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ARTICLE III.

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THE HISTORIC CHRIST IN THE LETTERS
OF PAUL.

BY PROFESSOR RHYS REES LLOYD.

THE careful student of the Pauline letters often asks himself, How much did Paul know about the historic life of Jesus? How much does he tell his various readers about that life? This article aims to answer these two questions. In trying to do this, it will gather its data from the thirteen letters usually attributed to this apostle. Not a reference to the earthly life of Jesus will be consciously overlooked. Care will be taken to consider thoughtfully all of the so-called "allusions" to that life. But in the consideration of these references and allusions, I shall not call upon the Gospels for help to finish any portion of the portrait of Jesus which Paul may have left unfinished. This process will tend to prevent my reading into certain expressions of Paul ideas which they do not naturally convey to other thoughtful readers. The temptation to read into the words and phrases of Paul ideas that are taught only in the Gospels is very great. But we must watch and pray so as not to enter into that temptation.

Let us then ask, What does Paul teach in these letters about the birth of Jesus? We are told that Jesus was an Israelite (Rom. ix. 5), that he came from the seed of David (Rom. i. 3). Like all other children, he was "born of woman," and born "under law" (Gal. iv. 4; cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16). He was "sent" into the world "in the fullness of the time" (Gal. iv. 4; cf. Eph. i. 6). These expressions contain all of the information given by Paul in answer to our

question. All of them are found in the so-called "indisputable letters." The phrase "the fullness of the time" gives us no possible clew to the year, month, day, or hour in which our Saviour was born. In like manner, "the seed of David" leaves us asking, From what family of the seed of David did he come? Who was his father? What was the name of his mother? To these questions there is no answer, save the phrase "born of woman." Was this expression designed to suggest that there was anything peculiar in the manner of the Saviour's birth? No. Analogous phrases are found in Job xiv. 1 ("Man that is born of woman," etc.), and in Matt. xi. 11 ("Among them that are born of women"), which designate only ordinary, human births. In the absence of anything in this context which requires that the phrase should have here an exceptional meaning, we conclude that it must carry only its usual signification; hence the phrase designates here an ordinary birth.

The apostle gives us no information respecting the place and the attending circumstances of this famous birth. Did Paul know anything about the *thoughts* recorded in regard to the birth by Matthew and Luke? We cannot tell. Speculation, therefore, about his knowledge on these points, seems useless.

Does Paul teach us anything about the childhood and youth of Jesus? Some scholars would have us believe that Paul alludes to the circumcision of the Babe of Bethlehem, when he writes to the Colossians as follows: "In whom ye were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in *the circumcision of the Christ*" (Col. ii. 11). Does the phrase "of the Christ" signify that he was the object of this circumcision? When we observe that the circumcision designated by the apostle is a circumcision not made with hands, a circumcision which consists "in the putting off of the body of the flesh,"

we see that "the Christ" is the person through whom this putting off is accomplished. It is performed when man comes into Christ. The circumcision which "*Christ*" *requires* may be the true meaning. Bishop Lightfoot seems to regard Christ as "the author" of this circumcision. If the first view be adopted, then there is here no reference to the circumcision of the boy Jesus. Since this is, in my judgment, the correct view, we are constrained to say that there is no allusion in these letters to the childhood and youth of the Saviour.

The incidents connected with his baptism and temptation, and even these events themselves, are passed by unnoticed. I am well aware that many claim that they have found several references to the baptism of Jesus (e. g. Rom. vi. 3-4; 1 Cor. x. 2; Col. ii. 11). These passages, I believe, do not point back to the baptism of the Saviour by John the Baptizer. In Romans we read: "As many as were baptized into Christ were *baptized into his death*. We were buried ["entombed"] therefore with him through *the baptism into the [or his] death*, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead," etc. (vi. 3, 4). The phrase "raised from the dead" shows, when taken with the preceding phrase, "baptized into his death," that "*the burial*" of Christ (ver. 4) cannot possibly refer to the baptism of Jesus in the waters of the Jordan. It points back to his entombment in the tomb of Joseph. These remarks apply equally well to Col. ii. 11; for the context of this passage shows clearly that Paul is referring to the burial of Jesus in the tomb. I fail to see why Hausrath should refer to 1 Cor. x. 2, in connection with the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. I repeat now the statement previously made, namely, that Paul nowhere refers to the baptism of Jesus in water.

Weary of the silence, and of the general statements respecting the birth and the early life of Jesus, we pass with

eagerness to his public career. This period brings before us the two forms of the Saviour's activity, his teaching and his deeds. Upon each of these we must now seek for light. A careful search of these letters finds only three possible allusions to the teachings that kept the people of Palestine hanging in wonder upon the gracious lips of Jesus. Two of these allusions are so general as to give us no conception of the forms and contents of that teaching. In 1 Tim. vi. 13 we read that "Christ Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pilate." What was this "good confession"? Was it a particular statement? If so, what were its contents? No answers are given to these questions. The other general allusion reads as follows: "And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the [or his] cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and he came and *preached peace to you* that were afar off, and *peace to them* that were nigh" (Eph. ii. 17). The reader will observe that Christ preached peace *after* he "slew the enmity through the cross"; hence this preaching was done after his crucifixion. This preaching had the Ephesian Christians for its hearers ("To you that were afar off"); consequently it could not be any preaching which was done in the days of his flesh.

