

# THE REVIEW AND EXPOSITOR

---

---

Vol. IX.

January, 1912

No. 1.

---

---

## PAUL AS AN INTERPRETER OF CHRIST.

BY PROFESSOR A. T. ROBERTSON, D.D., LL.D.,  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

I do not try to get away from the "Charm of Paul," to use Sir W. M. Ramsay's felicitous phrase. He was a tremendous personality, and a real man is always attractive. But, great as Paul was, our chief interest in him lies in his relation to Jesus Christ. This in itself is not a new theme. The Christology of Paul has received adequate treatment at the hands of Alexander, Bruce, DuBose, Dykes, Everett, Holsten, Lucas, Mouteil, Paterson, Pfeiderer, Schmidt, Somerville, Stevens, and B. Weiss. I do not purpose to enter the realm of Biblical Theology in this discussion. My aim is a much narrower one than that of Paul's theology, or even his Christology. I mean to keep close to the path of the historical and exegetical and show how Paul came to be the Interpreter of Christ that he was, how his heritage and environment contributed to his progressive apprehension, how the Epistles necessarily reflected Paul's actual experience which served to reveal new aspects of Christ to Paul. Matheson has ably portrayed the "Spiritual Development of St. Paul," and Sabatier has made a brilliant

“Sketch of the Development of His Doctrine.” What I have in mind is rather a combination of these two points of view.

It is hardly worth while to pause long to lay one's critical foundations for such a study. To-day everything is challenged by somebody. Dr. T. K. Cheyne produces the tame and labored conclusion that, after prolonged and unbiased research, he has come to the deliberate conviction that such a man as Paul really lived. We are very grateful for this comforting opinion from the Oxford scholar. No doubt Paul himself is relieved to think that he can now claim historic existence. There is raging at present in Germany a fierce controversy as to whether Jesus ever lived. “The Christ-Myth,” by Drews, has gone through a dozen editions. He claims to show that Jesus had no historical reality and is pure myth. Even radical German scholars like Von Soden and J. Weiss have gone into the fray to show that after all Jesus did live in Palestine. Last January, Prof. Shirley J. Case, of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, vigorously argued in the *Biblical World* against the delusion of attributing divinity to Jesus. But he now steps forth to prove against all comers “The Historicity of Jesus.” Jesus did live. For this we are grateful. Both Paul and Jesus have historic careers and may be fit subjects of antiquarian interest.

But the path is not yet clear. *The Hibbert Journal* has been the arena of a stiff debate concerning “Jesus or Christ.” Granted the historic Jesus, one must not admit the theological Christ. It is gravely argued by these modern wise men that the Jesus of history and the Christ of dogma are wholly different. The Christ is a mere theological invention, the attribution to the man Jesus of qualities which he did not possess, the deification of the real man Jesus. Prof. W. B. Smith, of New Orleans, has even undertaken to show us the “Pre-Christian Jesus,” the man stripped of all the later Christological

vagaries, the man as he was. Other voices rise above the confusion and boldly charge Paul with being responsible for having led the world astray from the simple Jesus of the Gospels. He is even called the Creator of Christianity, or the perverter, as one may choose. We have just passed through the din of this conflict. The big German guns have exploded and Paul still remains as the Interpreter of Christ. The effort to find a different conception of Christ in the Gospels has failed. Even the Synoptic Gospels have been dubbed Pauline in spirit and the earliest sources of the life of Jesus known to us (Q and Mark) place Jesus on as high a pedestal as does Paul.

Let us then assume the facts in the Gospels and Acts and the Epistles of Paul. That to some will be a violent assumption, but some men have a spasm at any statement of fact. Let us follow Paul in his approach to and apprehension of Christ. He was always pressing on, after he began, to apprehend that for which he was apprehended. He was always on the point of complete success, but the prize slipped on ahead. It was the one great passion of his life. Ἐν δέ. To forget and to push on to the riches in Christ. Do his best, the figure of Christ grew larger before him all the while. Nothing more than an outline of this great theme can be here attempted.

