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Jesus & Paul

by **J. Gresham Machen** (1881-1937)



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The Apostle Paul is the greatest teacher of the Christian Church. True, he has not always been fully understood. The legalism that he combatted during his lifetime soon established itself among his converts, and finally celebrated a triumph in the formation of the Catholic Church. The keen edge of his dialectic was soon blunted. But however his ideas may have been injured in transmission, they were never altogether destroyed. Much was forgotten; but what remained was the life of the Church. And the great revivals were revivals of Paulinism. Protestantism—in its practical piety as well as in its theology—was simply a rediscovery of Paul.

Yet Paul has never been accepted for his own sake. Men have never come to him for an independent solution of the riddle of the universe. Simply as a religious philosopher, he is unsatisfactory; for his philosophy is rooted in one definite fact. He has been listened to not as a philosopher, but as a witness—a witness to Jesus Christ. His teaching has been accepted only on one condition—that he speak as a faithful disciple of Jesus of Nazareth.

The question of the relation between Jesus and Paul is therefore absolutely fundamental. Paul has always been regarded as the greatest disciple of Jesus. If so, well and good. The Christian Church may then go forward as it has done before.

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But in recent years there is a tendency to dissociate Paul from Jesus. A recent historian has entitled Paul "the second founder of Christianity." If that be correct, then Christianity is facing the greatest crisis in its history. For—let us not deceive ourselves—if Paul is independent of Jesus, he can no longer be a teacher of the Church. Christianity is founded upon Christ and only Christ. Paulinism has

never been accepted upon any other supposition than that it reproduces the mind of Christ. If that supposition is incorrect—if Paulinism is derived not from Jesus Christ, but from other sources—then it must be uprooted from the life of the Church. But that is more than reform—it is revolution. Compared with that upheaval, the reformation of the sixteenth century is as nothing.

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At first sight, the danger appears to be trifling. The voices that would separate Paul from Jesus have been drowned by a chorus of protest. In making Paul and not Jesus the true founder of Christianity, Wrede is as little representative of the main trend of modern investigation as he is when he eliminates the Messianic element from the consciousness of Jesus. Measured by the direct assent which he has received, Wrede is a negligible quantity. But that is but a poor measure of his importance. The true significance of Wrede's "Paul" is that it has merely made explicit what was implicit before. The entire modern reconstruction of primitive Christianity leads logically to Wrede's startling pronouncement. Modern liberalism has produced a Jesus who has really but little in common with Paul. Wrede has but drawn the conclusion. Paul was no disciple of the liberal Jesus. Wrede has merely had the courage to say so.

This essential harmony between Wrede and his opponents appears even in some of the criticisms to which he has been subjected. No doubt these criticisms are salutary. They fill out omissions, and correct exaggerations. But they obscure the issue. In general, their refutation of Wrede amounts to little more than this— Paul's theology is abandoned, in order to save his religion. His theology, it is admitted, was derived from extra-Christian sources; but in his practical piety he was a true disciple of Jesus. Such a distinction is thoroughly vicious; it is contradicted in no uncertain tones by the Pauline Epistles. Where is it that the current of Paul's religious experience becomes overpowering, so that even after the lapse of centuries, even through the dull medium of the printed page, it sweeps the heart of the sympathetic reader on

with it in a mighty flood? It is not in the ethical admonitions. It is not in the discussions of the practical problems of the Christian life. It is not even in the inspired encomium of Christian love. But it is in the great theological passages of the epistles—the second chapter of Galatians, the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians, the fifth to the eighth chapters of Romans. In these passages, the religious experience and the theology of Paul are blended in a union which no critical analysis can dissolve. Furthermore., if it is impossible

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to separate Pauline piety and Pauline theology in the life of Paul himself, it is just as impossible to separate them in the life of the Church of today. Thus far, at least, all attempts at accomplishing it have resulted in failure. Liberal Christianity has sometimes tried to reproduce Paul's religion apart from his theology. But thus far it has produced nothing which in the remotest degree resembles the model.

In determining whether Paul was a disciple of Jesus, the whole Paul must be kept in view—not the theology apart from the warm religious life that pulses through it, and not the religious emotion apart from its basis in theology. Theology apart from religion, or religion apart from theology—either is an empty abstraction. The religion and the theology of Paul stand or fall together. If one is derived from Jesus, probably the other is also.

In discussing the relation between Jesus and Paul, it is better to begin with Paul. For, in the first place, Paul is more easily known than Jesus. That will be admitted on all sides. Jesus wrote nothing; all the extant records of his words are the reports of others. The trustworthiness of the records of his life is at present a matter of dispute. Yet even if the most favorable estimate of the Gospel narratives be adopted, Jesus remains far more incomprehensible than Paul. Indeed it is just when the Gospel picture is accepted in its entirety that the sense of mystery in the presence of Jesus becomes most overpowering.

For the life of Paul, on the other hand, the historian is in possession of sources which are not only trustworthy, but universally admitted to be trustworthy. At least seven of the Pauline Epistles—1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon—are now assigned by all except a few extremists to Paul himself; and the critical doubts with regard to three of the others are gradually being dispelled. In general, the disputed epistles are not of fundamental importance for determining the relation of Paul to Jesus. Colossians, perhaps, forms the only exception, and it is just Colossians that is most commonly accepted as Pauline. All the characteristic features of Paul's thinking appear within the homologoumena; and it is the characteristic features alone

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which can determine the general question whether Paul was a disciple of Jesus.

With regard to the book of Acts as a source for the study of Paul, there is more difference of opinion; and the difference is of more importance for the question now in hand. But three remarks can be made. In the first place, those sections of Acts where the first person plural is used are universally regarded as the work of an eye-witness. In the second place, the framework—the account of external events in the life of Paul—is for the most part accepted. In the third place, the tendency of recent criticism is decidedly towards a higher estimate of the general representation of Paul. The conciliatory attitude toward the Jews, which the book of Acts attributes to Paul, is no longer regarded as due altogether to an "irenical" purpose on the part of the historian.