Only in 1 Corinthians xi. 23-25 do we find Paul quoting any of the words of his Lord. In these verses he tells his readers that he "received from (*ἀπό*) the Lord that which" he "also delivered unto" them, "how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was delivered up took bread; and having given thanks, brake it, and said, *This is my body which is for you. This do to remember me.* In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as oft as ye drink it to remember me.*" This passage gives us two formal citations from the words of Jesus. We are told that they were uttered in the night in which he was delivered

up. What night was this? We cannot tell. Paul makes no other reference to it. What does this "delivering up" (*παραδίδωμι*) denote? A comparison of this passage with the words "deliver up to Satan" (1 Cor. v. 5), "deliver up my body to be burned" (1 Cor. xiii. 3), "delivered up to death" (2 Cor. iv. 11), shows that Paul is referring to the giving of Jesus into the power of the authorities who crucified him (1 Cor. ii. 8); or to the death itself. Which of these is designated here? Probably the former, because the Corinthian letters give us no hint of the "delivering up" of Jesus to die, either by himself, or by God. The modern reader who studies these letters without the help of the Gospels, will naturally regard this "delivering up" as the putting of Jesus into the hands of the authorities. The Corinthian readers would be driven to this view unless they possessed other information than that which is furnished in these two letters. How much other information they had previously received cannot be ascertained from these, nor from any of the other letters of Paul. Observe that Paul does not tell anywhere anything about Judas. Had he taught that Judas and Caiaphas were guilty of this "delivering up," could he then have taught so often and so indefinitely that God "delivered up" the Saviour?

To what persons was Jesus delivered? The only answer to this is found in the vague statement, "The rulers of this world" (*τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, 1 Cor. ii. 8). These persons are said to have "crucified" Jesus. This answer is so indefinite as to provoke the question, Did these men rule the world when this Corinthian letter was written? Pilate we know was deprived of his office in A.D. 36, and Herod about A. D. 38. These therefore could not have been regarded as ruling the world at the time Paul wrote this epistle. The indefinite phrase that is used by Paul, though it does not necessarily teach this, might

easily imply it. How many persons had a hand in this crucifixion? Paul gives us no answer. Were these "rulers" Jews, or Gentiles? They were Gentiles, because the Jewish hierarchy would not have been called by Paul "*the rulers of this world.*" This is as far as we can go in our effort after precise information upon the important historic points suggested by the phrase "delivered up."

Let us now ask, Where and to whom did Jesus address the words which Paul has cited? Upon these questions the apostle gives no information. Did Jesus use these very words? A comparison of these quotations with the words attributed to him in the Gospels reveals many striking differences between the reports. Of the fourteen words which Paul cites in connection with "the bread," only five ("This is my body,"—five in Greek) are found in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. There is one slight difference in the order of the common words. Paul puts the personal pronoun (*μου*, "my") after the word "this"; while the Synop- tists put it after "body." The nine (Greek) words which are peculiar to Paul have no equivalent in any one of our Gospels ("Which is for you. This do to remember me"). Of the twenty words used in First Corinthians about the cup, Mark has seven; but these are not in the Pauline order and forms (cases). Mark quotes thirty words that are not reproduced by Paul. Matthew agrees again with Mark against Paul. Luke, though agreeing only in part with Mark, differs wholly from Paul. The following words are peculiar to Paul's report ("The cup"; "the new," i.e., the new covenant; "which is for you. This do as oft as ye drink it to remember me"). We now see that the commands to "eat the bread," and to "drink the cup," for the purpose of remembering Jesus, are Pauline. This fact could not have been ascertained without the help of the Gospels. The reader will observe that I have not, in this instance, used the Gospels in order to force a particular

meaning into or out of the words cited by Paul; but simply to test their accuracy. Professor Allan Menzies believes that Paul added these *injunctions* to the words of Christ. He writes as follows: "The rite speaks in First Corinthians the language of Pauline theology, of that doctrine of Christ crucified and set forth in his blood by God as a propitiation through which believers should be justified."¹ No one conversant with the modern or even the Oriental method of reproducing the oral words of another will be troubled by the suggestion that Paul, or the Evangelists, may be consciously, or unconsciously, attributing to Jesus some words which were not spoken by him.

