

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

they must be ONE *with*, and find their unity *in* ONE second Head of Humanity, in whom and in His blessing, all the race can be included, as all were included in the first Adam, and in his curse.

Now Moses, the mediator of the Jewish covenant, is not such a "mediator of ONE," uniting all into ONE, making all ONE seed, ONE body, ONE mind and spirit—ONE with God, ONE with each other.

But Christ is exactly such a mediator. He is the ONE seed in whom all find their unity. In Him God and man are made ONE, for He is both in ONE person. In Him all men and nations, the most diverse, have become ONE, being all "by ONE spirit baptized into ONE body" (1 Cor. xii. 13), according to the good pleasure of Him who purposed "that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, He would gather together in ONE all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10).

Christ, as mediator, is a "mediator of ONE" in the fullest sense as making all ONE. "God," the author of the promise, "is ONE" God of all, Jews and Gentiles (comp. Rom. iii. 30).

"Ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus" (ver. 28), being all "baptized into Christ," having "put on Christ" (ver. 27). "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (ver. 29).

University of Aberdeen.

JOHN FORBES.

Secret History of St. Paul.—The classical passage (Gal. i. 17) which must always be the touchstone to try all theories of the apostolic age, is a reply to a series of mis-statements and innuendoes which the Galatians had before them and we have not. This is especially important with regard to the strange elliptical verses (ii. 3, 4) on the circumcision of Titus. The Galatians did not need to be told—as do we—whether Titus was circumcised or not. Supposing that he was circumcised—though there ought to have been no need of it—because of false brethren, an author writing for posterity would have been careful to make it clear that he denied the necessity, not the fact, but an author writing for contemporaries who knew the facts as well as he did, might write what might be paraphrased as follows:—

"As for Titus, the story that he had to be circumcised (though I may try now to make out that it was only a temporary concession) is false like the rest, like the insinuation that I learnt

the Gospel from the Twelve, and received my authority to preach from the Church at Antioch. He was only circumcised because of false brethren."

If he was circumcised, why was he circumcised? Because St. Paul had brought him into the Temple? Why should he not? Was not he a brother in Him in whom there was neither Jew nor Gentile, who had made both one and had broken down the middle wall of partition? There could have been no scandal if the brethren had been true to one another. At Jerusalem no outsider could know whether a Nazarene stranger was an Israelite by birth or not. But when false brethren had raised the question, if Titus had once been seen in the court of Israel he had no choice but circumcision, flight or death. His death would not have been martyrdom, his flight would have been a greater victory for the false brethren than his circumcision.

These conjectures claim some support from Acts xvi. 3. Timothy, unlike Titus, was of Hebrew descent. One might think this reason enough that St. Paul should have done spontaneously in his case what in the case of Titus he would not do—or only did after indignant protest; but we are told of another reason. It was notorious that Timothy was uncircumcised; that Titus was uncircumcised could only be ascertained by impertinent curiosity or odious espionage. If St. Paul had chosen an uncircumcised halfbreed, known as such, for his messmate and travelling companion, how could he have become as a Jew to the Jews to gain the Jews? No doubt the Judaisers pressed this concession too against St. Paul; but as there was nothing humiliating in the act itself, St. Luke mentions it in order to explain it.

No doubt also St. Paul's accusers, who brought him at last to martyrdom, harped upon the story that he had profaned the Temple—one of the Roman garrison of Jerusalem had been executed for a profanation of another kind—and even at Rome the charge would be a makeweight. Perhaps for this reason St. Luke, who passes over much that he must have known, is careful to mention that this charge was brought against him—falsely—in the case of Trophimus.

There are other passages in the Acts which seem more intelligible if they were written in view of St. Paul's second trial at Rome. It has often been argued that the particular point at which the Acts close could not have been chosen by an author

writing after the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul; and the only solid reply to this is, that whatever his motives for stopping short of it, the author was acquainted with the martyrdom of St. Paul, since he records the prediction to the elders of Ephesus, that they should see his face no more. If he did return to Asia, as is anticipated in the Epistle to the Colossians and assumed in the Pastoral Epistles, the prediction was falsified. Why was it recorded? His accusers made the most of the fact that all they of Asia were turned away from him—they said he was one who made every place too hot to hold him. What answer could be better than the pathetic scene at Miletus? So also we are told that the conference with the chief of the Jews broke up “after that Paul had spoken one word.” His accusers went about repeating that he had said more and worse; that it was not his guilt if his violence had not provoked a riot. Did they add that he had been acquitted on his appeal by a mistake; that he had passed in a hurry with others, in some general gaol delivery of the Prætorian camp?—is it an answer to this that he dwelt two whole years in his own hired lodging?—that if his accusers had had a case they had plenty of time to urge it against a well-known prisoner?

One can hardly doubt that the hearing of provincial appeals under Nero was a very perfunctory business. That in all probability both the acquittal and the condemnation of the Apostle were practically decided before he came into court. They depended, humanly speaking, upon something like this—whether Theophilus or somebody else could, after many efforts, get the ear for half an hour of some backstairs potentate, who could get the ear of Nero or Tigellinus for five minutes.¹ When St. Paul wrote, “only Luke is with me,” was he writing the Acts? If so, Theophilus was in a position to make the best use of his half hour if he got it.

¹ There were laws under which a Christian who was tried could only be condemned. Those five minutes would settle if St. Paul was to be tried under them. This would depend, not on the evidence of what he had done since his release, for this he could answer for himself; but on the strength of the prejudice that could be kept up in influential quarters about all that had passed before.