I. *Paul Knowing Christ after the Flesh.*—When Paul first heard of Jesus we do not know. It is hardly probable that he saw Jesus when a student at the seminary of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Paul had in all likelihood finished his course before the public ministry of Jesus began. He may have remained in Jerusalem, but more likely returned to Tarsus. It is a fascinating theory of some men that Paul came back to Jerusalem in time to see Jesus die on the cross. But we have no evidence of that. When he said (2 Cor. 5:16) that he

had once known Christ after the flesh ( *κατὰ σάρκα* ) he almost certainly means that he once looked on Christ from the fleshly standpoint, "yet now we have known him so no more." He recognized Jesus on the road to Damascus after the explicit statement, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." So then Paul's first approach toward Jesus was along the line of his prejudices. He was taught to hate the new claimant for the Messiahship who had been justly crucified to avoid an insurrection. This brilliant, cultured young Jew had all the patriotic fervor of Judas Maccabeus and the religious pride of the typical Pharisee. He was in touch with the Hellenistic life of the time and had a broader outlook on the world than many Palestinian Jews by reason of his life in Tarsus. He was a Roman citizen and a Hellenist, but he was most of all a Pharisee. The contact with the sect of the Nazarenes inflamed his religious nature and his orthodoxy blazed out with a terrible light. As we see the young man holding the garments while Stephen is stoned, he seems only to possess disqualifications for understanding Jesus of Nazareth. Every step that he takes in the persecution of the Christians is away from Christ. He becomes the very antithesis of Christ.

II. *Paul Seeing Christ Face to Face.*—It was a violent revulsion in Paul's whole nature when he looked into the face of the Risen Christ. It was the supreme test of his life, like a collision of a steel train. He was going at full speed against Christ and was abruptly halted. The shock was very great to Paul's physical nature. It was even greater to his spiritual equipment. He was thrown to the earth, and blinded in his eyes. But he had seen Jesus, the one whom he had come to hate most of all, though he had not looked upon His face before. He scorned Him for the pestilent heresy caused by His unfortunate life.

In great moments the mind is abnormally active and

the essential facts are stamped upon the brain with clearness and vividness. The salient features of this climacteric event never faded from Paul's memory. In speech and letter he repeatedly told of the revolution in his own heart and life. In all essentials the story never varied. It was not of his doing. Jesus manifested Himself to Paul. It was not of Paul's wish nor with his consent. But the undoubted presence and voice of the Risen Jesus convinced Paul that he was hopelessly in error. The look that Jesus gave Paul before he became blind remained with him forever. On that day Light shined into his heart "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). He understood now why Stephen had died rather than give up that Light that had shined into his own heart. It was here that Paul received his great qualification to interpret Christ. It was in the look that passed between Paul and Jesus. Dr. Dale once said that Mr. Moody had a right to preach since he could not talk about sinners without tears in his eyes. It was full surrender on Paul's part in response to the unutterable compassion of Jesus. As he stood in the white light of Christ's presence Paul saw his own picture silhouetted in the shadow of his sins. No man is qualified to talk about Christ who has not in a real sense seen Him face to face. Paul had an objective vision on a par with the resurrection appearances. The modern preacher cannot claim that experience, but he must have the look into the face of Christ in order to help others to see Jesus. No sadder calamity can befall Christianity than to have men as its exponents who merely mumble what they have read or have heard. Paul was not now able to reconcile his new experience with his old theology, but he could not deny his new experience. On this foundation he will build a new theology and a better one, a scientific theology in the true sense, the reflection of his experience of Christ.