The sources for the life of Paul are insufficient, indeed, for a complete biography. For the period up to the conversion, the extant information is of the most general kind, and after the conversion some fifteen years elapse before anything like a connected narrative can be constructed. Even from the years of the so-called missionary journeys, only a bare summary has been preserved, with vivid, detailed narratives only here and there. Finally, the close of Paul's life is shrouded in obscurity. But what the sources lack in quantity they make up in quality. Paul was gifted with a remarkable power of self-revelation, which has been exercised in his epistles to the fullest extent. Free from self-centred vanity, without the slightest indelicacy, without a touch of morbid introspection, he has yet revealed the very secrets of his heart. Not only the exquisite delicacy of feeling, the fine play of affection, the consecrated anger, the keen practical judgment are open before us, but also the deepest springs of the tremendous religious experience. The Pauline Epistles make Paul one of the best-known men of history. We might be able to account, in an external way, for every day and hour of his life, and yet not know him half so well.

As thus revealed, Paul is comprehensible. With all his greatness, almost immeasurably exalted as he is above the generality of mankind, he yet possesses nothing which any man might not conceivably possess. Starting from the common

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misery of sin, he attained to a peace with God, which, again, has been shared by humble Christians of all ages. His commission as apostle exceeds in dignity and importance that of other disciples of Christ, but does not free him from human limitations. It was Christ's strength which was made perfect in weakness. In all essential features, the religious experience of Paul may be imitated by every Christian. Jesus, on the other hand, is full of mystery. Of course the mystery may be ignored. It is ignored by Wrede, when he denies to Jesus the consciousness of his Messiahship. But even by the most thoroughgoing modern naturalism, that is felt to be a desperate measure. The Messianic consciousness is rooted too deep in the sources ever to be removed by historical criticism. That Jesus lived at all is hardly more certain than that he thought himself to be the Messiah. But the Messianic consciousness of Jesus is a profound mystery. It would be no mystery if Jesus were an ordinary fanatic or unbalanced visionary. Among the many false Messiahs who championed their claims in the first century, there may well have been some who deceived themselves as well as others. But Jesus was no ordinary fanatic—no megalomaniac. On the contrary, he is the moral ideal of the race. His calmness, unselfishness, and strength have produced an impression which the lapse of time has done nothing to obliterate. It was such a man who supposed himself to be the Son of Man who was to come with the clouds of heaven! Considered in the light of the character of Jesus, the Messianic consciousness of Jesus is the profoundest of problems. It is true, the problem can be solved. It can be solved by supposing that Jesus' own estimate of his person was true—by recognizing in Jesus a supernatural person. But the acceptance of the supernatural is not easy. For the modern mind it involves nothing short of a Copernican revolution. And until that step is taken, the person of Jesus cannot be understood. Paul, on the other hand, is more easily comprehended. To a certain extent, his religious experience can be understood, at least in an external way, even by one who supposes it to be founded not on truth but on error. Paul, therefore, may perhaps be a stepping-stone on the way to a comprehension of Jesus.

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In the first place, then, the investigation of the relation between Jesus and Paul should begin with Paul rather than with Jesus, because Paul is, if not better known than Jesus, at least more easily known. In the second place, Paul should be studied before Jesus just because he lived after Jesus. If the object of the investigation were Jesus and Paul, taken separately, then it would be better to begin with the earlier rather than with the later of the two; but since it is the relation between Jesus and Paul that is to be studied, it is better method to begin with Paul. For the investigator need not rely merely on a comparison of Jesus and Paul. If Paul was dependent upon Jesus, the fact may be expected to appear in direct statements of Paul himself, and in the attitude of his contemporaries toward him. Did Paul feel himself to be an innovator with respect to Jesus; and was he regarded as an innovator by the earlier disciples of Jesus?

The latter question, at any rate, cannot be answered offhand. There were undoubtedly some men in the primitive church who combatted Paul in the name of conservatism. These were the Judaizers, who regarded Paul's doctrine of Christian freedom as a dangerous innovation. The Jewish law, they said, must be maintained even among Gentile Christians. Faith in Christ is supplementary to it, not subversive of it. Were the Judaizers justified in their conservatism? Were they right in regarding Paul as an innovator? What was the relation between these Judaizers and the original apostles, who had been disciples of Jesus in Galilee? These are among the most important questions in apostolic history. They have divided students of the New Testament into hostile camps. F. C. Baur supposed that the relation between Judaizers and original apostles was in the main friendly. The original apostles, though they could not quite close their eyes to the hand of God as manifested in the successes of Paul, belong

nevertheless inwardly with the Judaizers rather than with Paul. The fundamental fact of apostolic history is a conflict between Paul and the original apostles, between Gentile Christianity and Jewish Christianity. The history of early Christianity is the history of the development and final adjustment of that conflict. The Catholic Church of the close of the second century is the result

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of a compromise between Pauline Christianity and the Christianity of the original apostles. This reconstruction of early Christian history was opposed by Albrecht Ritschl. According to Ritschl, the conflict in the apostolic age was not between Paul and the original apostles, but between apostolic Christianity—including both Paul and the original apostles—on the one side, and Judaistic Christianity—the Christianity of the Judaistic opponents of Paul—on the other. Specifically Jewish Christianity exerted no considerable influence upon the development of the Church. The Old Catholic Church of the close of the second century was the result not of a compromise between Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity, but of a natural process of degeneration from Pauline Christianity on purely Gentile Christian ground. The Gentile Christian world was unable to understand the Pauline doctrine of grace. Christianity came to be regarded as a new law—but that was due, not to the rehabilitation of the Mosaic law as a concession to Jewish Christianity, but to the tendency of the average man toward legalism in religion. As against Baur, Harnack belongs with Ritschl. Like Ritschl, he denies to Jewish Christianity any considerable influence upon the development of the Catholic Church. The Church Of 200, A.D. owes its difference from Paul, not to a compromise with Jewish Christianity, but to the intrusion of Greek habits of thought.