The meaning of these words of Christ as they are reported in First Corinthians is not very easily grasped. The phrase "This is my body" has occasioned, by reason of its ambiguity, much controversy. Does it mean that the bread is essentially the body of Jesus? The presence of the (Greek) article before the word "body" naturally suggests this identity. But the facts implied in the context prove that this was not the Saviour's meaning. When these words were spoken, the body of Jesus held "the bread" which he brake; hence it could not have been the bread itself. When Jesus brake the bread, his own body had not been broken; hence it could not be eaten by the Twelve. Enough has been said to show that these Christian words are not very intelligible because of their condensed form and rhetorical character. This expression about "the bread" is not the only dark portion of these sayings. The following words, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do," are not easily understood.

Did Paul receive these words from God, or from Jesus? The use of the name "the Lord Jesus" immediately after "the Lord" makes it very probable that Paul uses the latter epithet of God. The apostle would hardly say, "I re-

¹ Expositor, November, 1900, p. 260.

ceived from *the Lord (Jesus)* how that *the Lord Jesus.*" The latter name seems to be used for the purpose of distinguishing Jesus from "the Lord," who revealed the thoughts in question to the apostle. In favor of construing "the Lord" of God, the following facts are presented: Paul teaches that "all things are from God (1 Cor. xi. 12; viii. 6). In accordance with this we read that "Christ was made wisdom from God" (i. 31); the spirit is from God (ii. 10-14). The church is the church of God (1 Cor. x. 32). The apostles, the prophets, teachers, etc., are set by God in the church (xii. 28). The gospel which they preach is "the word of God" (xiv. 36). God has already revealed many things to his people (ii. 10). He, therefore, would reveal unto Paul, whom he had saved by his grace (xv. 10), whatever was necessary for Paul to know in order to properly perform his apostolic duties (cf. xv. 3, etc.).

Did Paul receive these words by a direct revelation from God? This question is not easily answered. We may safely say that he could have obtained them from the other apostles, and from Ananias. This being so, it is not likely that God would reveal in a miraculous way that which Paul could have easily gotten from God's agents.

Our attention must now be directed to the allusions that are made to the actions of Jesus. Some of the acts attributed to him are not strictly historic. Into this class we must put the following: "He emptied himself," "became poor," "took the form of a bond servant" (Phil. ii. 7, 8; 2 Cor. viii. 9); "descended into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 10); "giving grace" (Rom. i. 5) and revelation to Paul (Gal. i. 12); and also the giving of offices and gifts to different classes of believers (Eph. iv. 1). The self-emptying, spoken of by Paul, precedes or includes both the "taking of the form of a bond servant" and the "becoming in the likeness of men"; hence it cannot denote any act performed by Jesus during his earthly career. The

"becoming poor" must refer to some pre-natal act; because Jesus was born in poverty. The distribution of gifts to believers (Eph. iv. 1) was done after the termination of his earthly life.

Paul employs some expressions which describe the general attitude of our Saviour rather than any specific act. Into this class the following are put: "Who loved me" (Gal. ii. 20); "Loved us" (Eph. v. 2); "Loved the church" (Eph. v. 25); "Gave himself" (Gal. i. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Tit. ii. 14); "Delivered up himself" (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25). These phrases which speak of Jesus "giving" and "delivering up himself" look at his death from a sacrificial view-point. The contexts of the respective passages fully support this affirmation. These contexts wholly ignore the historic causes of the Saviour's death. No one will surely claim that Jesus gave himself up in the way in which Judas, and Pilate (Luke xxiii. 35), and the high priests delivered him up (Luke xxiv. 20). It is important to note that the words which seem to refer to the act of Judas are in a historic passage of First Corinthians, while the "self-deliverance" of Jesus is found only in Galatians (i. 3; ii. 20), Ephesians (v. 2, 25), First Timothy (ii. 6), and in Titus (ii. 14). Only in Romans do we read of *God* "delivering him up" (*παραδιδόναι*); but this letter does not speak of the act of Judas, nor of the self-deliverance of Jesus. The "delivering up" is ascribed to the Saviour and to God only when the thought of deliverance from sin dominates the context. Since this is unquestionable, the apostle is doubtless using the phrases in question in a sacrificial rather than in a historic sense. Since these phrases are of such a character, they must be excluded from the data belonging to this article.

This exclusion still leaves us four historic acts performed by Jesus on the night in which he was "delivered up" (1 Cor. xi. 23). Paul tells his readers that the Saviour "took

bread" and "brake it." He "took the cup" and "gave thanks." These four comparatively insignificant acts were performed within closed doors in the presence of twelve dull scholars. The designation of the time during which they were performed shows clearly that Paul is here dealing with historic acts. But they receive only incidental attention in this passage. Elsewhere they are not mentioned.