III. *Paul Proving that Jesus Is the Son of God.*—There were good reasons why Paul should say nothing at all. He was a tyro in Christian experience. He had only scraps of Christian theology. He could easily bungle what he did know. He was under suspicion. Ananias who had baptized him had to receive a special revelation before he was willing to baptize him or lend any endorsement to him as a disciple of Christ. He was known as the chief foe of the disciples of Jesus and he had come to Damascus to arrest those who had fled thither to escape his clutches in Jerusalem. He had with him the official papers of the Sanhedrin for the arrest of the Christians. Paul was wholly on the defensive. The Jews would regard him as a renegade. He was without a friend save Ananias and Judas who were doubtful. He would not get a hearing from Jew or Christian. And yet Paul would not be silent. "Straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). He must give his witness. It is a sure mark of the new convert that he must tell others of his new found joy. Paul was a novice in Christ, but not in mental equipment. He was already a man of high culture, great genius, and much experience in public life though comparatively young. He was trained in public discourse, but his voice must have sounded strange to his own ears as he heard it deliver powerful reasons why Jesus is the Son of God. He was refuting all his old arguments as successfully as Stephen had done. "And all that heard him were amazed" (Act 9:21). It was the voice of a lamb where they had usually heard the voice of the wolf. They were uneasy even now for fear that the wolf might crop out and make havoc as of old with all them that called on the name of Jesus. But Paul had found his voice and stuck to his message till it became familiar as well as sweet to him. He did not have many aspects of Christ that he could describe, but he knew one from personal experience. He knew that Jesus was

Messiah, the Son of God. He had seen Jesus Christ in His risen state. He grasped at once the two-fold nature of Christ, His humanity and His deity. Paul was wise enough to begin with what he knew by experience. He stuck to that and "increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ" (Acts 9:22). Paul's first interpretation of Jesus sounded the keynote of his entire ministry. He will never get beyond this truth whatever else he may learn hereafter.

#### *IV. Paul Adapting Himself to His New Environment.*

It was clear to Paul that he needed a season of retirement in order to take stock of his situation. The rebuffs at Damascus made it all the easier for him to follow his judgment to spend a few years in Arabia. He must make adjustment and take his bearings. The call had come to him from Christ through Ananias at Damascus to go far hence to the Gentiles. Thus had ended the three days of darkness and doubt as to his future. But even so, Christ had not told him to go at once. The way was not now open nor were the Jews anxious to hear him. He had his call, but none to hear. Besides, there was needed a delimitation between his old Judaism and his new Christianity. The two systems must come to terms in his own mind. He had acted on the assumption that they were hostile to each other. Now that he had opened his heart to Christ, how much of his old theology could he carry on with him? He must think the whole matter through in order to see where he stood. We do not know precisely what part of Arabia Paul visited, but at any rate it was the ancestral home of the Semitic race. He went back to the old haunts of his ancestors whether he actually journeyed as far as Mount Sinai or not. There was in his heart the conflict between law and grace. He was a master in rabbinic lore and Mosaic law, though as yet unskilled in the grace of Christ. But Christ

had looked upon him and he would gaze steadfastly into that face till he could blend law and grace. Arabia was the melting pot for Paul's theology. He was probably not wholly alone during this period, but meditations and reflections were predominant. He comes back to his work with a clear vision of the cardinal doctrines of grace. He has come to see how a new Israel is to supplant the old. The new is rooted in the old and is the true realization of the hopes of his people. Paul perceives that the Messianic longings of the Jews have come true in Jesus. It is his task to convince the Jews of this great fact and to help them see the wider outlook of the new Israel which is to include Gentiles as well as Jews. His life in Tarsus had prepared him for this revolution. The experience of Peter on the housetop at Joppa proves how difficult it was for a Jew to conceive of a Gentile in the Kingdom of God except in terms of Jewish racial bonds. So far from the years in Arabia being wasted, they served to lay broad and firm the foundations of Paul's theological system.

