

delight—"And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord."

But now comes to the front an incident in the history which all orthodox theologians pass by when possible without notice. The account reads as follows, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them: Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly and keepest the law."

Now, nothing is clearer from the epistles of Paul, than that this report concerning him, which had reached Jerusalem, was correct. And yet, here seems a scheme conceived and carried out to deny its truthfulness. Certainly, if the incident is correctly reported to us, there was intentional deception practiced by all parties concerned. Hence, as to this passage in the New Testament Scriptures, in place of fearing that the higher or lower critics might discover that it had been tampered with by copyists, our hopes are all with them that they may make some such discoveries, for almost any conceivable change would be for the better rather than be an injury. For this is that same Paul who, in his epistle, wrote: "And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."

But it is a legitimate criticism upon the actions of any man who is known to be

both honest and clear-headed that they must be interpreted so as to neither make him a fool or dishonest. Hence, we openly refuse to let this incident cast a blemish on the upright character of this apostle of righteousness. We would require the same incident to be confessed to by Paul himself before we could give it our full credence, or at least, be circumstantially told by more than one historian. We simply don't believe that this is a correct account of what was then done; which is tantamount to believing that Paul and the other apostles were not a set of accomplished deceivers.

As many as like may take hold of the other horn of the dilemma. But, they cannot accept the account as given in the Acts of the Apostles as true, and at the same time believe Paul and the elders of the church to be honest men, without, at the same time, writing themselves down as sanctioning the doing of evil that good might come.

Paul seems to allude to this incident in his epistle to Galatians, or if not to it, to something similar, where he tells of being forced to have Titus circumcised to please some false brethren at Jerusalem. And yet, he adds "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour."

Then, in the same epistle, he tells of his having publicly rebuked Peter for a species of deception which was as innocence itself when compared with what Paul is affirmed by Luke to have done.

Peter's act was, that whilst he freely ate and fellowshiped with Gentile Christians in the absence of Jewish converts, he would not do so when the latter were present. And yet, Paul was fired with indignation over a matter so simple and harmless in comparison with what he is alleged to have done at Jerusalem! Verily, if the account in Acts is correct then was Paul the prince of hypocrites.

We have dwelt on this phase of the narrative under consideration, for their sakes