The conclusion of our study of the data pertaining to the public life of Jesus is easily summed up. We have two quotations of the words which he is reported as uttering on the night of his arrest. These may, or may not, be exactly reproduced. If the reports of Paul are verbatim; then those of the Synoptists are not. The persons to whom the Saviour uttered these quoted words are not mentioned. From their context we can only learn that he spoke them to some of his followers. The words attributed to Jesus are accompanied by an incidental statement of four insignificant acts which Jesus performed in connection with the "bread" and "the cup" already mentioned. These are the only strictly historic deeds attributed to him. It is important to remember that these words and actions belong to the period of the Passion. All these came to pass, as Paul carefully specifies, "*in the night*" in which he was "delivered up."¹

This summary causes us to wonder at the silence maintained respecting the marvelous discourses and conversations of Jesus. We find no reference to the miracles which so many of us regard as the indispensable bulwarks of Christianity. The philanthropic deeds receive not even a passing notice. How strange it is that Paul should make no allusion to these twofold credentials of Jesus—his doc-

¹ His conception of Christ as the Passover of believers may have suggested the use of this italicised phrase, and also of "Do this to remember me."

trine and deeds (John xv. 22-24). Not a word is found in these letters about the selection and training of the Twelve. How can such a treatment of the manifold and busy life of Jesus be explained and justified? The answer to this question must be deferred until we have examined all of our data.

We are now prepared to ask, What does the apostle teach about the sufferings and death of Christ? We are anxious to learn all we can about the time, place, circumstances, the cause, occasions, and the manner of this death of deaths.

Four general allusions are made to the sufferings. One of these, namely, that found in Col. i. 24 ("I fill up in turn in my flesh the tribulations (*θλίψεων*) of the Christ for his body, which is the church"), cannot be historic, because it evidently refers to the mystical Christ. From the other three references we cannot secure any definite notion concerning the nature of the sufferings. Only the fact is mentioned ("The sufferings of Christ," 2 Cor. i. 5; Rom. viii. 17; Phil. iii. 10).

The death of Jesus receives very frequent and significant attention. Some of the passages give it only an incidental notice, while others dwell upon it. *The fact* of his death is mentioned twenty times,¹ and its *violent form* is clearly implied in the phrases, "The blood of (the) Christ,"² and "the body of (the) Christ."³ But the following words state clearly that he was put to death by others ("The putting to death of Jesus"; 2 Cor. iv. 10). The Jews are charged with "*kill*ing the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. ii. 15).

¹ "Death"—1 Cor. xi. 26; Rom. v. 10; vi. 3, 4, 5; Col. i. 22; Phil. ii. 8; iii. 10. "Died"—1 Thess. iv. 14; v. 10; 1 Cor. viii. 11; xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Gal. ii. 21; Rom. v. 6, 8; vi. 8; vii. 4; xiv. 9, 15.

² "The blood of the Christ"—1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 25, 27; Rom. iii. 25; v. 9; Eph. i. 7; ii. 13; Col. i. 20.

³ "The body of the Christ"—1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 29; Rom. vii. 4. "The body and blood of the Lord"—1 Cor. xi. 27. "My body"—1 Cor. xi. 24.

The mode of his dying is explicitly stated in the twenty references to his crucifixion.¹ There are, then, in all, sixty passages which emphasize in clear terms the fact of his death. I have excluded from these sixty verses the words "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree" (ξύλου, Gal. iii. 13); because this is not a historic reference. These words of the Old Testament do not designate men that were *crucified* by the Jewish authorities. It speaks of criminals, or enemies, who were hung up *after* they had been put to death (Josh. x. 26; 2 Sam. iv. 12). The covert allusion therein to the death of Jesus upon the cross must not be overlooked. I have also excluded from the strictly historic data the following phrases, although they contain clear allusions to the fact of his death: "Our passover hath been sacrificed for us, even Christ" (1 Cor. v. 7); "The Christ delivered up himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 2; cf. ver. 25); and also, "A man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6).

When we seek for the time and place, the historic occasion or the cause, of this crucifixion, we find no specific information to satisfy our search. The designation of the persons who did this cruel deed is very indefinite. In First Thessalonians "the Jews" are said to have put Jesus to death (ii. 15). But this epithet, "the Jews," designates the nation rather than any individuals. We are therefore baffled in our effort to learn what Jews, and how many persons, had a hand in this terrible action. Does the apostle desire to teach that the Jews actually "killed" Jesus? The context seems to warrant only an affirmative answer ("Even as they did of the Jews, *who both killed the Lord*

¹ "The cross of Christ"—1 Cor. i. 17, 18; Gal. v. 11; vi. 12, 14; Eph. ii. 16; Phil. ii. 8; iii. 18; Col. i. 20; ii. 14. "Crucified"—1 Cor. i. 13, 23; ii. 2, 8; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Gal. iii. 1; v. 24; vi. 14. "Crucified with"—Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 6.

Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us"). The apostles were driven forth by the Jews alone. No foreigners had any part in the persecution. They alone killed the prophets. Did any persons other than Jews have a hand in the crucifixion of Jesus? In the absence of any other source of information, we should have been driven by this context to answer, No. Observe that the apostle says that "the Jews killed" (*ἀποκτείνω*) Jesus. This verb seems to be used deliberately. Had Paul employed "crucify," or its cognate noun, the thoughtful scholar would have been led to ask, Did "the Jews" ever crucify men? The apostle seems to have been aware of this. The fact that he never uses the words "cross," "crucifixion," and "crucify" in the Thessalonian letters tends to support the view that the verb (*ἀποκτείνω*) "killed" represents a deliberate choice of Paul.

In First Corinthians we read that "*the rulers (οἱ ἄρχοντες) of this world (αἰῶνος) crucified the Lord of glory*" (ii. 8). These "rulers" must have been Gentiles; for only they "crucified" men. Who were these men? Did they rule the age at the time when First Corinthians was written? To these questions these letters give no answers.

How came "these rulers" to *crucify* the Saviour? Had he willfully violated some Roman law? This question receives no direct answer, save that contained in the words of the context ("The wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world knoweth, for *had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*"). But these words still leave us asking, Why did they crucify him any more than others of his contemporaries? Had he aspired after the position of one of these authorities? These questions impress upon the mind of the student that Paul does not even hint at the charge which led the Sanhedrin to compass the death of Jesus. The

apostle seems to have accepted the verdict of Pilate, and he has tried to account for the action of these rulers in view of the innocence of Jesus.

All of the data respecting the sufferings and death of the Saviour may be summed up as follows: the fact and mode of the death receive considerable attention. The perpetrators of the deed are described in two general expressions ("The Jews," "the rulers of this age"); but the precise part which each of these groups had in the crucifixion is not made known to the readers of these epistles.

The task of reconciling this verse (1 Cor. ii. 8) with that in First Thessalonians (ii. 15) could not have presented itself to the early readers of Paul; because we have no evidence to show that the one church ever saw the letter of the other church before 80 A. D. Nevertheless, this problem presents itself for our solution. And the only possible way to reconcile them is to say that "the rulers" "crucified" Jesus at the instigation of the Jews. And, because these urged "the rulers" to put Jesus to death, they could be charged with "killing" him (1 Thess. ii. 15).

The next topic that presents itself is *the burial of Jesus*. To this event there is only one specific and clear reference. We read in 1 Cor. xv. 4, "He was buried." The time, place, and manner of his burial are unnoticed. So also are the persons who performed the gracious deed. I am aware that the words "He descended into the lowest parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9) *seem to imply* the burial; but they cannot be regarded as a strictly historic statement of it. In any case, they add nothing to the information furnished by the foregoing historic passage. If my interpretation of Rom. vi. 3, 4 and Col. ii. 11 be correct, we must add these two to the one previously mentioned, and so we have three allusions to the burial.

Paul speaks of *the resurrection* in twenty explicit passages, which are distributed as follows: there is one in

each of the five following letters: First Thessalonians (iv. 14), Second Corinthians (iv. 14), Galatians (i. 1), Philip-
 pians (iii. 10), and Second Timothy (ii. 8). There are two
 in Ephesians (i. 20; ii. 5), seven in First Corinthians (vi.
 14; xv. 4, 12, 15; xv. 20), and eleven in Romans.¹ Thirteen
 of the foregoing passages teach that *God raised Jesus* from
 the dead.² In harmony with this affirmation is the testi-
 mony of the verses which teach that "*Christ was raised.*"³
 * The passive statements are confined to First Corinthians
 and Romans, whose readers have been explicitly taught
 that the resurrection was brought to pass through the
 power of God. Since this is so, the readers of these letters
 would naturally interpret the passive phrase in the light of
 the more explicit active statements. This thought of God
 raising Jesus must also guide our interpretation of the fol-
 lowing expressions: "Son of God in power . . . by a resur-
 rection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4); "Christ died and
 came to life" (Rom. xiv. 9); "To know the power of his
 resurrection" (Phil. iii. 10), and also, "Jesus died and rose"
 (1 Thess. iv. 14). Each one of these statements recognizes
 the fact of the resurrection; but not one of them gives any
 other information about it. But the meagerness of the
 knowledge furnished by these verses must not be allowed
 to diminish the force of the many clear passages which
 teach that *God raised Jesus*.

We are moved, however, to ask, Is this a historic or a
 theological account of the great event? Did Paul derive
 this information from historic sources, or is it an inference
 deduced from the necessities of the case? The latter seems
 to be the correct view. It is easy to see how a person who
 was convinced of the fact of the resurrection might easily

¹ Rom. i. 4; iv. 24, 25; vi. 4, 5, 9; vii. 4; viii. 11 (twice), 34; x. 9.