V. *Paul Winning an Ear for His Interpretation of Christ.*—It was not a new Christ that Paul had to preach, but he had a more just perspective of the world-mission of Christ than any of the apostles had yet grasped. Peter had said at Pentecost that the message was to them that were afar off, but he later showed that he understood that to mean that Gentiles would become Jews. Stephen had seen the matter more simply in its true spiritual nature as Jesus had taught the woman of Samaria that the worship of God was not bound by temple or tribe. And now Paul was taking up this larger conception of Stephen as his own life-task. Would he meet the fate of Jesus and of Stephen? The liberalizing of social and religious prejudice is a perilous undertaking for any man. But Paul's path is clear before him. He will heed the call of Christ to bear the message to the Gentiles. He



knows also that he must suffer for Christ in so doing. But the vision has come to him and he will not be disobedient to it whatever befall him. It is good for Paul that as he returns to Damascus he does not know the details of his future career. God mercifully veiled that from him. He will take up his burden day by day. He is conscious of a richer experience and fuller knowledge as he expounds anew the things of Christ in Damascus. There is proof of his fresh power in the plot of the Jews to kill him. He is not a negligible quantity. Paul had taught the Jews how to kill people for the crime of being Christians. They are now practising what he taught them, and Paul was not successful in convincing the Jews of Damascus that Christianity was the true Judaism, that Jesus was in truth the Messiah of their hopes. He was not able to answer his former arguments, in their opinion. But he has won the confidence of the Christians. He won converts to Christ to some extent, for we read of "his disciples" who planned his escape. It was a desperate beginning and a lonely retreat, but Paul was unafraid. He went straight on to Jerusalem. He would tell his new story in the presence of Gamaliel himself if he would hear it. If Paul had been fainthearted, he would surely have hesitated to come back to Jerusalem. Once he had been the joy and pride of the Sanhedrin; now he is the victim of their scorn and hate. Once the disciples had fluttered and fled with dread at his approach. He is cut to the quick to note how they shrink from him still. The smell of fire is on him yet. There was no sympathy in Jerusalem for Paul, no ear for his message. It was enough to throw a weak nature into despair. Paul was sensitive and felt it keenly, as any preacher does who finds his person and his message unwelcome. It is an honor to Barnabas that he had the insight and the courage to see what was in Paul. On this endorsement Peter and John opened their hearts to the new recruit. Paul had two weeks of blessed fellowship

with Peter (*ιστορήσαι*). Peter knew at any rate that Paul was a man of parts. He had made the disciples feel his steel. It is no discredit to Peter to say that he could not have foreseen how great a man he was dealing with at this juncture nor how Paul would one day become the chief apostle of Christ and rob Peter of his primacy as an exponent of Christ. There was no jealousy between them, and Peter could tell Paul many facts about the life of Christ, but Paul had already made his interpretation of Christ, so that he could later say that Peter added nothing to his knowledge of Christ. It was a novel experience to Paul to preach Christ in the Hellenistic synagogues of Jerusalem. He did it with such power as Stephen had done before that the Grecian Jews were about to kill him. The Lord Jesus had to appear to Paul in a trance in the temple and bid him depart, for the Jews there would not hear him.

VI. *Paul Pleading the Case with the Jews.*—We are not following closely the story of Paul's Life. The years at Tarsus were not wasted. The opportunity came at Antioch for which Paul had long waited. This again was due to Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas have had a specific call of the Holy Spirit to go on a world campaign to win the Gentiles to Christ. They have not found the task easy. In order to get at the Gentiles, they find it wise to preach to the Jews. Many Gentiles had business connections with the Jews. Some attended worship in the synagogues. Besides, there had been no command to slight the Jews for the Gentiles. At Antioch in Pisidia Paul had the opportunity to plead the cause of Christ before Jews and devout Gentiles. Fortunately we have preserved full notes of this discourse, which is the earliest statement with any fullness of Paul's conception of Christ. The accuracy of Luke in his reports of Paul's speeches is well vindicated by Maurice Jones, in his book *St. Paul the Orator*. Paul has now been a preacher of

