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E.A. Russell, Convincing or Merely Curious? A Look at  
Some Recent Writing on Galatians /1

Since 1975 we have had a number of writings linked with Galatians especially coming from the U.S.A. /2 We propose to look at the more important and where convenient in chronological order.

Professor Hans Dieter Betz published in 1975 a paper entitled "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians." /3 He applied the theory behind this article to his major commentary on Galatians which appeared some years later. /4 The article contended that the epistle to the Galatians is an example of an "apologetic genre", found in one form or other in contemporary Greek and Latin writing. Such an epistle he maintains "presupposes the real or fictitious situation of a court of law with the jury, the accuser and the defendant." (p377). In Galatians the addressees are the jury, Paul the defendant and the opponents the accusers. Brinsmead /5 also takes up the hypothesis of Galatians being of an apologetic genre. For the sake of clarity and ease of reference the parallels between the proposed structure of Betz, followed by Brinsmead may be set out as follows:

Structure of Galatians as an "Apologetic Genre"

	<u>Betz</u>	<u>Brinsmead</u>
1.	<u>Epistolary Prescript</u> (with a basic sequence of <u>superscriptio</u> , <u>adscriptio</u> and <u>salutatio</u> ) Gal 1.1-5	cf. 58-63
2.	<u>Exordium</u> (or <u>proemium</u> or <u>principium</u> ) which states the <u>causa</u> of the case, the reason for writing the letter; 10-11 represent the <u>transitus</u> or <u>transgressio</u> to the next section ( <u>narratio</u> ) (362)	1.6-11 cf. 19,67-69

	<u>Betz</u>	<u>Brinsmead</u>
3.	<u>Narratio</u> ("statement of the facts" persuasively (cf Quintilian) with lucidity, brevity and plausibility) (364) 1.12-2.14	49-51
4.	<u>Propositio</u> (Its function is twofold: to sum up the legal content of the <u>narratio</u> by an outline of the case; to provide an easy transition to the <u>probatio</u> ) (368) 2.15-21	51-52, 69-78
5.	<u>Probatio</u> (The most decisive part of the speech as presenting the <u>proof</u> , and <u>exordium</u> and <u>narratio</u> are only preparatory steps leading to this central part) (368-375) 3.1-4.31	Describes 3.1-5 as <u>interrogatio</u> cf Betz 370)  52, 78-85
6.	<u>Paraenesis</u> (O. Merk, Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief, ZNW, LX (1969), pp83-104, differs from Betz as to the point at which paraenesis begins. The latter dismisses Merk's view as not based on compositional analysis) 5.1-6.10	Calls this section <u>refutatio</u>  53-54
7.	<u>Postscript</u> (serves as <u>peroratio</u> or <u>conclusio</u> ie end and conclusion of the apologetic speech, forming body of letter 6.11-18	63-66

The first reaction of the minister whose task it is to make use of commentaries especially for expository or devotional purposes may very well be one of bewilderment even astonishment at the thought of having to take such a structure with its strange terminology into account

in any work on the epistle. It involves jargon that by its very nature can obscure rather than illumine for the large majority of his congregation. How possible is it to explain such terms to the average congregation without spending too much time on what after all many will consider a fringe concern? Let such an essay that sets out the theory of an "apologetic genre" for Galatians be kept for scholarly journals. Again, how sensible is it to commission a commentary where what after all is only an hypothesis is to be drawn in and and where all too distractingly such frequent efforts are made to justify it? We do not find the attempt to blend the argument for an apologetic genre with commentary very successful.

It may be worthwhile to look at one illustration of the complicated argument, that which seeks to justify the use of exordium (44-46) of which we quote a section:

Speaking in terms of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Paul's statement of the *causa* is a mixture of types of exordia, the *principium* ('Direct opening') and the *insinuatio* ('subtle approach'). The former, the *principium*, is appropriate in addressing an audience where attention, receptivity, and a favourable disposition can be obtained directly or without difficulty, while the *insinuatio* should be used in cases where for example the audience has been won over by a previous speech of the opponent.

(Commentary, 45)

It may well be asked what help or hindrance this may give us in understanding such a short passage as Gal 1.6-11! Betz gives us no less than four pages of explanation of narratio. Here he find it necessary to refer to Cicero's definition of narratio as "an exposition of events that have occurred or are supposed to have occurred." But he has to proceed further and tell us of Cicero's division of narratio into three types, only one of which applies to Galatians as "that form of narrative which contains an exposition of a case in law." (58). It must be admitted that this is quite offputting and obstructive for one trying to get at the text and being held up by a process producing a result which hardly justifies the complex means.