² 1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 14; xv. 15, 20; 2 Cor. iv. 14; Gal. i. 1; Rom.
 iv. 24; Eph. i. 19; ii. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 8.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 4, 12; Rom. iv. 25; vi. 4, 5, 9; vii. 4; viii. 34.

infer that it must have been performed by God. Knowing that the Jews killed Jesus, he would say that having been put to death by men, the Saviour could become alive again only through the intervention of some agency outside of himself. The only being capable of raising the dead is God; therefore the resurrection of Jesus is the work of God. This logical process was easily pursued and its result was convincing. The Jews were wont to ascribe all good actions, whose origin or cause was unknown, to God, or to a holy spirit. After reaching this result the teaching of the Messianic psalms would lend its support to the conclusion already reached; for they taught that the Messiah would not be left in Hades (Acts ii. 25; xiii. 32-39). This simple, logical process would inevitably appear to an acute mind like that of Paul. Since this *true conception* could be thus easily secured, it is not likely that God would make it known to Paul by a special, supernatural revelation. And we know that it was impossible for Paul to get the thought from any eyewitness, inasmuch as no human eye saw the resurrection. The statement that "God raised Jesus" must therefore be regarded as a theological inference derived logically from a study of the circumstances and nature of the event.

It matters little what opinion we hold about that phrase, inasmuch as it is so indefinite. It still leaves us asking, How did God raise him? Who saw God doing this? And these questions wait in vain for answers from Paul. The apostle tells the Corinthians that Jesus "was raised *on the third day*," i.e., after his burial. But since the date of the burial is not given to us by Paul, we cannot ascertain the date of the resurrection. We now see that while Paul gives great prominence to the fact of the resurrection, and also to the agency of God in bringing it about, he leaves us in the dark as to the manner, witnesses, and time of the same, except that it was brought to pass on the third day after the burial.

In marked contrast with the silence respecting much of the life of Jesus is the prominence which the apostle gives to the witnesses of *the appearance of Jesus after the resurrection*. Paul enumerates in First Corinthians six distinct appearances of the Saviour. He first showed himself to Peter, then to the Twelve, then to upward of five hundred brethren at once, then to James. After this he was seen by all of the apostles, and last of all by Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5-8; ix. 1).

This list is remarkable for the orderly array of the appearances, and for the grouping of the witnesses. The orderliness of the statement is due to the fact that the author is giving the events chronologically. The adverb "then" shows that Paul is recording these appearances in accordance with the time of their occurrence. And the words "first" and "last" clearly show that he is giving to his readers a complete list. Its completeness is only challenged when we recall that the Gospels give us records of other manifestations. Only one of this list is mentioned in the Gospels. At any rate, only one of these groups can be identified with the eyewitnesses of the risen Jesus as these are portrayed by the Evangelists. John (xx. 3-10)¹ tells us of the appearance to *Peter* and to "the other disciple." I am fully aware of the effort of Professor J. Agar Beet and others to identify the appearance "to the Twelve" with the appearance which Luke says was made to "the Eleven and to those with them" (Luke xxiv. 36, etc.). But how can "the Twelve" be made to mean "the Eleven and those with them." The chasm between these two expressions he tries to bridge with the following baseless assertion: "*The Twelve* [italics are his] had so thoroughly become a technical term for the original apostles both before

¹Luke xxiv. 12 is absent from the Western; hence it is regarded by Westcott and Hort, Plummer, Schaff, as probably, if not surely, an interpolation. Tischendorf omits it. If we regard it as genuine, its witness may be added to that of the verses in John.

and after (Acts vi. 2) the death of Christ that it is used here, although one had fallen from the ranks" (Com. on 1 Cor. xv. 5). This assertion is wholly untenable. If we leave the passages in question (Luke xxiv. 36 ff.; John xx. 19 ff.; 1 Cor. xv. 5) out of our view for a moment, then we shall find that wherever "*the Twelve*" is used the epithet always designates twelve persons. This is true of Acts vi. 2, which counts Matthias in with "the Eleven." Paul does not employ the epithet elsewhere; consequently we have no basis in his letters for affirming that it was "a technical term" with him for the Eleven.

After the defection of Judas, Matthew (xxviii. 16) and Luke (xxiv. 9, 33; Acts i. 26) always use "the Eleven" of the remaining apostles. Mark xvi. 14 shows that long after the days of Paul "*the Eleven*" was "*the technical term*" for the loyal apostolic group. The words of John xx. 24 ("Thomas one out of the Twelve") does not militate against my contention, inasmuch as the phrase "out of the Twelve" actually refers to twelve (cf. John vi. 71; Luke xxii. 47; Mark xiv. 43; Matt. xxvi. 14). Enough has been said to show that the contention of Meyer, Alford, and others, which is repeated by Professor Beet, is without any biblical foundation. In despair of finding any evidence in the New Testament, they refer us to the Latin use of the words *Decemviri* and *Duumviri*,—an argument which needs no refutation. All such efforts to harmonize irreconcilable statements create disrespect for Christian scholarship, and breed unbelievers. All that can be honestly affirmed about these appearances is this: the list is presented by Paul in a frank, easy, and orderly manner, and it undoubtedly represents the sincere belief of this godlike and intelligent servant of God. And this epithet, "the Twelve," may have included in his mind that number of persons, or he may have used it carelessly of that number. Which of these two views is correct, we cannot answer.