Christ some ten or twelve years. He has put to the test his interpretation of Jesus. He is in no sense apologetic nor timid. He is no longer a tyro, though a stranger to this particular audience. Certainly he has now learned how to put his view of Christ to a Jewish audience with more suavity and winsomeness than was true at Damascus and Jerusalem. The whole point of his sermon is to show that Jesus is the promise made to David. He speaks from the Jewish standpoint about the Jewish Messiah. Paul shows clear knowledge of John the Baptist and his relation to Christ. He states the facts of Christ's death and resurrection and expounds the significance of both of these great events. He gives the core of this system of theology which is justification by faith in Christ, who died on the cross for the remission of our sins. He shows that the law of Moses could not justify the Jews before God. It was all very wonderful and strange and yet very attractive. They wanted to hear more about it. On the next Sabbath the jealousy of the Jewish leaders led Paul to turn to the Gentiles instead of the Jews. But we have caught a glimpse of Paul's point of view and method with Jews. We see his skill in this matter also as he speaks to the mob from the steps of the town of Antonia, and later before Agrippa in Cæsarea. He is thoroughly at home in all Jewish questions and seems the man of all men to speak with the Jewish people about Christ. In the last chapter of Acts we see Paul pleading with the Jews of Rome to accept the Kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and the partial success obtained there. In Rom. 9-11 Paul reveals his own passionate love for the Jews, his own kinsmen in the flesh.

VII. *Stating the Case to the Gentiles.*—The real work of Paul was to be with the Gentiles. This was the call of Christ made long ago. The Jews themselves drove Paul more and more to preach to the Greeks and the

Romans. As the Jews spurned Paul and his gospel, he dramatically and proudly turned to the Gentiles. *They will hear*, he had said to the Jews in Rome. He knew that by blessed experience. The Gentiles persecuted Paul also. At first they were put up to it by the Jews. But on the whole the Gentiles gave an attentive ear to Paul. He glorified his ministry and marvelled that Christ should have intrusted to him, the least of all saints, this grace to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Paul evidently felt that he was not so well qualified to speak to the Greek as to the Jew. His education was Jewish and his pride and prejudices ran in that direction. He had come to see that Christianity was the true Judaism. He had overcome his difficulties in that respect. It was a gigantic task to grapple with the cyncretistic religions of the Græco-Roman world of that period. Babylon, Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome had all contributed their share to make a mongrel brood. Astarte, Isis, Diana, and Venus polluted the life of the time. The emperor-cult had displaced and degraded the old worship of Zeus and his circle of deities. False philosophy had triumphed over the nobler ideals of Socrates and Plato. Epicurean and Stoic contended in the market-place with any chance comer just for the sake of argument. Mithraism held many in its grip by its mysticism and magic. Gnosticism was already showing signs of life. One needed to be cyclopædic in knowledge and masterful in interpretation to be able to win a hearing for a new religion in a world already badly overstocked and disgusted with what it had. But God had His man ready. Paul was reared in Tarsus, the home of a great Greek university and of philosophers also, a center of Greek and Roman life. The tides of the Roman world ran through Tarsus, and Paul is never greater than in his power to take the very language of the various cults of the time and charge it with Christian meaning. He does this time and again. Thus

he gets a hearing from the man in the street. He was a man of the schools. But he knew how to talk in the tongue of his time. He could be understood. A typical example of Paul's skill in this respect is seen in the wonderful address on Mars' Hill. In the midst of all that was great in Athens and before Epicureans and Stoics, Paul made a most persuasive statement of the gospel of Christ in such a way as to turn to his advantage all his surroundings and yet to bring out many of the fundamental doctrines. He made some impression also upon the fickle Athenians. How well Paul succeeded with the Gentiles is seen in the long line of churches planted by him in Asia and Europe. In his Epistles he will glory in the power of the cross of Christ. It was foolishness to the Greeks at first, but to many it became the wisdom of God.

VIII. *Paul Looking for Christ's Return.*—In Athens Paul was face to face with Greek philosophy and sought to preach Christ in the teeth of it. At Thessalonica just before, it was the power of the Roman empire that confronted him in all its promise on the spirit of man. He has gone on to Corinth where he writes, but the great problems of Thessalonica are on his heart. There he felt keenly the conflict between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Rome. He foresaw the inevitable grapple between these two great forces for the mastery of the world. He found hope in the coming of Jesus to claim his own. It was natural that this hope should be brighter in the earlier stages of the apostolic history. The subject was left in doubt by Christ himself as to the time. The disciples were charged to be ready. There is no doubt that this steady hope cheered them through the first years of separation from Him. Some came to look for Him at once. It was hard to preach on the topic without creating a false impression. Hope would so easily become certainty. So it happens that the very first group of Paul's Epistles deals with last things. Escha-

