

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 Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

What were the Churches of Galatia?

BY SIR WILLIAM M. RAMSAY, LL.D., D.D., D.C.L., EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

VI.

XI. THE PRINCIPLE OF CLASSIFICATION BY PROVINCES IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—In the ante-Nicene period generally, and also in the Byzantine period, the congregations of the Universal Church were classified according to provinces, *i.e.* the political divisions of the Empire; and a change in the political classification altered the ecclesiastical connexion. That was the case in the fourth century, as the early Council lists show.¹ When did the custom begin? Theodore of Mopsuestia, in *Comm. on 1 Timothy* (Swete ed., ii. p. 121 f.), says that the provincial principle goes back to Apostolic times; and Harnack (*Verbreitung*, 2nd ed. i. p. 387: *Expansion*, ii. p. 96) agrees that Theodore was right in this (though wrong, or merely spinning a theory of his own, in some of the statements which he makes about early Church organization). As Harnack says, 'Paul's range of missionary activity was regulated by the provinces: Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, etc., were ever in his mind's eye. He prosecutes the great work of his collection by massing together the congregations of a single province, and the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians is addressed, as many scholars think, to a large number of the Asiatic communities. John writes to the churches of Asia.'² In a footnote Harnack mentions, as if it were contrary to the principle, that John includes Laodicea, which belongs to 'the neighbouring district of Phrygia'³; but in this he confuses between 'province' and 'district.' Laodicea was a city of the district Phrygia and province Asia. Paul and John ranked Colossæ and Laodicea as Asian, for Phrygia was part of the province Asia.

The fact that John and Paul reckoned Laodicea as an Asian congregation (so also the fact that Philippi was counted a Macedonian congregation

¹ Basil of Cæsarea tried vainly to resist this custom, when Cappadocia was divided by Valens about 371. His protest that the Church of God should not be divided according to political changes could not be maintained.

² I quote Dr. Moffatt's translation.

³ Dr. Moffatt has inserted the words 'district of,' which are not in the German. See the last footnote in § XI.

and Corinth an Achæan) proves that they both had in mind political, *i.e.* Roman, provinces. At a later time, after A.D. 295, Phrygia was made a province, and then Laodicea ceased to be reckoned an Asian church, and its bishops became metropolitan of the province Phrygia Prima. Peter also classified the congregations to which he wrote according to the political provinces in which they were situated (1 P 1¹, and Hort *ad loc.*⁴).

Therefore the contributions of the congregations of Galatia (1 Co 15¹, 2 Co 9¹⁻⁵, Ac 20⁴) were subscribed by Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, along with any other churches in the province Galatia; and they were taken to Jerusalem by Timothy of Lystra and Gaius of Derbe.

Here emerges a question: Were there both North and South Galatian churches, all reckoned equally in the province? As Professor Val. Weber has pointed out, the churches of Galatia, to which Paul wrote his Epistle, must have formed a single well-marked group. They acted together; they were brought over to Christianity at the same time; they were subject to the same influences; and they were all on the point of seceding from the gospel of Paul together. This, as he says, is not consistent with the view (which has sometimes been maintained) that there were two groups of churches of Galatia—one in the southern part of the province, converted and organized during the first journey; the other group in the northern part towards Ancyra and Pessinus, formed during the second journey. Those two parts, north and south, are separate and distinct, not merely geographically and racially, but also in time of conversion, in type and nature, and in the influences which acted on them. Travellers crossing the one district from east to west would not and could not in ordinary circumstances visit the

⁴ Hort in his North-Galatian days has treated this matter conclusively. There is nothing further to afford standing-ground for an adversary. Those who cannot see the completeness of the case as stated by Hort cannot be moved by any further reasoning on the subject of classification.

other; if they did so, they would not simply cross the district but would make a circuit of both districts, and they must travel with the express object of making a complete circuit of this very large province. Churches in the north would not naturally be affected in the same way as those in the south, even if similar influences were applied to them; and it would not be a probable or natural issue that both groups should act together or secede in a common movement from the gospel of Paul.

The Apostle's letter, therefore, was written either to the churches of the north or to those of the south, but not to both; and there can be no excuse for interpreting 'the churches of Galatia' in that Epistle in a different sense from that in which Paul mentions those congregations and their liberality, when he writes to the Corinthians. Therefore only one body of 'churches of Galatia' is mentioned in Paul's letters, viz. either the Southern or the Northern.

Nor can there be any reason for thinking that, if there really existed two distinct and separate groups of Galatian churches, Paul would mention only one of them and ignore the other, or that he would ask only one of these groups to contribute and praise their liberality in contributing. If only one group contributed, the names of those who took charge of the money to Jerusalem prove that it must have been the southern churches that contributed. It would be absurd to suppose that the northern churches alone contributed, and sent their money under charge of delegates from the southern non-contributing churches. Such a supposition would imply either that the southern churches had fallen away from Paul, or that those three southern delegates had come to occupy a position of intimacy and even of superintendence in relation to the northern churches. No circumstance lends probability to either supposition. Nor is there any reason to think that the southern churches fell away from the Pauline gospel, and ceased to be regarded by Paul. Antioch and Iconium were leading churches in the earlier Christian centuries, both evidently with a long previous Christian career; and Paul's words in speaking about Antioch and Iconium and Lystra to Timothy do not suggest that the writer felt (or knew about) any estrangement.