Some scholars, I know, have tried to harmonize the appearance to the "upward of five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6) with the manifestation which Matthew tells us was made to "the Eleven" (Matt. xxviii. 16-20). Against this attempt is the fact that Matthew says that "the Eleven" saw Jesus. He gives no hint of the presence of any others. And we must not be wise beyond what is written, if we would honor the text. Paul, on the other hand, uses words which do not naturally nor necessarily include "the Eleven."

The reader of the Pauline words has doubtless noticed that they do not teach us anything about the localities and the times of these manifestations. The form and manner of the Saviour's appearance are also left unnoticed.

The appearance of Jesus to Paul, although it did not take place during the earthly life, requires special consideration. Some affirm that Paul saw Jesus in a vision. Is this the teaching of the letter to the Corinthians? Be it remembered that only in First Corinthians (ix. 1; xv. 8) and Galatians (i. 16) is there any real or apparent reference to this event. But the Corinthians did not have the Galatian letter in their hands; hence they could receive no help from that letter to interpret their own. And our business is to try to secure the meaning which the words of First Corinthians would convey to the Christians at Corinth; because it must be presumed that Paul expected them to understand their letter without the help of any of his other letters. The natural impression which any Greek reader gets from 1 Cor. ix. 1 is this: Jesus appeared in some objective manner to Paul; because the word *ἐώρακα* always bears this meaning (cf. John i. 34; iii. 32; iv. 45; xx. 18, 25, 29; xix. 35; Luke ix. 36), unless the context specifies otherwise. In 1 Cor. ix. 1 the context seems to demand an objective manifestation ("Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?"). Only an objective vis-

ion could have put the apostle on the same plane as the Twelve. If Paul pointed to an inward vision, he ought to have indicated this in a clear manner. Such an indication is not given in this context; hence the readers at Corinth would naturally understand his words as designations of an objective appearance. But this passage points to the same sight as that mentioned in 1 Cor. xv. 8 ("He appeared to me also"); hence both denote objective manifestations. This interpretation of the verb (*ᾤφθη*) seems to be required by the context. The appearance to Paul seems to be of the same kind as those given to the other groups named in this context; for *the same verb is used of each in precisely the same way.* Meyer teaches that all of these groups, except Paul, had seen Christ in "bodily" form (Com. on 1 Cor. xv. 8). He claims that *ἔσχατον* separates these from the "later appearances in visions (Acts xviii. 9) or some other apocalyptic way." This adverb was intended to separate them only as to time. It certainly was not intended by Paul to indicate a difference in manner, especially such a difference as is assumed by Meyer. The natural impression conveyed by this narrative is confirmed by the use of *ᾤφθη* and *έώρακα* of the same objective manifestation of spiritual persons in Luke ix. 31 and 36 (cf. Matt. xvii. 3; Mark ix. 4; Luke i. 11). And this verb *ᾤφθη* can indicate in regard to Paul only the same kind of appearance as it does to "the upward of five hundred brethren *at once*," which, from the nature of the case, must have been an objective sight. Any other interpretation than this of the verb in these verses is imported into it at the bidding of some other authority than that of this context, or of this letter.

So thorough a critic as Pfeleiderer writes of these two Corinthian verses, which describe the appearance of Jesus: "He traces his call to the Apostleship to an appearing of Christ, which he ranks, as essentially similar with the ear-

lier appearances of the risen Lord. It is accordingly beyond doubt that Paul was fully convinced of the objective reality of the appearance of Christ with which he was favored."¹ Professor Bruce also says that "the objective character of Christ's appearance to St. Paul is by all means to be maintained."²

In the consideration of the passages in First Corinthians, I purposely avoided any discussion of Gal. i. 16 ("To reveal his Son in me") because I desired to secure the impression which those at Corinth would get from their own letter. I see no reason for using the Galatian verse to pervert the natural meaning of the words written to the Corinthians. Those are strictly historic phrases; but this can hardly be said of the rare phrase *found only in Galatians* (i. 16), and which must be interpreted in harmony with the teaching of Galatians and also with the principles that guide God's dealings with unbelievers. We know that God reveals Jesus *to* men before he reveals the Son *in* men. To this affirmation all the Bible yields unquestioned support. "To reveal Christ in" Paul in order that Paul *might preach him* must denote such a revelation as would indicate that Christ was a reigning power in his soul. This is the force of the kindred expressions that are found in this letter ("Christ liveth in me," ii. 20; "Until Christ be formed in you," iv. 8). But such a condition as this could arise only after Christ had been revealed to these individuals. This statement is in fullest accord with the teaching of the Pauline letters. We conclude, therefore, that this phrase, "reveal his Son in me," denotes the revelation of Christ *in Paul as the result of the previous and implied revelation of the Son to Paul.* An inward revelation of Christ in an ungodly man is clearly unbiblical. If this be

¹The Influence of the Apostle Paul on Christianity (Eng. Trans.), p. 27.