tology is to the fore in the beginning in the apocalyptic language of the time, but it gradually receded as time went by. Paul never lost his conviction that Christ would come again nor should we, but other topics came to occupy his heart more as the years flew by. Indeed, the two Thessalonian Epistles are written chiefly to correct misapprehension about what Paul had said on this subject. It is so easy to be misunderstood. Some had understood him to say that those already dead would have no share in the second coming. Others drew the inference that since Christ was coming at once, there was no need to work. So Paul has to deny that he said that Jesus was coming right away, indeed the Man of Sin loomed large in the horizon before that event. This conflict with Rome did begin all too soon and lasted much longer than Paul knew. In the Thessalonian Epistles therefore, Jesus appears in a very personal and real way to Paul. He mentions various items about His life and death and aspects of faith in Him as Lord on a par with God the Father. He is the Son of God, raised from the dead, who will surely come back again. Salvation is through the atoning death of Christ. The Christian meanwhile lives in Christ as the sphere of his activity and the ground of his hope. These are not doctrinal Epistles, but Paul's great doctrines are here in the most incidental form. To understand Paul's standpoint then one must look back across the eighteen years that have passed since he met Jesus on the Damascus Road. It is all a matter of course with Paul now, but the fire of love and faith burns bright. He is not blasé. Christianity is not stale nor is preaching perfunctory. He meets every new situation with the alertness of youth and finds Christ adequate for everything.

IX. *Paul Justifying the Cross of Christ.*—Paul's Epistles may not be a complete picture of his conception of Christ. We have very few of Paul's many sermons.

He may have written other letters. He knew things about Christ which it was unlawful to utter. But, so far as they go, the letters do justly reveal Paul's apprehension of the mystery of Christ, as he himself said (Eph. 3:3f.). They go very far indeed. They are the greatest letters of history, and sound depths and scale heights that baffle the most of us. I am not attempting here an outline of Paul's life nor an exposition of his Epistles, but merely to draw a pastel, so to speak, of the background of Paul's growing knowledge of Christ. I am using the Epistles as a revelation of Paul's progressive apprehension of Christ. It is some four years later that Paul writes First Corinthians. He is in Ephesus, and is cut to the heart over the troubles in the church at Corinth. He has lived to see the sad sight of a church split over the merits of various preachers, including himself. They have appealed to Paul for help and he has to speak. The divisions led to or helped on various vices and weaknesses. Paul feels called on to defend his style of preaching in Corinth. Cephas had not been there and Apollos was acknowledged to be eloquent. Paul makes his defense by showing how he did right in determining to preach only Christ Jesus and Him crucified. It was bad enough as it was. If Paul had pandered to the false taste and low standard of the Corinthians for flashy oratory and superficial philosophy, he could have made a greater name for himself and ruined the church. As it turned out many scoffed at the foolishness of his preaching the cross of Christ. But his chief joy in it all is that he laid no other foundation in Corinth than Christ Jesus. The Cross of Christ is the truest wisdom for it is God's wisdom. It is a great apologetic for the Cross that Paul makes in that Epistle and one that is extremely pertinent now. The heart of Paul's message is the Cross and the resurrection of Christ as proving His power over death on the Cross. Paul apparently moves in a new realm on this subject, but we have seen the same point

of view in the sermon at Antioch in Pisidia. His mastery of this great theme shows that he had often preached on it and thought it through. He wields this weapon with great power.