Now comes the question whether he could call Antioch, Lystra, etc., churches of (the province) Galatia. We have quoted the emphatic statement

of Professor Harnack, that 'Paul's range of activity was regulated by the provinces: Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, etc., were ever in his mind's eye' . . . , and that he 'massed together the congregations of a single province': i.e. he massed together Antioch and the other three churches in the Galatic province, as the higher unity of which they all were members. The case, as stated in Dr. Harnack's words, is clear. He gives quite absolutely the shortest and simplest statement of the fundamental principle on which the South-Galatian view is based, viz. that Paul classified by provinces, and thought in provinces, and regulated his constructive organization according to the political divisions of the Roman Empire.

Why, then, is not Dr. Harnack definitely of the South-Galatian opinion?¹ Let him who asks the question turn to the maps in his second edition of the *Mission und Ausbreitung*, and he will see the reason. The provinces there displayed correspond to the facts of no period, they are not right either in names (e.g. Mysia) or in number, or in bounds. Already in studying his first edition, I marked several places in which his reasoning (quite unconnected with Galatia) showed some underlying misconceptions about the provinces. For a time I contemplated the writing of a review from the geographical side; but it is always painful to point out slips in a work that one admires and to which one is deeply indebted, and I left the review unfinished. The misconceptions appear in the maps. The provinces are stated as practically the same in number and bounds in Map II., A.D. 325, and Map I. before A.D. 180. No attention is paid to the total change caused by the reorganization of Diocletian, (about) A.D. 295; the provinces are too few for 325, and too many for 180. It was not easy to make the maps clear.² Our knowledge of Asia Minor has made such rapid progress in recent years, that it is difficult to keep

¹ I have always understood that he inclined to the North-Galatian view, but in his second edition of the *Mission und Ausbreitung*, ii. p. 180, he is more inclined to the South-Galatian view than in Dr. Moffatt's translation of the first edition. See above, p. 63 (where I have wrongly mentioned p. 387 instead of 180).

² The imperious need of economy in publication ordained that Maps I. and II. should be printed from the same plate, hence there is no variation in bounds, etc., but only in colour; only the city-names are mostly cut out of II. A plate can be altered by cutting out, but not by adding new details. Something might have been done by the use of different type to indicate changes at important epochs.

pace with its growth; but still the main facts about the provinces have remained fixed and certain. Before A.D. 180 the only provincial change which could affect the Pauline churches was that Derbe became part of the Tres Eparchiæ, Cilicia-Lycaonia-Isauria (about A.D. 138, or shortly after). Otherwise all the Pauline churches of Asia Minor (setting aside Tarsus, which was perhaps pre-Pauline) continued to be either in the province Asia (which was unaltered) or in the province Galatia. But Dr. Harnack's map classes them to five provinces, Lycaonia (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium), Pisidia (Antioch), Galatia (no names except Ancyra), Asia (Troas, Ephesus), Phrygia (Laodiceia, Hierapolis, Colossæ). He feels a little hesitation about Phrygia, which he marks by type as a province, but does not separate by a boundary from Asia—not even in 325—yet his footnote in the second edition, vol. i. p. 387,¹ implies that it was a separate province; and in ii. p. 179f. he calls Phrygia and Lycaonia provinces, though he adds that there occurred much change in this respect.

Thus the fact remains that his principle is

¹ Dr. Moffatt in his translation seems to have felt that there was something wrong here, for he renders 'Phrygien' as 'district of Phrygia'; but while this is in a way more accurate, it vitiates Harnack's argument, which is that, because Laodiceia was in Phrygia, it could not be in the province Asia. Laodiceia was in the district Phrygia of the province Asia.

perfectly right, but its geographical application is not consistent, owing to uncertainty about the relation between districts and provinces. Paul classed the four churches according to the province to which they belonged, viz. Galatia; and the entire body of the Pauline churches are classed to the four neighbouring provinces, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, a well-marked and continuous area, which included a very large part of what was most highly civilized in the world at that time.

Those who reject the South-Galatian view must reject also the principle, which Dr. Harnack has stated in such broad and simple terms; and they ought also to explain why and when this principle which Paul rejected was adopted by the Church, so that it governed all subsequent organization. On the other hand, if you admit Dr. Harnack's principle, and apply it according to our growing knowledge of Asia Minor, then everything is clear, simple, and continuous in development.

Since, however, difficulties are felt, let us take the questions that have been raised. Some are just and illuminative, some the result of ignorance. (1) Was the province called Galatia? (2) Could the people of the whole province be slumped together as 'Galatians'? (3) If Paul used the name Galatia, why did not Luke use that name?

The answer to these questions involves some antiquarian details, which I shall cut as short as possible.

Contributions and Comments.

A new Hebrew Grammar.¹

THE Hebrew Grammar before us, as the Preface informs us, is 'an attempt to supply a want suggested by the experience of two Lecturers for the first part of the Theological Tripos at Cambridge.' As the result of a careful reading of the book right through, it may be confidently said that it will fulfil its purpose. Of course we in Scotland have our own Introductory Hebrew Grammar by the

¹ *A Hebrew Grammar*, by the Rev. T. C. Wood, M.A., Fellow and Hebrew Lecturer of Queens' College, Cambridge, with the Co-operation of Rev. H. C. O. Lanchester, M.A., formerly Fellow and Lecturer of Pembroke College, Cambridge. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1913. Price 5s. net.

late Professor A. B. Davidson, which does not suffer by comparison with the present work and will certainly not be superseded by it. At the same time the two books admirably supplement one another, and soon those who possess Davidson's Grammar will learn something by comparing it with the new Grammar. The authors have arranged their material well; the exercises are admirable; and the whole scheme of the book is excellently fitted to introduce students to an intelligent study of the Old Testament. The mysteries of *varv consecutive* are treated with clearness, as well as the somewhat puzzling use of the numerals in Hebrew, and great pains have been taken to exhibit the use of the verbal suffixes and the formation of the conjugations of the various