But does Paul sit down and dictate Galatians, having

carefully shaped previously an apologetic structure? Is this the impression Galatians gives us, of a letter calmly and carefully composed and rather proud of its adherence to a literary form? Is this a contrived letter, anxious for language and style or is it a *cri de coeur* from someone who is deeply disturbed about what he sees as a serious danger to the church and its gospel? Is the use of anathema on two occasions a cool piece of skilful rhetorical emphasis or is it not rather a poignant yet fierce attack from one who feels it in the depths of his being? It is usual to say that Paul leaves out his usual thanksgiving because he is very angry? Have we any better explanation produced by the hypothesis of a piece of defence rhetoric? Would it not be an excellent captatio benevolentiae to make such a gesture along with his defence. Again, how artificial or contrived are expressions like "You are severed from Christ" (5.4), or "you have fallen away from grace" (5.4), and especially "I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves." (5.12). Here we have language that at times is passionate, deeply concerned, fierce, uninhibited. It represents the outpouring of one who has no time for niceties or suave or stilted expressions. Here is someone with one urgent mission to turn Galatians from the dangerous path of legalism on which they already seem to have entered. Surely to bring Paul here into a literary or rhetorical world with its preoccupation with what are after all only fringe concerns is to misread him seriously and the task he undertakes.

We are not, however, denying that there are sections of a moderate tone here and there in the epistles. A formed catechetical or liturgical tradition on justification by faith or on ethical obligations could well lie behind eg 2.15-21 or 3. 6-29. Some striking examples of what appear to be independent units are discernible eg in Romans on the benefits of justification (5.1-11) or on a Adam/ Christ comparison (5.12-21)

Another serious problem is whether we can be certain that Paul made use of a Greek or Latin apologetic genre. Betz in spite of his splendid if complex presentation of his case only deals with a theoretical form. He cannot offer a single instance of an apologetic genre with which to compare Galatians. /6 Betz appears to be aware of this as

evidenced by the special pleading and urgent reasoning in connection with the divisions of the genre eg exordium (44-46) or narratio (58-62) or probatio (128-131). The slender evidence produced from M. Hengel eg by Brinsmead hardly helps the case. /7

Again, to make Galatians into an apologetic genre is to ignore elements in it that are not apologetic at all. /8 It ignores the real terms of affection with which Paul can from time to time address them eg "My little children with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you! I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you" (4. 20). Or again we may note the pastoral expression which would surely have been an odd phenomenon in the Graeco-Roman world eg "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault you who are spiritual restore him in the spirit of meekness.....Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." (6.1,2) Or again, "Let us not grow weary in well-doing for in due time we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (6.9) It is difficult to resist the impression that although he has arraigned and spoken so vehemently to the Galatians, he treats them as if they had not gone astray in these words of pastoral counsel and exhortation

We are indebted to Wayne A. Meeks for another observation. He points out the tendency with Betz to accept what he puts forward as theory as a concrete conclusion. He gives an instance /9 where Betz put forward the hypothesis that 2 Cor 6.14-7.1 is an anti-Pauline tract. It was only an hypothesis, yet later he was to argue as if it were an established fact. Has something like this happened with the theory of an apologetic genre? He dismisses Merk's argument for a different beginning for the exhortation section (parenthesis) ie at 5.1, on the basis that it was not grounded on compositional analysis ie. that of Betz himself. /10 Thus an hypothesis is seen to be an established fact.

Brinsmead seeks to develop the thesis of an apologetic genre, thus throughout Galatians is a dialogical response to opponents, who are identified with the Galatians and the whole letter is written against a single theological complex (192). Such a theology derives from one source

associated probably with apocalyptic and sectarian Judaism and in particular Qumran, (195) though not of course ceasing to be Christian. It is precisely because he makes so much of the apologetic genre theory that he identifies one set of opponents and from it to deduce their theology. If the theory of an apologetic genre falls to the ground his thesis has to be seriously qualified, if not abandoned, ie Galatians as a dialogical response to opponents.

Another recent book on Galatians is that of Dr George Howard, "Paul: Crisis in Galatia, A Study in Early Christian Theology" /11. Dr Howard is now Professor of Religion in the University of Georgia. The title of the book suggests his method in approaching Pauline theology. He writes: "Paul's genius is seen best when his theology is allowed to arise from the historical setting of his opponents and his methods in preaching the gospel. An understanding of Paul and biblical, historical exegesis go hand in hand. It is the historical, exegetical process which must come first if there is to be a genuine understanding of Paul's theology." (p ix)

The book begins with a predictable survey of research on Paul's opponents, reaching back to F.C. Baur. He identifies them with Jewish Christian agitators from Jerusalem who sought to have the Galatians circumcized and keep the law, not a remarkable or unusual conclusion.