If Baur was correct, then Paul was probably no true disciple of Jesus. For Baur brought Paul into fundamental conflict with the men who had stood nearest to Jesus. But Baur was not correct. His reconstruction of apostolic history was arrived at by neglecting all sources except the epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians and then misinterpreting these. He failed to do justice to the "right hand of fellowship" (Gal. 2:9) which the pillars of the Jerusalem Church gave to Paul. And the account of Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch, apparently the strongest evidence of a conflict between Paul and the original apostles, is rather to be regarded as evidence to the contrary. For Paul rebukes Peter for hypocrisy— not for false opinions, but for concealing his correct opinions for fear of men. In condemning his practice, Paul approves his principles. Peter had therefore been in fundamental agreement with Paul.

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As for the Judaizers in Corinth, their opinions are as uncertain as their relation to the original apostles. It is not certain that they combatted Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, and it is not certain that they had any kind of endorsement from the original apostles. Surely the apostles were not the only ones who could have given them "letters of recommendation" (2 Cor. 3:1).

Baur's thesis, then, was insufficiently grounded. One fact, however, still requires explanation—the appeal of the Judaizers to the original apostles against Paul. It is not enough to say simply that the appeal of the Judaizers was a false appeal. For if the original apostles were as Pauline as Paul himself, it is difficult to see why they should have been preferred to Paul by the anti-Pauline party. Surely the original apostles must have given the Judaizers at least some color of support; otherwise the Judaizers could never have appealed to them. Until this appeal is explained, Baur remains unrefuted. But the explanation is not difficult to find. It was the life, not the teaching, of the original apostles which appeared to support the contentions of the Judaizers. The early Christians in Jerusalem continued to

observe the Jewish law. They continued in diligent attendance upon the Temple services. They observed the feasts, they obeyed the regulations about food. To a superficial observer, they were simply pious Jews. Now, as a matter of fact, they were not simply pious Jews. They were relying for salvation not really upon their observance of the law, but solely upon their faith in the crucified and risen Christ. Inwardly, Christianity was from the very beginning no mere continuation of Judaism, but a new religion. Outwardly, however, the early church was nothing more than a Jewish sect. And the Judaizers failed to penetrate beneath the outward appearance. Because the original apostles continued to observe the Jewish law, the Judaizers supposed that legalism was of the essence of their religion. The Judaizers appealed to the outward practice of the apostles; Paul, to the deepest springs of their religious life. So long as Christianity was preached only among Jews, there was no acute conflict. True Christians and mere Jewish believers in the Messiahship of Jesus were united by a common observance of the Mosaic law. But when Christianity began to

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transcend the bounds of Judaism, the division became apparent. The apostles, true disciples of Jesus, attested their own inward freedom by accepting the outward freedom of the Gentiles; the Judaizers, false brethren privily brought in, insisted upon the observance of the law as necessary to salvation.

Paul, then, was not the founder of universalistic Christianity. In principle, Christianity was universalistic from the very beginning. In principle, the first Christians in Jerusalem were entirely free from the Judaism with which they were united outwardly by observance of the Temple ritual. If Paul was not the founder of universalistic Christianity, what was he? What was his peculiar service to the Church? It was not the mere geographical extension of the frontiers of the Kingdom. That achievement he shares with others. Paul was perhaps not even the first to preach the Gospel systematically to Gentiles. That honor belongs apparently to certain unnamed Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene. The true achievement of Paul lies in another sphere—in the hidden realm of thought. When Christianity began to be offered directly to Gentiles in Antioch, the principles of the Gentile mission had to be established once for all. Conceivably, of course, the Gentile mission might have got along without principles. The leaders of the church at Antioch might have pointed simply to the practical necessities of the case. Obviously, the Gentile world, as a matter of fact, would never accept circumcision, and would never submit to the Mosaic law. Consequently, if Christianity was ever to be anything more than a Jewish sect, the requirements of the law must quietly be held in abeyance. Conceivably, the leaders of the church at Antioch might have reasoned thus; conceivably they might have been "practical Christian workers" in the modern sense. But as a matter of fact, the leader of the church at Antioch was the Apostle Paul. Paul was not a man to sacrifice principle to practical necessity.

What was standing in the way of the Gentile mission was no mere Jewish racial prejudice, but a genuine religious principle. Jewish particularism was part of the very essence of the Jews' religion. The idea of the covenant between God and his chosen people was fundamental in all periods of Judaism. To have offered the Gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles simply because

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that was demanded by the practical necessities of the case, would have meant to a Jew nothing less than disobedience to the revealed will of God. It would have been an irreparable injury to the religious conscience. Particularism was not a prejudice, but a religious principle. Therefore it could be overcome only by a higher principle. Its abrogation needed to be demonstrated, not merely assumed.

And that was the work of Paul.

The original apostles, through their intercourse with Jesus upon earth, and their experience of the risen Lord, had in principle transcended Jewish particularism. Inwardly they were free from the law. But they did not know that they were free. Certainly they did not know why they were free. Such freedom could not be permanent. It sufficed for the Jewish Church, so long as the issue was not clearly drawn. But it was open to argumentative attack. It could never have conquered the world. Christian freedom was held by but a precarious tenure, until its underlying principles were established. Christianity could not exist without theology. And the first great Christian theologian was Paul.

In championing Gentile freedom, then, in emphasizing the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, Paul was not an innovator. He was merely making explicit what had been implicit before. He was in fundamental harmony with the original apostles. And if he was in harmony with the most intimate disciples of Jesus, the presumption is that he was in harmony with Jesus himself.

