostolic church and, in particular, upon the personal character of Peter and the independent position of Paul.

It is accepted by the writer as critically proved that the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem referred to in Gal. 2:1-10 is identical with that narrated in Acts 15:1-35, and that the presence of Peter in Antioch occurred soon after the Council, for the gathering of which the above visit was made, and which was assembled to consider the question of the admission of uncircumcised gentile converts into Christian fellowship.

Upon the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch occurred an episode not mentioned in Acts, because of its merely passing effect upon the life of the church; but is given here by Paul with some detail, because of its testimony to the independent character of his apostolate—one of the things in question between the Galatians and himself. The occurrence involved Paul in a rebuke of Peter, and through the rebuke was brought out in startling light Paul's apostolic consciousness over against a misrepresentation of the fundamental truth of the gospel, even though it were made by the leader of the original Twelve.

Paul introduced the record of the event with a brief statement of the content of the rebuke, together with the grounds on which it was based (vss. 11, 12).

Vs. 11: "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face." It was doubtless a public rebuke upon the occasion of some gathering of the church, though this publicity is first referred to in vs. 14 (*ἔμπροσθεν πάντων*), the distinctive phrase of the present verse (*κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀνέστην*) referring to the personally directed vigor of the argument which Paul employed. The following clause (*ὅτι κατεγγυσμένος ἦν*) refers to the subject of the same discussion. It is interpreted in our versions as causal to the preceding, giving the reason why Paul so vigorously rebuked Peter—"because he stood condemned." Most scholars so understand it. But the question is raised whether it does not give the

content of the charge, “[declaring] that he stood self-condemned,” rather than the reason for it. *Ὅτι* will yield to either rendering, and the fact that Paul is here seeking to portray the independence of his own apostleship would seem to make it unlikely that he would give as the main reason for his action the judgment of other people. It is more probable that the reason would be given in the next following clause which recites the fact of Peter’s conduct and is distinctively a causal clause.

Vs. 12: “For before the coming of certain from James, he ate with the gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.” Two questions present themselves here: (1) What was the attitude of these “certain from James” to the views of Paul? (2) Where was the fault of Peter’s action? As to the first question, it is clear, from the connection of *ἀπό* with *τινάς* and not with *ἐλθεῖν*, that the preposition is intended to designate a relationship between these men and James which in some way makes them representative of James’s own views (*cf.* Matt. 26:47; Mark 5:35). It may be that this representation is not that of a party of which James is the head. We certainly have no indication of any such James party throughout the New Testament—not even in the Corinthian epistles. It is more likely that James is here used simply as head of the Jerusalem church; so that these *τινές*, through his conspicuous relation to it, are to be understood as representative of the mother church.

But here is just the difficulty. How could persons representing James and the Jerusalem church be the cause of less freedom on Peter’s part, when in the Council just preceding they, together with Peter, had recorded themselves as in agreement with the free views of Paul? No resolving of this difficulty is possible without remembering that, with the gradual emergence of this question of the admission of gentiles into Christian fellowship, three parties or groups had arisen within the Jewish Christian church: (a) “those of the circumcision” (*οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς*)—the sentimental Jews, who believed in the law of Moses for themselves, though they were willing that it should be relaxed for the gentile converts (*cf.* Acts 10:45; 11:2–18); (b) “those of the sect of the Pharisees who believed” (*τινές τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες*)—the bigoted Jews who not only believed in the law of Moses for themselves, but insisted on it for all within the church as an essential of salvation (*cf.* Acts 15:1, 5); (c) “false brethren privily brought in” (*οἱ παρεισάκτοι ψευδ-ἀδελφοί*)—unbelieving Jews surreptitiously slipped into the membership of the church, with the purpose of causing dissension among the new religionists and who used the bigoted Jews to further their ends (*cf.* Gal.

2:4). It was the first of these groups which dominated the Council, as over against the minority of the second group—the third group being, as it always was, a sub-surface factor. It is clear, from the closing phrase of our verse (*τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς*), that these who came down to Antioch at this time represented this first group and stood simply for the sentimental view of Mosaism, viz., that the law was not a condition of salvation, only a time-honored custom. Consequently what they charged in Peter's action was, not that this eating with the gentiles was in itself sinful, but only that, as the leader of the Jewish party in this newly membershiped church, he must not ignore the observance of the law by breaking bread with the uncircumcised, however right such liberalism might be for Barnabas and Paul.