Yet Dr Howard, in coming to this conclusion, goes about it in an unusual way. He argues that the so-called opponents treated Paul as an ally, thinking that he agreed with circumcision, and that he preached and practised it. But a problem arose for them. Although Paul preached and practised circumcision, he had not at the time of his mission circumcised the Galatians. How did they explain this to themselves? Dr Howard's explanation is remarkable, even ingenious. Paul had been ill when with the Galatians, an illness that was unsightly and repellent. (4.13,14) Paul did not want to add to that repugnance by circumcizing them! This is quite a gratuitous suggestion totally without support in the letter or indeed any of Paul's letters. No hint is ever given that Paul practised circumcision. Thus Dr Howard gives us an imaginative and wholly unsubstantiated reconstruction of Paul's

visit to Galatia which has little to commend it.

But we are not done with the novelties in Howard's construction. It is a commonplace of NT interpretation that Paul in Galatians chapters 1 and 2 insists on the independence of his apostleship and his gospel especially in relation to the Jerusalem apostles. Sentences in the course of his general argument that support Paul's claim for independence are: "an apostle not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father," (1.1) or "the gospel preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." (1.11,12) Thus Paul does not lay his gospel before the Jerusalem apostles until the conference. Nor was it due to any instructions the apostles gave him that he attended the conference but rather he went up in response to a revelation that God had given him (Gal 2.2). Dr Howard, however, suggests that this was not the reason he delayed but rather Paul deliberately waited until he had consolidated his work and proved its effectiveness; the "revelation" of 1.1,12 refers to the Damascus event in which Paul received his apostolic commission and gospel. Thus, according to Howard, it was not until the Jerusalem conference that the apostles became aware of his gospel, ie although Paul had been preaching for up to seventeen years.

The difficulties with Howard's view are apparent. The context makes it clear that Paul does insist on his independence and on a number of occasions eg "not from man nor through man" (1.1); "It did not receive it from man nor was I taught it" (1.12); "I did not confer with flesh and blood nor did I go up to those who were apostles before I was." (1.17) This fits in awkwardly with the claim that Paul deliberately waited until he had consolidated his work. Why the stress on no human agency and the special mention of not consulting the apostles? Again, to suggest that the apostles were not aware of what Paul was preaching is unlikely if we accept Paul's close links with the Jerusalem Sanhedrin before his conversion, the shock of his conversion which was bound to be familiar to the authorities, and the inevitable aftermath of enquiry as to what Paul was doing both by leading Jews and by the rather anxious Christian community.



In Galatians 2.2 Paul declares he went up ie to Jerus-  
"by revelation" (kata apokalupsin). It is usual to  
explain this by saying that as a result of a special  
personal revelation and not because he was summoned by  
the apostles that Paul went up to Jerusalem. This is in  
keeping with his assertion of independence in chapters 1  
and 2. Dr Howard maintains that kata here means "on  
account of" and that apokalupsin refers to the revelation  
on the Damascus road. Thus he gives an exceptional  
meaning to kata (there appears to be no example of this  
meaning in Liddell and Scott nor in the whole Pauline  
corpus). But the difficulty is not merely the strained  
interpretation of kata, but the claim that it refers to  
the time of his conversion. Why would Paul wait for some  
years to state that he went up to Jerusalem "because of  
such a revelation?" Dr Howard fails to explain the  
reason for the lengthy account in chapter 1. Would it  
not have been enough for Paul to say: "I met the risen  
Lord. He made me an apostle. I preached and my record  
show I have been successful. I waited for a number of  
years but it was my encounter with Jesus that made me go  
up to Jerusalem" ie if what Howard contends were valid.  
But this is not what Paul says

Howard has recently been charged with being an icono-  
clast, setting out his own interpretative "images" in  
place of those he pulls down. /12 We may mention two  
further interpretations that are unusual. 1. According  
to Gal 2.11f Peter sat down at table with Gentiles. But  
after some people came down from James to Antioch Peter  
withdrew. The grounds for such an action are, according  
to Paul, because he feared the circumcicion party. It  
would be natural to understand this as a piece of vacil-  
lation on Peter's part. Howard does not agree. Peters  
position was that Gentiles needed to be circumcised in  
order to be saved and this was part of his theological  
conviction. Thus Howard turns the meaning of the text  
upside down. 2. In Gal 3.11 Paul quotes from Habbak-  
uk 2.4, "He who by faith is righteous, shall live." In  
the context of Gal chapter 3, Paul sets justification by  
faith over against justification by works of the law.  
Thus "faith" here (as in Romans 1.17) would be individ-  
ual faith in Christ as the key to salvation. Howard,