If the harmony between Paul and the original apostles was preserved by Paul's conception of Christian freedom, it was preserved even more clearly by his view of the person of Christ. Just where modern radicalism is most confident that Paul was an innovator, Paul's contemporaries were most confident of his faithfulness to tradition. Even the Judaizers had no quarrel with Paul's conception of Christ as a heavenly being. In the Epistle to the Galatians, where Paul insists that he received his apostleship not from men but directly from Christ, he does so in sharp opposition to the Judaizers. Paul says, "not by man, but by Christ"; the Judaizers said, "not by Christ but by man." But if so, then the Judaizers, no less

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than Paul, distinguished Christ sharply from men, and placed him clearly on the side of God. If Paul can prove that he received his apostleship directly from Christ, then he has already proved that he received it directly from God. Apparently, it never occurred to him that his opponents might accept the former proposition and deny the latter. For the Judaizers as well as for Paul, God and Christ belong together. In 2 Cor. 11:4, it is true, Paul hints that his opponents are preaching another Jesus. If that passage stood alone, it might mean that the Judaizers differed from Paul in their conception of the person of Christ. But if there had been such a difference, it would surely have appeared more clearly in the rest of the Corinthian epistles. If the Judaizers had taught that Jesus was a mere man, son of David and nothing else, surely Paul would have taken occasion to contradict them. So dangerous an error—an error so completely subversive of Paul's deepest convictions—could not possibly have been left unrefuted. The meaning of the passage is quite different. It was the Judaizers themselves, and not Paul, who said that their Jesus was another Jesus. "Paul", they said to the Corinthians, "has not revealed the Gospel to you in its fulness (2 Cor. 4:3, 11:5). Paul has had no close contact either with Jesus himself, or with the immediate disciples of Jesus. Paul has preached but an imperfect gospel. We, on the other hand, can offer you the true Jesus, the true Spirit, and the true gospel. Do not listen to Paul. We alone can give you fully authentic information. "In reality, however, the Judaizers had nothing new to offer. Paul had been no whit behind "the pre-eminent apostles." He had made the full gospel plain and open before them (2 Cor. 11:5-6). If Paul's gospel was hidden, it was hidden only from those who had been blinded by the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). The "other Jesus" of the Judaizers existed only in their own inordinate claims. They preached the same Jesus as did Paul—only their preaching was marred by quarrelsomeness and pride. They preached the same Jesus; but they had not themselves come into vital communion with him. In that they differed from Paul.

It is not until the Epistle to the Colossians that Paul is compelled to defend his conception of the person of Christ. And

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there he defends it not against a conservative, naturalistic view of Jesus as a merely human Messiah, but against Gnostic speculation. With regard to the person of Christ, Paul appears everywhere in perfect harmony with all Palestinian Christians. In the whole New Testament there is not a trace of a conflict. That is a fact of tremendous significance. For Paul's conception of the supernatural Christ was formed not later than five years after the crucifixion of Jesus. There is every reason to believe that it was formed at the conversion. With regard to this matter, there is no evidence of a development in Paul's thinking. One passage, 2 Cor. 5:16, has occasionally been regarded as such evidence. But only by palpable disregard of the context. When Paul says, "Even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer," he cannot possibly mean that for a time after his conversion he regarded Christ simply as a human, Jewish Messiah. For the point of the whole passage is the revolutionary change wrought in every Christian's life by the death of Christ. It is clearly the appropriation of that death—that is, conversion—and not some subsequent development of the Christian life which brings the transition from the knowledge of Christ after the flesh (whatever that may be) to the higher knowledge of which Paul is now in possession. The revelation of God's Son (Gal. 1:16) on the road to Damascus clearly gave to Paul the essential elements of his Christology. What is more, that Christology must have formed from the very beginning the essence of his preaching. The "Jesus" whom he preached in the Damascan synagogues was also Christ—his Christ. That he preached in Damascus is directly attested only by the book of Acts, but, as has been observed by some who entertain rather a low estimate of Acts, it is implied in 2 Cor. 11:32-33. What could have caused the persecution of Paul except Christian activity on his part? If the book of Acts is correct, Paul preached also in Jerusalem only three years after his conversion. Yet the churches of Judea glorified God in him. If there was opposition to his heavenly Christ, such opposition has left no trace. Yet Paul had been in direct consultation with Peter. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that from the very beginning, the exalted Christology of Paul was accepted by the

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Jerusalem Church. The heavenly Christ of Paul was also the Christ of those who had walked and talked with Jesus of Nazareth.

By his contemporaries, then, Paul was regarded not as the founder of a new religion, but as a disciple of Jesus. That testimony may be overthrown by contrary evidence. But there is a strong presumption that it is correct. For among those who passed judgment upon Paul were included the most intimate friends and disciples of Jesus. Their estimate of Paul's relationship to Jesus can be rejected only under the compulsion of positive evidence. Those who knew Jesus best accepted Paul as a disciple of Jesus like themselves.

Thus, by his contemporaries, Paul was not regarded as an innovator with respect to Jesus. Did he regard himself as such?

Put in this form, the question admits of but one answer. "It is no longer I that live," says Paul, "but Christ that liveth in me. Christ, for Paul, was absolute Lord and Master. But this "Christ" whom Paul served was identified by Paul with Jesus of Nazareth. Of that there can be no manner of doubt.

Moreover, even in his estate of humiliation, Christ was regarded by Paul as Lord. It was "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8) who was crucified. The right of the earthly Jesus to issue commands was for Paul a matter of course. That is proved beyond question even by the few direct references which Paul makes to words of Jesus. So much is almost universally admitted. That Paul regarded himself as a disciple of Jesus can be denied by no one. The difference of opinion appears when the question is formulated in somewhat broader terms. Do the Pauline Epistles themselves, even apart from a comparison with the words of Jesus, furnish evidence that Paul was not, as he supposed, a disciple of Jesus, but the founder of a new religion?