This brings us to the second question, and rather emphasizes the query as to where lay the fault of Peter's action. It certainly did not lie in recognizing the obligations of his leadership of this party of conservative views, even though that recognition be expressed in terms of fear (*φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς*). No leader of a party but is obligated to respect the party views, and should fear to be brought to the bar of his party for contempt. More clearly did it not lie in his putting this recognition of his obligations into action and retiring from his meal-fellowship with the gentiles. If it was an obligation to be recognized, the recognition was necessarily one to be carried out by removing the cause of offense. The fault is really disclosed in the following verse, where Paul speaks of Peter's conduct as essentially hypocritical, and through its hypocrisy as exerting a misleading influence upon others.

Vs. 13: "And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him (*καὶ συννεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι*); insomuch that even Barnabas himself was carried away with their dissimulation (*ὥστε καὶ Βαρνάβας συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει*)." The primary meaning in the simple verb of the compound here used (*συν-ὑποκρίθῃσθαι*) is: "to separate the part of question and answer," which develops into the "taking of a part in a dialogue"—"playing a part on the stage"—"pretending," "dissembling;" so that the idea under the *ὑπόκρισις* here charged is not that of a false motive entertained, but a false impression produced. Paul evidently intends to intimate that Peter's fault was not in leaving the gentiles in obedience to his party's views, but in so leaving it as to create the impression that the carrying on of it had been a sin, something which was not really believed by himself, nor by the party whose leadership he held, nor by the mother-church which this party represented. It was the producing of this false impression, contrary to his own convictions, as

expressed in the Council (Acts 15:7-11)—an impression so demoralizing in its effects as not only to pervade the general Jewish Christian element in Antioch, but even to cause Barnabas himself to swerve from his proclaimed and practiced liberal views—it was this that Paul declared was the ground of his rebuke of Peter and, in fact, constituted the cause of his self-condemnation.

Vs. 14: The doctrinal content of this behavior Paul characterizes as not straightly walking with reference to the truth of the gospel: “But when I saw that they did not walk straightly (*ἀλλ’ ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν* [“going with straight feet”]) up to the measure of the truth of the gospel (*πρὸς* [expressing the norm] *τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*), I said unto Cephas before them all.” It is clear that this phrase, “the truth of the gospel,” as used here and in vs. 5, represents the truth of justification by faith, apart from the works of the law, which to Paul’s mind was so fundamental to the gospel he preached as to constitute the truth without which it could not be the gospel (*cf.* Gal. 1:6, 7 with 2:1-5; 3:7-14). This forms the background of the argument which Paul proceeds to make.

It is understood, of course, that this argument is reproduced here only in outline, though at the same time it is recognized that it extends throughout the rest of the chapter—the return to the epistolary discussion being too evidently at 3:1 to admit of any portion of our passage belonging outside of the specific rebuke of Peter.

(1) First the inconsistency of Peter’s action is stated in an epigrammatic clause, the significance of which has not always been fully brought out. “If thou, born and brought up a Jew (*Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων*), livest as a gentile and not as a Jew (*ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς*—the adverbs here naturally being restricted to the matter of meats and foods), how canst thou constrain the gentiles to change their manner of living so as to conform to Judaism (*πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαῖζειν*)?” The apostle is careful in his choice of words. He has used *ὑπάρχων* instead of *ὄν* to emphasize the innate Judaism of Peter’s position, which made his fellowship with the gentiles such an acknowledgment on his part of the fact of Christian brotherhood (see use of *ὄν* in John 4:8). He has used *ἀναγκάζειν* to show the moral constraint brought to bear upon the gentiles by the way in which Peter had left their fellowship, as though such fellowship was sinful outside of Jewish living on their part. He uses *Ἰουδαῖζειν* instead of repeating *Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς*, to show that what the gentiles were being thus constrained to do in the direction of Jewish living was really more than Peter himself was doing in keeping to

his Jewish manner of life. And he has cast the whole statement in the present tense (*ἔῃς—ἀναγκάζεις*), not to give the time of the episode, which, as far as Peter's action itself was concerned, was now past, however its influence might be yet continuing, but to state it in its simple logical relations apart from time.