however, - and it appears to run completely against the context - claims that the contrast is rather between man's works (including faith) and God's faithful act in fulfilling his promise (63f). (He speaks of "works" and not of the polemic phrase "works of the law"?) In chapter 3.8, we have the words, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.....". Dr Howard interprets this as "faith-act" ie God keeping faith with his promise. In the context this can hardly mean anything but the faith that God bestows. Pierre Bonnard expresses its meaning more in keeping with the context when he writes: "La foi n'est pas la contribution de l'homme à la justification mais le moyen ou la méthode que Dieu choisit pour justifier gratuitement les païens." /13. Howard, on the basis of Gal 3.8 argues that as an expression of God's keeping his promise he sets men free from the tyranny of the law which divided Jews and Gentiles and thus created one united humanity. If Paul continues to accept that Jews retain the law and its practices while Gentiles need not, it is because Paul's notion of unity demands the retention of ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. Otherwise his gospel would be rendered null and void (81)

While no one will quarrel with these last sentences, it does not mean that Howard's method in reaching it is legitimate. He appears to ride roughshod over the context of Galatians on a number of occasions. He creates a Paul who scarcely fits in with that we find in the other authentic epistles. We are forced to say that the book strives after originality at the expense of the text and of logic. The bases of his exegetical and idiosyncratic conclusions are not always clear. It is hardly a very helpful contribution to the understanding of Galatians.

Dr David John Lull's book "The Spirit in Galatia, Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as Divine Power" /14 is distinctive among treatments of Galatians in that it attempts to apply the hermeneutic known as "Process Theology" to its understanding. This hermeneutic appears to determine the way in which the biblical material is handled, the terms that are used, and even the very choice of Galatians as a convenient subject for such an approach. It claims to be "an internal analysis of Paul's statements about the Spirit in the letter to the Galatians." It does not deal with any

possibilities of development in Paul's view of the Spirit (though it may be doubted if there are any since his view was well-shaped before the first letter we have from him (Galatians?) perhaps some seventeen years after his conversion) nor does he inquire into the background eg in his use of pneuma. Dr Lull admits that his thesis represents a first step, and claims that such concentration on Galatians is an advantage for "Paul's statements about the Spirit in Galatians are understood...in their origin in Christian experience in the Galatian churches and in Paul's polemic with his opponents in Galatia." (p.x) He also considers it an advantage from a hermeneutical standpoint (ie that of Process Theology) since he can single out the concrete event which set up the church in Galatia and it is this especially since his hermeneutic is that of "Process Thought" where events are primary. Finally, he seeks to relate Paul's thought to contemporary thought as represented in Existentialism (Bultmann) and Process Theology (W. Norman Pittenger and Wolfhart Pannenburg).

It will be asked how legitimate is it to seek an understanding of scripture by applying an alien category from Philosophical Theology especially for those who believe that scripture has to be interpreted by scripture and that the Canon has to be given a special place whenever understanding of what scripture is saying is sought. Not all are prepared to admit that the authority of scripture is diminished to such an extent that we have to make use of Existential or Process Theological principles to give it respect in the minds of modern man. This is not to say that we can afford to ignore the issue of credibility for the church's message or to recognize that reason, integrity and courage are needed to draw out its essential truth for our day. But this is a different matter from taking out from other speculative systems something that may or may not be helpful in helping us to hear what God has to say to us.

What then is "Process Theology"? We take our explanation from one of the representatives Dr Lull mentions ie Norman Pittenger. In an article in the "Dictionary of Christian Theology" on Process Theology Dr Pittenger writes  
The concern for the dynamics of the physical universe in which he lives, have led process

Russell, Galatians, IBS 6, October 1984

theologians to assert that it is in "event" rather than "things", in action and activity rather than in "substances"; in creation as a continuing process rather than in creation as finished product, that we may best interpret the order of nature and of human life.

Such theologians see man as "becoming." They find their criterion in the text, "God is love", to be understood in the light of the event of Jesus in whom (for Christian faith) the Lord "who moves the sun and other stars" was vividly "enfleshed".