In favor of the affirmative, two considerations have been adduced.

In the first place, in the Epistle to the Galatians Paul himself insists upon his independence of tradition. He received his gospel directly from Christ, not through any human agency. Even after he had received his gospel, he avoided all contact

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with those who had been apostles before him. He conferred not with flesh and blood. Paul received his gospel, then, by revelation from the risen Christ, not by tradition from the earthly Jesus. But the earthly Jesus was the historical Jesus. In exalting his direct commission from the heavenly Christ, Paul has himself betrayed the slenderness of his connection with Jesus of Nazareth.

In the second place, the same low estimate of historical tradition appears throughout the epistles, in the paucity of references to the words and deeds of Jesus. Apparently Paul is interested almost exclusively in the birth and death and resurrection. He is interested in the birth as the incarnation of a heavenly being, come for the salvation of men; and in the death and resurrection as the great cosmic events by which salvation was obtained. But for the details of the life of Jesus he displays but little interest. His mind and fancy are dominated by a vague, mysterious, cosmic personification, not by a definite historical person—by the heavenly Christ, not by Jesus of Nazareth.

The latter of these two arguments can be established only by exaggeration and by misinterpretation—by exaggeration of the paucity of references in Paul to the life of Jesus, and by misinterpretation of the paucity that really exists. In the first place, Paul displays far greater knowledge than is sometimes supposed, and in the second place, he possesses far greater knowledge than he displays. The testimony of Paul to Jesus has been examined many times—it will not be necessary to traverse the ground again. The assertion that the details of the life of Jesus were of little value for Paul is contradicted in no uncertain terms by such passages as 2 Cor. 10:1 and Rom. 15:3. When Paul urges as an example to his readers the meekness and gentleness of Christ, or his faithfulness in bearing reproaches in the service of God, he is evidently thinking not primarily of the gracious acts of the incarnation and passion, as in Phil. 2:5ff., and 2 Cor. 8:9, but of the character of Jesus as it was exhibited in his daily life on earth. Such expressions as these attest not merely knowledge of Jesus but also warm appreciation of his character. The imitation of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:1) had its due place in the ethical life of Paul. Direct commands

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of Jesus are occasionally quoted, and Paul is fully conscious of the significance of such commands (1 Cor. 7:10, 12, 25). In 1 Cor 11: 23ff., he quotes in full the words of Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper, and incidentally shows that he is acquainted with the exact circumstances under which the

words were spoken ("the night in which he was betrayed").

The incidental character of Paul's references to the life of Jesus itself suggests that he knew far more than he chooses to tell. The account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, for example, would never have found a place in the epistles except for certain abuses which had sprung up in Corinth. Yet Paul says that he had already "delivered over" that account to the Corinthians. It had formed part of his elementary preaching. And it displays intimate knowledge of detail. That one example is sufficient to prove not only that Paul knew more than he tells in the epistles, but also that what is omitted from the epistles formed part of the essential elements of his preaching. It is omitted not because it is unimportant, but on the contrary because it is fundamental. Instruction about it had to be given at the very beginning, and did not often have to be repeated. The hint supplied by such passages as the account of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23ff. is only supplementary to weighty a priori considerations. A missionary preaching that included no concrete account of the life of Jesus would have been preposterous. The claim that a crucified Jew was to be obeyed as Lord and trusted as Saviour must surely have provoked the question as to what manner of man this was. It is true that the gods of other religions needed to be described only in general terms. But Christianity had dispensed with the advantages of such vagueness. It had identified its God with a Jew who had lived but a few years before. Surely the tremendous prejudice against accepting a crucified criminal as Lord and Master could be overcome only by an account of the wonderful character of Jesus. The only other resource is an extreme supernaturalism. If the concrete figure of the crucified one had no part in winning the hearts of men, then the work must have been accomplished by a magical exercise of divine power—working out of all connection with the mind and heart. That is not the supernaturalism of Paul. When Paul writes to the

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Galatians that Jesus Christ crucified was placarded before their eyes, he refers to something more than a dogmatic exposition of the atonement. The picture of the crucified one owed part of its compelling power to the conviction that the death there portrayed was the supreme act of a life of love.

It is already pretty clear that the first chapter of Galatians cannot mean that Paul had a contempt for Christian tradition. When Paul says that he received his gospel by direct revelation from Jesus Christ, he cannot mean that he excluded from his preaching what he had received by ordinary word of mouth from the eye-witnesses of the life of Jesus. He cannot mean even that his proof of the resurrection of Jesus was based solely upon his own testimony. That inference, at least, would be very natural if Gal. 1 stood alone. But it is refuted in no uncertain terms by 1 Cor. 15:3-7. In this passage the appearances of the risen Christ to persons other than Paul are reviewed in an extended list, and Paul distinctly says that this formed a part of his first preaching in Corinth. So not even the fact of the resurrection itself was supported solely by the testimony of Paul. On the contrary, Paul was diligent in investigating the testimony of others.

The first chapter of Galatians, therefore, bears a very different aspect when it is interpreted in the light of the other Pauline epistles. Paul does not mean that all his information about Jesus came from the risen Christ. In all probability, Paul knew the essential facts in the life of Jesus even before he became a Christian. Since he was a persecutor of the Church, he must have had at least general information about its founder. The story of the life and death of the Galilean prophet must have been matter of common knowledge in Palestine. And after the conversion, Paul added to his knowledge. It is inconceivable that during the brief intercourse with Peter, for example, the subject of the words and deeds of Jesus was studiously avoided. Such an unnatural supposition is by no means required by the

actual phenomena of the epistles. That has been demonstrated above. The true reason why Paul does not mention his knowledge of the life of Jesus as part of the basis of his faith, is that for him such factual knowledge was a matter of course. For us it is not a matter

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of course, because many centuries stand between us and the events. For us, painful investigation of sources is necessary in order that we may arrive even at the bare facts. Indeed, it is just the facts that need to be established in the face of the sharpest criticism. But for Paul, the facts were matter of common knowledge; it was the interpretation of the *facts which was in dispute. Paul was living in Jerusalem only a very few years at the latest after the crucifixion of Jesus. The prophet of Nazareth had certainly created considerable stir in Jerusalem as well as in Galilee. These things were not done in a corner. The general outlines of the life of Jesus were known to friend and foe alike. Even indifference could hardly have brought forgetfulness. But Paul was not indifferent. Before his conversion, as well as after it, he was interested in Jesus. That was what made him the most relentless of the persecutors.