(2) Vss. 15, 16: So far Paul has used the pronoun of direct personal address (*σύ*), for the argument is personally addressed to Peter. He now broadens out into the use of the general personal pronoun (*ἡμεῖς*), for in what he is to say all Jews, himself as well as Peter, are included; it is, in fact, a statement of the common doctrinal ground on which all Christians stand, though presented from the view-point of the Jew, for the sake of emphasizing the argument in its application to Peter's case. "We who are by nature (*φύσει*) Jews, and so (*καί*, sequential) not sinners of the gentiles (*ἁμαρτωλοί* used here—as is evident from the conditioning words, *ἐξ ἔθνων*, which precede it—in the technical sense of those outside the theocracy, cf. Eph. 2:12), yet (*δὲ* introducing a statement in contrast to the idea of *φύσει*) recognizing (*εἰδότες*, causal participle to the following verb, *ἐπιστεύσαμεν*) [the general truth] that not from the source of works of law is a man justified, but through faith which rests on Jesus Christ (*Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, objective genitive), even (*καί*) we (*ἡμεῖς*, repetition of the *ἡμεῖς* of vs. 15, in order to bring its subject nearer the verb) have believed unto (*εἰς*, with accusative, to express the directive object of the faith) Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified from the source of a faith, which rests on Christ, and not from the source of works of law; for from the source of works of law shall no flesh be justified."

The passage has been rendered literally in order that the full significance of Paul's choice of prepositions might be brought out. Both works and faith are looked upon in the light of media of acceptance with God. This idea of mediating cause can be variously expressed—most clearly by *διά* with the genitive (*διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ*); also by *ἐκ* with the genitive (*ἐξ ἔργων νόμου—ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ*)—the preposition representing the *νόμος* or the *πίστις* as the source from which the justification is secured, and so the ground of the justifying. It can even be expressed by *ἐν* with the dative, especially with persons (e. g., Luke 11:19, 20), or by the simple dative (e. g., Rom. 3:28, where Paul uses the dative of *πίστις* with *δικαιῶσθαι*, though *διά* and *ἐκ* with the genitive form are his almost exclusive method of expressing the mediating cause of justification). The statement of the passage is simply to the effect that the Jewish Christians, in spite of their training under the influence of the ceremonial law, had come to God for justification through faith in Jesus Christ, realizing that no justification was possible for anyone through works of law.

One phrase in this clause has been grossly misinterpreted and, without a fair grammatical rendering, must always be open to misunderstanding. It is the opening phrase of vs. 16. This is often read as though it implied that a man could not be justified by works unless these works were done in a spirit of faith in Christ. It has been used as an authoritative passage for the doctrine of penance and good works; but it is so used only by ignoring the universal statement at the close of vs. 16 which renders justification by works of law under any condition impossible. The apparent contradiction in this clause disappears when its plain grammatical construction is recognized. *Εἰ μὴ* is always exceptive to the emphatic word preceding. In this case it is the negative verb *οὐ δικαιούται*, and not the entire sentence which has the emphasis. The exception which *εἰ μὴ* introduces, therefore, is taken to the general idea of "not justified," not to the specific idea of "not by works justified;" and the sentence as a whole is grammatically rendered, "knowing that not justified is a man by the works of the law (which was equivalent to saying that a man was not justified at all; for this way of justification was the only way mankind practically knew anything about before Christ came, cf. Eph. 3:5, 9), except he be justified through faith in Christ."

(3) Vss. 17, 18: Paul now proceeds to measure Peter's action up to this norm of doctrinal truth and to expose its absurdity. In vs. 17 he does this by means of a syllogistic statement in which the right premise is stated—as it was involved in this doctrinal truth just presented—and then from this right premise a false conclusion is drawn, which reduces Peter's position to the extremity of folly. "But if, seeking to be justified in Christ [on the basis of this common doctrinal truth that justification is impossible otherwise], we ourselves have been found (*εὐρέθημεν*—in the sense of proved results) to be technical sinners (*ἁμαρτωλοί* as above, vs. 15—only here used of the Jews who, standing helpless of any justification through their law, practically occupied the place of gentiles), does Christ then become a minister of actual sin? God forbid." (*ἄρα* [requiring a negative answer, only twice used in the New Testament: Acts 8:30; Luke 18:8] *Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας* [real sin, in distinction from the technical idea involved in *ἁμαρτωλοί*] *διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο*).

This is a keen thrust at Peter's inconsistency. He admitted the principle that in forsaking the law as a ground of justification and coming to Christ by faith, the Jew practically stood with the gentile (see the concluding words of his address before the Council, Acts 15:11); and yet, by withdrawing from fellowship with the gentile Christians in the way he had done, he had in fact maintained that the gentiles' position was one of real

sin, and that, in so far as Christ had announced the forsaking of the law as the only way of salvation, he had made himself to the Jew a minister of actual sin.