Thus Dr Lull concentrates on the "event" which constituted the Galatian church, Galatians being seen to be useful material for his experiment. It is in events that he sees God in his continuous creation is active, but through the particular mode of the Spirit. The action of the Spirit descending on the Galatians as they respond to the proclamation in faith and, continuing within their process of "becoming" lends itself readily to process concepts. Lull's concern to emphasize the event of the Galatians receiving the Spirit and the ensuing enthusiasm makes him deny such an event was linked with baptism. If however we understand Paul aright and, pace Lull, the reception of the Holy Spirit and initiation into the church were always at the point of baptism eg in the chapters that deal especially with the implication of the outpouring of the Spirit viz 1 Cor 12-14, Paul can write:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Note the parallel: "all baptized into one body...all made to drink of one Spirit." If we prefer the overall view of Paul's teaching in his letters, we can as we have stated accept that by this time Paul had worked out his understanding of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There is always the risk of distortion or onesidedness in taking Galatians on its own as Lull does. After all, it is only an occasional letter addressed to specific circumstances and shaped in relation to these circumstances. Lull, as

process theologian, prefers to take what he sees to be the "event" which lay at the foundation of the Galatian church their ecstatic reception of the Holy Spirit and its ecstatic cry, "Abba, Father."

It is interesting to note how this concentration on Galatians affects the construction. There is little or no mention of the resurrection or of the risen Lord. In Galatians, the verb egeirō only occurs in Gal 1.1 while anistēmi and anastasis do not occur, all of them terms which relate to the "raising" of Jesus. There does appear to be a continual blurring of the distinction between Christ and the Spirit eg the unbiblical expression "Christ and Spirit" is used on some twenty occasions (this is not to deny an occasional blurring of this distinction in Paul). Paul, however, never uses the combination "Christ and Spirit." The nearest he gets to it is in sentences like "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus...." (Romans 8.2) or the Spirit paralleled to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 13.13; cf 1 Cor 12.4-6)

We have seen that the major text of the process theologian is "God is love", understood in the light of the event of Jesus Christ. Lull links together the placarding of Jesus Christ crucified so closely with the reception of the Spirit that the Resurrection, which was of such importance to Paul and the church, falls into the background and the combination "Christ" (ie "crucified" equals "event") and "Spirit" (equals in Gal "event" and "process") emerges.

In the final two chapters of Galatians (5,6) Paul deals extensively with the contrast of "flesh" and "spirit" (5.6-6.10). Lull considers somewhat arbitrarily it would appear that Paul's view of the "flesh" is different from that in Romans and that it is earlier. To Lull, in Gal. "flesh" is the power behind evil. In Romans it is sin. The claim is very doubtful indeed. Rather both in Romans and in Galatians sin which almost becomes personal, is that which constitutes the power behind evil. One line of explanation takes into consideration the OT word for "flesh" (basar). In the OT it is a neutral term. It is weak and mortal but not necessarily sinful. Sin can be thought of as invading the flesh, giving it a sinister

force, and enduing it with its own rebellion. Lull thus, on the basis of a single epistle - Galatians, derives his understanding of sarx. If the same method were applied to Philippians where sarx does not occur, would this imply that Paul had no interest in or no sinister view of "flesh" when he wrote Philippians?

When we begin to think in terms of "person" for the Holy Spirit, it may be we are pushing later concepts on to Paul's view of the Spirit. And yet when we look for other methods of expressing what Paul says about the Spirit, it would be difficult to get any other word than that which has emerged in the course of history, "person". Bultmann may explain the Spirit anthropologically in terms of a new "self-understanding". Lull may not go as far as this but we may if we will see the influence of process theology in the way he de-personalizes the Spirit as evident in the expressions he uses. He speaks of the Spirit as "it" and not "He" (in Greek of course pneuma is neuter necessitating a neuter attribute though not necessarily denying what we call "personality" or any less status than the Father or Jesus). He claims that Paul thought of the Spirit as a fluidum (197), as a discrete "entity", a historical "entity", "a mode of the presence of God in history." For Lull, the Spirit tends to be identified with the eternal Spirit in whom everyone lives and in which, "with the whole cosmos" everyone has their own creative ground. Lull, however, denies this on the score that the historical event of the death of Christ "calls forth sustained attention to the love of God which is present in the Spirit", and that, therefore, the Spirit can be spoken of "as a particular, but not exclusive, mode of God's being-in-the-world." (200). It is evident that the language of process theology has taken over from biblical expression and not with any gain but rather loss in understanding.

The book is an intriguing, if somewhat laborious and repetitive attempt to apply a specific hermeneutic from modern philosophical theology to an ancient letter. Such a hermeneutic takes over the biblical hermeneutic though an attempt is made to conflate or relate both. Examples of carefully worked out exegesis on more traditional lines may be found eg in Part 2, "The Historicality (sic!) of the Spirit." On the whole in our view the first attempt to our knowledge to apply Process Theology to the understanding of Galatians raises more problems than it solves.