The bare facts of the earthly life of Jesus did not, therefore, constitute in Paul's mind a "gospel." Everyone knew the facts—the Pharisees as well as the disciples. The facts could be obtained through a thousand channels. Paul did not reflect as to where he got them. Before the conversion, he heard the reports of the opponents of Jesus, and the common gossip of the crowds. After the conversion, there were many eye-witnesses who could be questioned—perhaps in Damascus and even in Arabia as well as in Jerusalem. It never occurred to Paul to regard himself as a disciple of the men who merely reported the facts, any more than the modern man feels a deep gratitude to the newspaper in which he reads useful information. If that particular paper had not printed the news, others would have done so. The sources of information are so numerous that no one of them can be regarded as of supreme importance. For us, the sources of information about the life of Jesus are limited. Hence our veneration for the Gospels. But Paul was a contemporary of Jesus; the sources of his information about Jesus were so numerous that they could not be counted.

Thus, when Paul says that he received his gospel from the risen Christ, he does not mean that the risen Christ revealed to him the facts of the life of Jesus. He had known the facts

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before—only they had filled him with hatred. What he received at his conversion was a new interpretation of the facts. Instead of continuing to persecute the disciples of Jesus, he accepted Jesus as living Lord and Master. Conceivably, the change might have been wrought through the preaching of the disciples; Paul might have received his gospel through the ministrations of Peter. But such was not the Lord's will. Suddenly, on the road to Damascus, Jesus called him. Paul had heard, perhaps, of the call of the first disciples; he had heard of those who left home and kindred to follow the new teacher. He had heard only to condemn. But now it was his turn. Jesus called, and he obeyed. Jesus, whom he knew only too well—destroyer of the Temple, accursed by the law, crucified, dead and buried—was living Lord. Jesus called him—called him not merely to revering imitation of the holy martyr, not merely to a new estimate of events that were past, but to present, living communion with himself. Jesus himself, in very presence, called him into communion, and into glorious service. That, and that only, is what Paul means when he says that he received his gospel not from man but by revelation of Jesus Christ.

Neither by Paul himself, therefore, nor by the original apostles was Paul regarded as an innovator with reference to Jesus. On the contrary he regarded himself and was regarded by others as a true disciple. The presumption is that that opinion was correct. For both Paul himself, and the early Christians with whom he came into contact were contemporaries of Jesus, and had every opportunity to know him. If Paul had detected any fundamental divergence between his own teaching and that of Jesus of Nazareth, then he could not have remained Jesus' disciple. Unless, indeed, the conversion was supernatural. But the conversion was not supernatural if it left Paul in disharmony with Jesus. For it purported to be wrought by Jesus himself. If supernatural, the conversion could not have left Paul in disharmony with the historical Jesus, because it was wrought by an appearance of Jesus; if not supernatural, it would have been insufficient to make Paul regard himself as a disciple of one with whom he did not agree. That the original apostles had every opportunity

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for knowing the historical Jesus requires no proof. Yet undoubtedly they accepted Paul as a disciple.

The presumption thus established in favor of regarding Paul as a true disciple of Jesus could be overthrown only by positive divergence, established by an actual comparison of Jesus with Paul. At the very outset of such comparison, a serious difficulty is encountered. How is Jesus to be investigated? Paul we know, but what is the truth about Jesus? It will not do, it is said, to accept the Gospel picture in its entirety: For the Gospels were written after Paul, and have been affected by Pauline thinking. To a certain extent, therefore, it is no longer the historical Jesus which the Gospels describe, but the Pauline Christ. To compare Paul with the Gospels, therefore, is to compare not Paul with Jesus, but Paul with Paul. Naturally the comparison establishes coincidence, not divergence; but the result is altogether without value.

This objection was applied first of all to the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel was written undoubtedly many years after the Pauline Epistles. And undoubtedly it exhibits a remarkable harmony with Pauline thinking. The Pauline Christ is here made to appear even in the earthly life of Jesus. In this respect, it is said, the Gospel is more Pauline than Paul himself. Paul had done justice to the human life of Jesus by distinguishing sharply between the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ. Jesus had become Son of God in power only at the resurrection. In the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, the heavenly Christ appears in all his glory even on earth. Furthermore, the new birth of John 3 is identical with the Pauline conception of the new life which the Christian has by sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ. Even the Pauline doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ, though not prominent in the Fourth Gospel, appears in such passages as John 1:29 and 3:14-15.

The objection could be overcome only by an examination of the Fourth Gospel, which would far transcend the limits of the present discussion. The Fourth Gospel will therefore here be left out of account. It should be remarked, however, in passing, that dependence of the Fourth Gospel upon Paul has by no means been proved. A far-reaching similarity in ideas

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may freely be admitted. But in order to prove dependence, it is necessary to establish similarity not only of ideas, but also of expression. And that is conspicuously absent. Even where the underlying ideas are most clearly identical, the terminology is strikingly different—and not only the bare terminology but also the point of view. The entire atmosphere and spirit of the Fourth Gospel is quite

distinct from that of the Pauline Epistles. That is sufficient to disprove the hypothesis of dependence of the Gospel upon Paul. The underlying similarity of thought, when taken in connection with the total dissimilarity of expression, can be explained only by dependence upon a common source. And that source can hardly be anything but Jesus Christ.