X. *Paul Beholding the Glory of God in Christ.*—Second Corinthians is the most personal of all Paul's Epistles. He is at white heat. The crisis has come at Corinth. Paul is in flight from Ephesus. He has met Titus in Philippi, with much agitation of spirit. He writes with heart all aglow with emotion. He seems to catch a fresh glimpse of the face of Jesus. He lifts the whole discussion of the ministry out of the sordid atmosphere of Corinth, and places it on the pinnacle of spiritual communion with God in Christ. The eternal relation of the soul with God in Christ is here seen with marvelous clearness. This Epistle is a Pierian spring for every preacher who is racked with cares and ecclesiastical worries. Paul is able to sing so nobly because he is sure of the presence of Christ with him. He has real rapture with Christ. Nothing else really matters now. He is the slave of Christ in God's triumphal march through the ages. He is an incense-bearer with the sweet savor of Christ unto God, whatever men may think. So he is confident in Christ with unveiled face before the whole world. The light of God is in his heart through Christ, and for Jesus' sake he will endure anything. He is anxious to be at home with the Lord, but meanwhile will endeavor to be well-pleasing unto Him as His ambassador. The love of Christ holds him fast to his great task. The power of Christ is with him in his weakness. The glory of Christ ennobles men and Paul glories in the possibilities of all men through Christ.

XI. *Battling for Liberty in Christ.*—The date of Galatians is much disputed, and the book has no very clear earmarks of time save the note of protest against the effort of the Judaizers to fasten the Mosaic ritual on the Gentiles. That effort was made as early as A.D. 50,



after Paul's return from the first mission tour as is seen in Acts 15. Paul took a bold stand for freedom from the ceremonial law for all Gentile Christians. He won the support of the Apostles at Jerusalem and saved the day, but the Judaizers would not stay defeated. They reopened the controversy at Antioch and followed Paul's travels in Corinth and Galatia. The Epistle to the Galatians is the bugle-blast of liberty. It seems to come just after Second Corinthians and has much of the same heat as that great Epistle. Paul here conceives Christ in His universal relation as the emancipator from the shackles of traditional ceremonialism. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. It is a great conception and is triumphant proof of Paul's statesmanlike grasp of great issues in that he saw at once and continually how much was at stake. Spiritual Christianity was in peril and under God Paul saved that blessed heritage in Christ for us all. He brushed aside the Pharisaic pretensions to exclusive prerogatives in the Kingdom of God. Paul saw that class and national lines did not run through Christ. In Galatians He seizes upon the root ideas in Christ's mission and applies them to the cause of human freedom and progress. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ made you free. Paul had drawn the picture of Christ with a bold hand before the eyes of the Galatians. He cannot understand how, once having seen Christ, they can go back to the weak and beggarly elements of rabbinism. That message is good for all time as a protest against the bondage of mere tradition and ritual. It is vital union with Christ that Paul covets. Christ lives in Paul and he is crucified with Christ.

XII. *Paul Expounding Redemption in Christ.*—No condensed statement can do justice to Paul's reasoned exposition of the varied relations of Christ to all the phases of the work of redemption as wrought out in the Epistle to the Romans. It is not merely that Paul

is here seen at his best, in the prime of his mental powers, on the greatest of themes, and with sufficient space to give play to his great genius. Paul in Romans gives his gospel. In a true sense Paul's evangel is the full and finest evangel of all (Cf. Whyte, Thomas Shepherd, p. 18). It is not a new gospel; it is the one that Paul had joyfully preached to the Gentiles. Nowhere does Paul make it clearer that Christ is the center of all his thinking and actions. The heart of his argument turns on the fact that Jesus made propitiatory offering for our sins by His blood on the cross, which offering is mediated to us by faith in Christ as our Redeemer so that God freely justifies us and declares us righteous and will ultimately make us righteous. There are great words in Romans like righteousness, sanctification, redemption, propitiation, faith, justification, power, reconciliation, salvation, no condemnation, life, victory, sons, adoption, heirs. But they are all meaningless to Paul, apart from Christ. Christ is here seen as the sole means of righteousness, the sole hope of redemption, the pledge of all good. In Christ we are more than conquerors. Christ will never desert us till He takes us to the Father. In Christ Paul defies all the forces of evil in earth and hell. He stands upon the Rock of Ages and faces the devil. He writes from Corinth with the storm at Jerusalem gathering in the distance, but he is not afraid. Christ is over all God blessed forever (according to the probable punctuation in 9:5). He is Son of David and Son of God.