Finally, we come to the work of Dr Richard B. Hays, "The Faith of Jesus Christ, An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3.1-4.11". /15 Dr Hays seeks to find the "core" of the gospel /16, its "constant elements". He does not find an explanation in terms of systematized doctrine (cf Reformers), eschatological participation in Christ (Schweitzer), justification (Käsemann) existentialism (Bultmann) or subjective religious experience (Deissmann, Jeremias) entirely satisfactory. The springboard for undertaking his thesis Dr Hays attributes to a sentence from J.C. Beker, neglected by other critics "the investigation of the nature and method of Paul's theological language." /17 Such an investigation must, he says, "reckon with the centrality of narrative elements in his thought." (p5). This narrative Hays identifies with Paul's allusions to the story of Jesus Christ. From them he discerns some features of its narrative "shape" and examines the way in which the story operates as a constraint governing the logic of argumentation. On page six, Dr Hays gives careful expression to his claim:

"The gospel story does not determine Paul's discourse in the sense that the latter follows directly and inevitably from the former - indeed Paul's letters may be read as running arguments with opponents who draw different inferences from the same story - but the story provides the foundational structure upon which Paul's argumentation is founded."

And if Paul absorbs diverse traditions in his letters, it is made possible because he interprets them within the framework of a narrative pattern.

Our first reaction to this may be predictable, perhaps, but nevertheless worth expressing. It is well-known that Paul makes so little reference to the historic Jesus in his letters, so much so that it is claimed he has no interest in him. His major concern is with the crucified and risen Lord. We find no such expression as that we find in the book of Acts in Peter's address to the Jews, "Jesus whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and kill the Author of life, whom God raised from the

dead." (3.13-15; cf also 2.22-23). Paul, of course, may and probably does, assume that his readers know what the story of Jesus is; again, what is crucial to him, where his main concern lies, is in the implication of the somewhat truncated story ie of the final events, the death for sin and the resurrection, interpreted as the first-fruits of them that slept. There is little evidence of a story without explanation or interpretation.

Dr Hays is well aware of the distinction of story in relation to interpretation. He mentions Fry's analysis of "story" (muthos) and "interpretation" (dianoia). He also mentions a distinction between "story" and "narrative", the former referring to content and the latter to the story as "narrated"; "Paul's gospel is a story; it has a structure but it is not a narrative except when it is actually narrated." (p17). But if Paul's thought is to be understood in terms of an underlying narrative structure, this perspective, he points out, is merely a useful heuristic device by which Paul's thought is illumined for us in significant ways and solutions offered to several vexing exegetical problems (p13).

Dr Hays concentrates on a selected passage from Galatians, 3.1-4.11 on various grounds: it is a block of Paul's theological prose; it reviews for the Galatians the basic of the gospel and includes kerygmatic summaries (3.13-14; 3.22; 3.26-28; 4.3-6); further, the text is difficult - full of exegetical puzzles where the theory of a narrative substructure can be tested for its contribution to understanding (pp28-29). The sections on which Dr. Hays concentrates his attention are kerygmatic or credal formulations (3.13-14 and 4.3-6). How closely is the so-called narrative substructure related to such kerygmatic formulations?

It must be confessed that it is difficult to see the value of Greimas's model analysis of narrative structure with its perplexing jargon. Simple stories are obscured by complicated jargon eg syntagms, disjunction/conjunction, actantial, so many idiosyncratic. Even Hays calls it "esoteric"! The greatest problems for the thesis of a narrative substructure lie in the area of the exegetical claims that Hays makes. We refer in /



particular to chapter IV, "The Function of pistis in the Narrative Structure of Paul's Gospel". In chapter three he justifies his examination of the Galatians' passages on the Greimas model - which he himself admits is a relatively pedantic exercise! - by claiming that this theoretical narrative model provides a degree of methodological control, a criterion by which we can evaluate the perception that Paul's exposition presupposes a Gospel story. It is at this point the weakness of Hays' position emerges more clearly than elsewhere especially in his not taking sufficiently seriously the context where he imposes his interpretations.

First, the problem of the meaning of pistis. It can have two meanings with which we are specially concerned: "faith" which a man puts in Jesus Christ and by which he is justified; or the "faithfulness" by which he lives out his life. In Gal 2.16 we have the words: "We....who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ in order to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the law."

The phrase hē pistis Iēsou Christou by itself would mean either "the faith of Jesus Christ" or "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ". Dr Hays prefers to think of Paul referring to the "faithfulness" of Jesus Christ in carrying out his Father's will, a reasonable suggestion suited to his view of a narrative substructure - reasonable that is if we had not context to help us. But the RSV translators, rightly in our view, in the light of the context, translate the two phrases dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou and ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou as "through faith ..." or "by faith in Jesus Christ". Why do they reject the translation - along with most scholars - of "faithfulness"? We can suggest three reasons:

1. Both clauses are placed together with the phrase "even we have believed in Jesus Christ". Here we have the aorist referring to the point in time when they put their trust (episteusamen) in Jesus Christ. Here Jesus is the object of the believer's trust. To speak of the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ" here would be quite odd.