Provisionally, however, the Fourth Gospel will be left out of account. That can be done with the greater safety, because it is now universally agreed that the contrast between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is not an absolute one. The day is past when the divine Christ of the Gospel of John could be confronted with a human Christ of Mark. Historical students of all shades of opinion have now come to see that Mark as well as John (though, it is believed, in a lesser degree) presents an exalted Christology. The charge of Pauline influence, therefore, has been brought not only against John, but also against the earlier Gospels. Hence, it is maintained that if Paul be compared even with the Jesus of the Synoptics, he is being compared not with the historical Jesus, but with a Paulinized Jesus. Obviously such comparison can prove nothing

If the Synoptic Gospels were influenced by Paul, then there is extant not a single document which preserves a pre-Pauline conception of Christ. That is a very remarkable state of affairs. The original disciples of Jesus, those who had been, intimate with him on earth, those from whom the most authentic information might have been expected, have allowed their account of the life of Jesus to be altered through the influence of one who could speak only from hearsay. Such alteration would certainly fall within the lifetime of many of the eyewitnesses. For the Gospel of Mark is generally admitted to have been written before 70, A.D. It is conceivable that the Pauline conception might thus have gained the ascendancy

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over the primitive conception. But it is hardly conceivable that it could have done so without a struggle, and of struggle there is not a trace. In the supposed Pauline passages in the Synoptic Gospels, the writers are quite unaware that one conception is being replaced by another. And the Pauline Epistles themselves, as has already been observed, presuppose a substantial agreement between Paul and the Jerusalem Church with regard to the person of Christ. This remarkable absence of struggle between the Pauline conception and the primitive conception can be explained only if the two were essentially the same. Only so could the Pauline conception have been accepted by the Jerusalem Church, and permitted to dominate subsequent Christianity. This conclusion is supported by the positive evidence, which has recently been urged, for example by Harnack, for a pre-Pauline dating of the Synoptic Gospels—that is, for dating them at a time when the Pauline! Epistles, even if some of them had already been written, could not have been collected, and could not have begun to dominate the thinking of the Church at large. The affinity between the Christology of Paul and the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels does not prove the dependence of the Gospels upon Paul. For the Christology of Paul was also, in essentials, the Christology of the primitive Christian community in Jerusalem.

The transition from the human Jesus to the divine Christ must be placed therefore not between the primitive church and Paul, but between Jesus and the primitive church. A man, Jesus, came to be regarded as a divine being, not by later generations, who could have been deceived by the nimbus of distance and mystery, but almost immediately after his death, by his intimate friends, by men who had seen him subject to all the petty limitations of daily life. Even if Paul were the first witness to the deification of Jesus, the process would still be preternaturally rapid. Jesus would still be regarded as a divine being by a contemporary of his intimate friends—and each deification would be no mere official

form of flattery, like the apotheosis of the Roman emperors, but would be the expression of serious conviction. The process by which the man Jesus was raised to divine dignity within a few years of his death would be absolutely unique. That has been recognized

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even by men of the most thorough-going naturalistic principles. The late H. J. Holtzmann, who may be regarded as the typical exponent of modern New Testament criticism, admitted that for the rapid apotheosis of Jesus, as it appears in the thinking of Paul, he was unable to cite any parallel in the religious history of the race. In order to explain the origin of the Pauline Christology, Bruckner and Wrede have recourse to the Jewish Apocalypses. The Christology of Paul was formed, it is said, before his conversion. He needed only to identify the heavenly, pre-existent Christ of his Jewish belief with Jesus of Nazareth, and his Christology was complete. But that explanation does not help matters. Even if it be accepted to the fullest extent, it explains only details. It explains why, if Jesus was to be regarded as a divine being, he was regarded as just this particular kind of divine being. But it does not explain how he came to be regarded as a divine being at all. And that is what really requires explanation. One might almost as well say that the deification of a man is explained if only it be shown that those who accomplished such deification already had a conception of God. The apotheosis of Jesus, then, is remarkable, even if it was due to Paul. But it becomes yet a thousand fold more remarkable when it is seen to have been due not to Paul, but to the intimate friends of Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, the process is so remarkable that the question arises whether there is not something wrong with the starting-point. The end of the process is fixed. It is the super-human Christ of Paul and of the primitive church. If, therefore, the process is inconceivable in its rapidity, it is the starting-point which becomes open to suspicion. The starting-point is the purely human Jesus. A suspicion arises that he never existed. If indeed any early Christian extant document gave a clear, consistent account of a Jesus who was nothing more than a man, then the historian might be forced to regard such a Jesus as the starting-point for an astonishingly

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rapid apotheosis. But as a matter of fact, no such document is in existence. Even those writers who represent Jesus most clearly as a man, represent him as something more than a man, and are quite unconscious of a conflict between the two representations. Indeed the two representations appear as two ways of regarding one and the same person. If, therefore, the purely human Jesus is to be reconstructed, he can be reconstructed only by a critical process. That critical process, in view of the indissolubly close connection in which divine and human appear in the Synoptic representation of Jesus, becomes, to say the least, exceedingly difficult. And after criticism has done its work, after the purely human Jesus has been in some sort disentangled from the ornamentation which had almost hopelessly defaced his portrait, the critic faces another problem yet more baffling than the first. How did this human Jesus come to be regarded as a super-human Jesus even by his most intimate friends? There is absolutely nothing to explain the transition except the supposed appearances of the risen Lord. The disciples had been familiar with a Jesus who placed himself on the side of man, not of God, who offered himself as an example of faith, not as the object of faith. And yet, after his shameful death, this estimate of his person suddenly gave place to a vastly higher estimate. That is bare supernaturalism. It is supernaturalism stripped of that harmony with the laws of the human mind which has been preserved even by the supernaturalism of the Church. In its effort to remove the supernatural from the life of Jesus, modern criticism has been obliged to heap up a double portion of the supernatural upon the Easter experience of the disciples. If the disciples had been familiar with a

supernatural Jesusa Jesus who forgave sin as only God can, a Jesus who offered himself not as an example of faith but as the object of faith, a Jesus who substantiated these his lofty claims by wonderful command over the powers of nature-then conceivably, though not probably, the impression of such a Jesus might have been sufficient to produce in the disciples, in a purely natural way, the experiences which they interpreted as appearances of the risen Lord. But by eliminating the supernatural in the life of the Jesus whom the disciples had known, modern criticism