XIII. *Paul Learning Humility from Christ.*—Paul has been long a prisoner in Cæsarea and Rome when he writes to the Philippians. His spirit is chastened and humbled. The proud eagle looks out and sees the crags which he cannot reach. Paul is confident, indeed, that he will be set free again, but meanwhile he has learned how to be content. He has come to see that Christ is his very life. He is in a real sense living over the life of Christ.

He is emboldened to urge that the Philippians have the mind that was in Christ. The greatest words that Paul utters about Christ seem to come out incidentally. It is so with the great passage in Phil. 2 on the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. We see Christ in His preëxistent state of glory, His lowly life and death, His consequent greater exaltation. Paul betrays intense passion for Christ in Phil. 3. He places his old life and theology in the scales with his new life and joy in Christ. That is but refuse beside Christ, who overtops all earthly pride and pomp. And yet it is an elusive chase. Christ lures him on to higher heights of service and fellowship. He knows the joy of this rapturous chase for the goal is Christ, who is never out of sight, ever beckoning him on. He sees the foregleam of the riches of glory in Christ.

XIV. *Paul Showing the Supremacy of Christ.*—In Rome, Paul is made aware of a new heresy in Asia which he had foreseen in his address to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus. This hybrid philosophy and speculative Essenism degraded Christ to the rank of an *aeon* or angel. The Pauline Christology is now attacked at the center and Paul steps out into the open to show that Jesus and Christ are one and the same (cf. the "Jesus or Christ" controversy in the *Hibbert Journal*), that Jesus was a real man and died on the cross for our sins, that Christ is the very image of God, and the First-born before all creation, that Christ is the author of creation, and the sustainer of the created universe, that He is supreme in the work of nature and given head over all. Christ is the key of the universe, the reconciler between man and God and man and man (the true Peace-maker), the mystery of God, the fullness of all the Godhead in bodily form. Christ is all and in all. Christ is our ideal and our goal. We are hid with Christ in God. No higher word has ever been spoken of Christ than Paul utters in Colossians in refuting the Gnostic error.

XV. *Paul Unfolding the Glory of Christ's Body.*—Ephesians is the complement of Colossians. God has summed up all in Christ. He is the fullness of God. In a real sense we are the fullness of Christ, that is "we all," the church general or the kingdom. Christ is the head as is shown in Colossians. The body of the head is the church, the spiritual church. We are made alive in Christ, created in Him for good works. Nowhere is the dignity of human nature so well brought out as in Ephesians. We are to grow up *into* Christ, to become one new man, one full man in Him, in some sense worthy of Him, our Head. We are one in Him, both Jew and Gentile. The middle wall of partition is broken down. Peace and love have come instead. He is the chief cornerstone and we are built into the great temple of God's redeemed humanity. The riches of Christ are unsearchable and his love past all comprehension and all telling. But we are destined to sit in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus.

XVI. *Paul Trusting in Christ Jesus, His Hope.*—The Pastoral Epistles show the tender side of Paul's nature. He is an old man. Christ put him into the ministry, counting him worthy. It is still a marvel to Paul how He came to do it. But he is deeply grateful. The lesson of it all is that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners. He is the Mediator between God and man, the ransom for all, the one Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. He abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. He has helped Paul all the way. He stood by him in his last trial when all others were absent. And Paul is ready for the glorious end. He has finished his course, he has kept the faith, he sees the martyr's crown ready for him. He is willing to be offered up for Jesus' sake. Christ is all and in all to Paul. This is his own heart's experience.

This is his testimony in his Epistles. He has tested Christ all over the Roman Empire, by land and sea, with friend and foe. Christ has never failed him. Paul is qualified to interpret Christ out of the wealth of his experience of Christ. The best tribute to Paul is for us to learn to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Paul was able to say to the end of the day: "I know him whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He had committed (*παραθήκη*) his all to Christ. Soon he would see Him again face to face. He will know even as Christ has known him through all the years.