2. We have two occurrences of the regular polemical

phrase "works of the law", not "works" but "works of the law." Paul places these in contrast to the principle of "faith". Is he likely to place "not by works of the law" over against the "faithfulness of Jesus Christ" and not rather over against "faith in Jesus Christ" as the contrary situation? If it is a condensed phrase, it is because he accepts it will be understood without spelling it out in full. Thus Iēsou Christou is objective genitive: "faith in Jesus Christ."

3. Accepting that these are two principles of salvation, set over against one another, that of the Jew and that of the Christian, then the stress is on man's response. To bring in Jesus' faithfulness into such a contrast must be considered awkward.

There are also more general considerations. There is the comparative rarity of the phrase "the faith of Jesus Christ" in the NT. /18 Of only eight instances, six are found in Paul and in epistles that are generally taken as authentic (Rom 3.22,26; Gal 2.16<sup>2</sup>; 3.22; Phil 3.9; cf Eph 3.12). In all these six instances there is the contrast of faith in Jesus and works of the law. Especially striking - it is found in a rather isolated passage - is Phil 3.9: "that I may...be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ (dia pisteōs Christou), the righteousness from God that depends on faith." Further, when it is the adjective pistos ("faithful") that is used, Paul uses it for God (the Father)(he also uses it of man but this is not relevant to our purpose) and invariably so eg "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1.9; cf also 1 Cor 10.13; 2 Cor 1.18; 1 Thess 3.24; in 2 Thess 3.3, a disputed letter, the somewhat ambiguous Kurios is used; cf also 1 John 1.9; but cf Heb. 2.17 where Jesus is described as "merciful and faithful High Priest").

If Paul had been interested, within the traditions it is clear he had opportunity to emphasize the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Over against the disobedience of Adam he can stress the obedience of Jesus (Rom 5); in the Philippian hymn he can stress the obedience of Jesus to the lowest point of degradation, death on a Cross - a

phrase possibly added by Paul if it breaks the rhythm as some claim. But this extreme point of humiliation is contrasted with the supreme exaltation that God gives to Jesus. Paul never gives us the simple story of Jesus. It is what it means, its theology that lies behind his constructions; if we want to use Frye's phrase - we are not certain how useful it is - it is more if not all, a matter of dianoia rather than muthos. But it is a fact that must not be overlooked, pīstis throughout the NT applies almost invariably to the believer whether what he believes or in whom he believes - it is almost exclusively, to put it in another way, anthropological. Thus to take it in the passages Dr Hays mentions as the faithfulness of Jesus Christ is to run contrary to the usage, not merely of Paul, but the whole NT. It is indeed possible to argue that the Fourth Evangelist leaves out the noun pīstis because it might take away from the sense of active trust (he invariably uses pīsteuō)

This is not the place to deal at length with some of the other interpretations of Dr Hays. Where in ch 3. 2 we have ex akoēs pisteōs, (RSV "By hearing with faith" ) Dr Hays prefers to take it as the "message of what is believed", suggesting it does not refer to the Galatians' act or attitude of faith (p149). While akoē can suggest "message" and if it does, it can mean the message that brings about faith taking pisteōs as objective genitive on the other hand, it can mean - and more usually does - "the hearing of faith" ie the response of faith (cf the lengthy discussion by H.N. Ridderbos ad loc. in his commentary on Galatians (NICNT, Grand Rapids 1953)).

In 3.16 we have the quotation of Habakkuk 2.4 by Paul "He-who-is- righteous-by-faith shall live" or "The righteous shall live by faith". Dr Hays argues rather oddly, following a suggestion of A.T. Hanson, that ho dikaios is the Messiah (pp151-154) and that ek pisteōs need not refer to the believer's faith but to the Messiah's faithfulness and that all the following three interpretations are possible: "The Messiah will live by (his own) faith, (faithfulness)"; "the righteous person will live as a result of the Messiah's faith (fulness)"; "the righteous person will live by (his own) faith (in the Messiah)" and should be taken together. Thus again Dr Hays seems

to hold all too lightly to the context of Galatians without any appreciable gain in understanding viz that the reception of the Spirit is given to the believers on the basis of Christ's faithfulness. Paul does not doubt that Christ is faithful and that he fulfilled the complete and righteous will of God but whether he inserts it in the areas where he discusses justification by faith and especially the passages claimed by Dr Hays is debatable indeed.