²St. Paul's Conception of Christianity, p. 32.

correct, this passage is not a precise parallel of the historic phrases of First Corinthians. The parallel with those is the implied revelation of Christ to Paul.

Whether my interpretation is accepted or not, it ought to be evident that the employment of this theological phrase as a key for the interpretation of the historic phrases of First Corinthians is unscientific. Such a procedure, to say the least, lacks straightforwardness, and ignores the teaching of Paul.

The preceding discussions make known unto us the fact that Paul claims that Jesus appeared to five different groups of persons at various times. Some of these persons are mentioned by their well-known names, and one group (the apostles) is described by a term which puts the identity of its members beyond dispute. But the time, place, and manner of these several manifestations are not designated.

We must now pass to the consideration of the data pertaining to the Ascension. The apostle informs the Ephesians that Jesus "ascended on high" (Eph. iv. 8, 9), "far above all the heavens" (iv. 10). In another letter he writes, "God highly exalted him" (Phil. ii. 9). The passage in Romans viii. 34 implies the ascension, for Jesus "is at the right hand of God"; while Timothy is explicitly told that the Saviour "was taken up in glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). These statements constitute the source of our explicit information of this event. At best they only affirm the fact of going up. The place, the time, the witnesses, the form of the Saviour, and the manner of the ascension are not stated. The words "He was taken," or received, "in glory" are too indefinite to justify any affirmation respecting the manner. This phrase seems to be out of harmony with the active phrases of Ephesians ("He ascended"), unless these be regarded, for the sake of harmony, as incomplete descriptions of the fact. The careful reader has no doubt observed that only one of these refer-

ences is taken from one of the four undisputed letters of Paul, and this one only vaguely implies the event (Rom. viii. 34). ✓

Our examination of the data of our subject has been completed. Our surprise at the meagerness of the information imparted to us is far from being matched by the satisfaction of its strength. The phenomena presented to our attention show clearly that these letters were designed by their author only for the churches and individuals to whom they were written. If we insist on claiming that these epistles were penned "for the permanent instruction of the churches of the world," still their form and contents will show palpably their lack of fitness for such service.

How shall we account for the silence of these letters touching the miraculous birth, the infancy and baptism, of Jesus, the descent of the Spirit upon him, the heavenly attestation, the trial by Satan, the teaching and miracles of Jesus, and also respecting the topics discussed in this article? Are we authorized to teach that Paul was ignorant of all of the things? By no means. There was no necessity for crowding all of his information upon any one of these topics into all, or even into any, of these *letters*. Yes, "letters," not treatises. Four of them are private letters to individuals, who were not expected, as the form and contents of the respective missives clearly demonstrate, to give them publicity. These epistles were written to persons who had heard Paul preach at length, or who had conversed with him leisurely in private. The letters supplement, therefore, more or less the oral instruction which had been given to these readers.

Shall we, because of their supplementary office, maintain that Paul knew as much about the earthly life of Jesus as we do? Shall we teach that he believed in the Gospels of the Infancy, and that he knew as much about the teaching and miracles of Jesus as we do? No. We cannot tell

from these letters how much, or what, he knew about the topics concerning which he is silent. Our duty, therefore, touching his knowledge of these matters, is to be silent. We cannot tell how much he had taught these respective individuals and congregations. The addresses attributed to him in the Acts are far from authorizing us to teach that Paul knew as much about the earthly life and teaching of Jesus as we do. We must learn to march abreast with facts, no further, else disaster will overtake us. With the facts, we are with the Almighty.

We must not fail to notice that, *probably*, the chief reason for the little stress laid in these letters upon the historic Christ, is the fact that Paul was converted through the risen, spiritual Christ. This fact seems to form the lens whose color is imparted unto every object seen through it. Paul's theology is a logical development of the teaching involved in the question which the risen Saviour addressed to him, and also of that which seemed to his rabbinic mind to be involved in the circumstances of the time. The information is not, for this reason, any less of a revelation given to him by God. The Christ Paul knows and glories in is a spirit, who, by reason of this, can dwell in the individual believer, and who can also be said to be the habitation of the spirit of the believer ("In Christ"), and be one with all those who trust in him. The body through which this spirit—Christ—reveals himself to the world is the body of true believers.

Salvation, in these letters, seems to be hung upon trust in this Life-giving Spirit, rather than upon assent to a series of propositions concerning either the earthly career or the essential nature of Jesus, or of any particular part of his teaching. A life of love springing up out of a firm trust in a person is at a premium in these wonderful writings.