In vs. 18 he takes the other side of Peter's action and shows its fatality of attitude toward the law, which was a cherished institution with all the sentimental Jews. He adopts the first person singular pronoun, putting himself for the moment in Peter's place: "For, if the things which I tore down (*κατέλυσα*) these [same] things I build again (*οικοδομῶ*), I make myself a transgressor" (*παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω* [establish and constitute myself such by making this return]). Grammatically this verse stands as the confirming ground of *μὴ γένοιτο*—"Christ is not a minister of sin; for if I do here as you have done, I make myself a transgressor of this very law which by my return to it I was supposedly observing." The question, of course, is in what way Peter so transgressed the law. Certainly not as a mere sinner against its precepts; for this he was anyway in common with all mankind; rather in some special way, in which he would not be transgressing, were he not to return to its observance. An intimation of what that way might be is given generally in Rom. 7: 7-13, where the spiritual effect of the law upon the sinner is shown to be a consciousness of sin, and specifically in Gal. 3: 23, where the function of the law is declared to be that of preparing us to come to Christ (*cf.* the even more specific statement of Gal. 3: 23, where the force of *χάριν* should be noted). What Peter transgressed in his return to the law's observance was the divine intent and purpose of the law to make him conscious of the uselessness of its observance as a means of salvation, and so to bring him to that state of hopelessness which would turn him to Christ alone for help.

(4) Vs. 19: That this is the meaning of the apostle is evident from the following verse, which describes the spiritual relation to the law into which a man comes in leaving it to go to Christ: "For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God" (*ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμον νόμῳ ἀπέθανον ἵνα Θεῷ ζήσω*). From this statement it is clear, not only that this relation is one of complete severance of all ties (*νόμῳ ἀπέθανον*—*dativus commodi* in the broadest sense), but that this severance of ties was brought about through the instrumentality of the law itself (*διὰ νόμον*; *cf.* Rom. 7: 7, *διὰ ἐντολῆς*), and had for its purpose a life which should no longer be one of bondage under its power and claims, but one of freedom in new relations to God (*ἵνα Θεῷ ζήσω*—again the *dativus commodi* in the broadest sense). This statement is appended to the preceding one of *παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω* as its reason and justifying ground. So that what

the apostle means is: "In returning to the observance of the law [as Peter has done] I make myself a transgressor of its very plan and purpose; for if I have responded rightly to its intended spiritual effect upon me, I have come to such a consciousness of its helplessness for my salvation that I have not only severed all dependence upon it for that result, but in my living have turned wholly from it to Christ, so that he and not the law is the supreme thing of life."

Vs. 20: The statement of his change in relationship to the law is then summed up in the phrase, "with Christ am I crucified" (*Χριστῷ* [emphatic by position] *συνεσταύρωμαι* [a sharing in that death of Christ which relieved him from all dependence upon the law for salvation; cf. Gal. 6:14; Col. 2:20]; while the statement of his new relationship to God is developed in the clause: "Yes (*δέ*, ascensive), I no longer live, but (*δέ*, contrastive) Christ liveth in me; in fact (*δέ*, ascensive), the life I now live in the flesh (*ἐν σαρκί*, in general for the physical environment) I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and so (*καί*, sequential) gave himself for me." In other words, this new life of Paul's was no mere sharing in the benefits of Christ's death, but an actual death of a former life; and, further, it was no mere replacement of that old life with a new life of his own, but with the actual life of Christ in his living—in fact, the life which Paul is now living, open though it is to the sinful influences of his physical environment (*ἐν σαρκί*), is a life which is actually lived only in the element, and consequently under the power of his personal relationship of dependence (*ἐν πίστει*, 1 Tim. 2:15) upon this crucified Christ.

Vs. 21: The statement of the concluding verse shows the bearing of all this position of law freedom upon God's gracious relationship to man. "I do not set aside (*ἀθετῶ*, render *ἀθετόν*, without a place [1 Tim. 5:12]) the grace of God" (*τῆν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ*—on which grace Peter, in common with all Christians, depended for salvation [by asserting that salvation is possible only by freedom from dependence upon the law]). This statement is then followed by a statement of its ground and reason, which is so phrased as to amount to an assertion that he does practically just the opposite thing: "For (*γάρ*, argumentative) if through the law there was righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*, acceptance with God as righteous, justification), then Christ died without cause (*δωρεάν*, as a gift, gratuitously, unnecessarily), since his death would be for the securing of that result which the law itself was sufficient to accomplish."