In spite of Dr Hays carefully worked out argument and his awareness of the difficulties of his thesis, he seems all too ready to see what fits in with his thesis rather than what suits the Pauline context. Some of his suggested interpretations are quite unusual if not precocious. There are too many difficulties in the way of accepting a narrative substructure for Paul's theological language in the form in which it is presented here. And even if it had validity, and all the problems were dealt with, we find it difficult to see how it can bring much illumination to the way in which Paul is to be understood.

#### Notes

1. No attempt will be made in this paper to examine the problem of the identification of the "Galatians". The matter has been thoroughly discussed and, with the loss of authority for Acts among some scholars, the Northern theory has gained ground. Nor will we need to re-open the somewhat worn discussion on reconciling Gal 2 with Acts. The tendency today is to concentrate on the "authentic" Pauline letters with Acts acting by way of corroboration as a secondary source.

On the matter of identifying the opponents of Paul in Galatians, among opinions are the following: apostles at Jerusalem with Peter as leader (F.C. Baur, 1831); Jewish Judaizers not supported by the Jerusalem church (J.B. Lightfoot, 1896); two groups: (i) Judaistic nomism and (ii) a spiritualistic, libertinistic, ultrapaulinistic group (W. Lütgert, 1919; J.H. Ropes, 1929); Jewish Christian nomists (H. Schlier; he also distinguishes between what the opponents are in themselves and the portrait Paul gives, Gal 1951); sectarian Jewish Christians with Gnostic colouring

but mainly legalistic (G. Stählin, 1957); Jewish Christian gnostics (W. Schmithals, 1970); Gentile Judaizers (J. Munck, 1959); Pharisaic group of Judaizing Christians, not supported by the Jerusalem church (H.J. Schoeps, 1959; he claims Paul misunderstood the Jewish law); Jewish Christian gnostics (K. Wegenast, 1962; as Schmithals); opponents gnostic but Paul thought they were Pharisaic Jewish Christians (W. Marxsen, 1968); Jewish Christians afraid of zealot pressure from Judea, initiated a nomistic campaign to circumcise Galatians to offset zealot reprisals (R. Jewett, 1970/71); Jewish Christian judaizers influenced by Pharisaism (A. Oepke, 1973); Galatians not at all by Paul but letter is directed toward orthodox Judaism mainly (J.C. O'Neill, 1972); Jewish Christians who preached circumcision and liberty from the law as well (W.G. Kummel, 1975)

2. The articles/books are: George Howard, Crisis in Galatia, Cambridge 1979; David John Lull, The Spirit in Galatia, Chico 1980; Bernard Hungerford Brinsmead, Galatians - Dialogical Response to Opponents, Chico 1982; Richard B. Hays, The Faith of Jesus Christ, Chico 1983; Hans Dieter Betz, The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians, NTS, 1975, pp353-379; and Galatians, Hermeneia Commentary Series, Philadelphia, 1979.
3. See Note 2
4. See Note 2
5. See Note 2.
6. JBL, Vol 100,2,1981, pp304-307
7. Brinsmead, p231; Notes 129, 133
8. Cf Richard B. Hays, "Precisely the observation that Paul appeals to the Galatians' experience of the Spirit as a premise from which he can argue deals a serious blow to Betz's theory that Galatians is an apology written 'in defense of the Spirit' ", op.cit. p179, N.16; again Dr Hays notes that Betz's exegetical observations on Gal 3.1-5 contradict his hypothesis about the aim of

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the letter (ibid)

9. JBL, 92, 1, 1973, pp88-108
10. Otto Merk, Der Beginn der Paränese im Galaterbrief, ZNW 60, 1969, pp83-104; cf Betz, Comm. p253, N.5
11. See Note 2
12. JBL, 100,2, 1981, pp307-308- the review of Howards' book offers serious criticisms of the "poorly written and poorly edited" book, its "questionable logic, excessively imaginative exegesis, and overly-speculative historical reconstructions." This present paper was delivered before Dr Sam B. Williams' review came into the writer's hands.
13. L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Galates, Neuchâtel 1972<sup>2</sup> p66
14. Cf the review by the present writer in IBS 4, July 1982, pp171-174; and note 2 above.
15. See above Note 2
16. J. Christiaan Beker, "Contingency and Coherence in the Letters of Paul", USQR 33, 1978, pp141-151 (an article not available to the present writer.
17. op.cit. p65
18. It is notable that it never occurs except after a preposition whether dia (Rom 3.22,25; Gal 2.16; 3:26; Phil 3.9) or ek (Rom 3.26; Gal 3.22) though there does not appear to be much difference if any between the expressions other than rhetorical.