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has closed the way to this its only possible psychological explanation of the Easter experience. In order to explain the facts of primitive Christianity, the supernatural must be retained at least either in the life of Jesus of Nazareth or else in the appearances of the risen Lord. But of course no one 'will stop with that alternative. If the supernatural be accepted in either place, then of course it will be accepted in both places. If Jesus was really a supernatural person, then his resurrection and appearance to his disciples was only what was to be expected; if the experience of the disciples was really an appearance of Jesus, then of course even in his earthly life he was a supernatural person. The supernaturalism of the Church is a reasonable supernaturalism; the supernaturalism into which modern criticism is forced in its effort to avoid supernaturalism, is a supernaturalism unworthy of a reasonable God. In order to explain the exalted Christology of the primitive church, either the appearance of the risen Christ or the Easter experience of the disciples must be regarded as supernatural. But if either was supernatural then there is no objection against supposing that both were.

The similarity of the exalted Christology of the Synoptic Gospels to the Christology of Paul is therefore no indication of dependence upon Paul. For the Christology of Paul was in essence the Christology of the primitive church; and the Christology of the primitive church must have found its justification in the life of Jesus. Furthermore, comparison of Pauline thinking with the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels will demonstrate that the harmony between Jesus and Paul extends even to those elements in the teaching of Jesus which are regarded by modern criticism as most characteristic of him. For example, the fatherhood of God, and love as the fulfilling of the law. The conception of God as father was known, it is true, in pre-Christian Judaism. But Jesus brought an incalculable enrichment of it. And that same -enrichment appears in Paul in all its fullness. In the earliest extant epistle (1 Thess. 1:1) and throughout all the epistles, the fatherhood of God appears as a matter of course. It requires no defence or elaboration. It is one of the commonplaces of Christianity. Yet it is not for Paul a mere matter

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of tradition, but a vital element in his religious life. It has not, through familiarity, lost one whit of its freshness. The cry, "Abba, Father", comes from the very depths of the heart. Hardly less prominent in Paul is the conception of love as the fulfilling of the law. "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" "And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." In the epistles, it is true, Paul is speaking usually of love for Christian brethren. But simply because of the needs of the churches. The closeness of the relationship with fellow-Christians had sometimes increased rather than diminished the tendency towards strife and selfishness. The epistles are addressed not to missionaries, but to Christians of very imperfect mold, who needed to be admonished to exhibit love even where love might have seemed most natural and easy. On account of the peculiar circumstances, therefore, Paul speaks especially of love for fellow-Christians. But not to the exclusion of love for all men. Never was greater injustice done than when Paul is accused of narrowness in his affections. His whole life is

the refutation of such a charge—his life of tactful adaptation to varying conditions, of restless energy, of untold peril and hardship. What was the secret of such a life? Love of Christ, no doubt. But also love of those for whom Christ died—whether Jew or Greek, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.

The fatherhood of God, it is true, does not mean for Paul that God is pleased with all men, or that all men will receive the children's blessing. And Christian love does not mean obliteration of the dividing line between the Kingdom and the world. But these limitations appear at least as clearly in Jesus as in Paul. The dark background of eternal destruction, and the sharp division between the disciples and the world are described by Jesus in far harsher terms than Paul ever ventured to employ. It was Jesus who spoke of the outer darkness and the everlasting fire, of the sin that shall not be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come; it was Jesus who said, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his

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own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

These examples might be multiplied; and they should be supplemented by what has been said above with regard to Paul's appreciation of the character of Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth, as he is depicted for us in the Gospels, was for Paul the supreme moral ideal. But that does not make Paul a disciple of Jesus. Be it spoken with all plainness. Imitation of Jesus, important as it was in the life of Paul, was overshadowed by something else. All that has been said about Paul's interest in the earthly life of Jesus, about his obedience to Jesus' commands, about his reverence for Jesus' character, cannot disguise the fact that these things for Paul are not supreme. Knowledge of the life of Jesus is not for Paul an end in itself but a means to an end. The essence of Paul's religious life is not imitation of a dead prophet. It is communion with a living Lord. In making the risen Christ, not the earthly Jesus, the supreme object of Paul's thinking, modern radicalism is perfectly correct. Paul cannot be vindicated as a disciple of Jesus simply by correcting exaggeration—simply by showing that the influence upon him of the teaching and example of Jesus was somewhat greater than has been supposed. The true relationships of a man are to be determined not by the periphery of his life, but by what is central—central both in his own estimation and in his influence upon history. But the centre and core of Paulinism is not imitation of the earthly Jesus, but communion with the risen Christ. It was that which Paul himself regarded as the very foundation of his own life. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature." "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." It was that which planted the Pauline gospel in the great cities of the Roman Empire; it was that which dominated Christianity, and through Christianity has changed the face of the world.

The tremendous difference between this communion with the risen Christ and mere imitation of the earthly Jesus has sometimes been overlooked. In the eagerness to vindicate Paul as a disciple of Jesus, the essential feature of Paulinism

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has been thrust into the background. It is admitted, of course, that in Paul's own estimation the thought of Christ as a divine being, now living in glory, was fundamental. But the really important thing, it is said, is the ethical character that is attributed to this heavenly being. Paul's heavenly Christ is the personification of self-denying love. But whence was this attribute derived? Certainly not from