

THE POSTHUMOUS CLASH BETWEEN PETER AND PAUL

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Against the view of Bruno Bauer and a few other scholars including Hermann Detering that the Pauline Epistles are second century fabrications,¹ G.A. Wells asks what Christian writer of that period would have “invented the unseemly quarrel between Peter and Paul” recorded in Gal 2 “and even represented it as unresolved.”² In reply, Detering suggests that “Paul does not come off badly in his confrontation with Peter” who is there (in Gal 2: 11-12) made to represent “a Catholic Christianity that has lapsed into obedience to the Jewish law”; Paul, on the other hand, represents “true Marcionite Christianity.”³ Detering even suggests elsewhere, by implication, that it was Marcion who invented the incident at Antioch.⁴ I for one am not satisfied that Peter and Paul ever met, and propose to demonstrate that it was more likely a forerunner of Marcion who invented the quarrel.

As evidence that Marcion may have written Galatians, Hermann Detering cites Tertullian’s *Against Marcion*, 4.3: “...Marcion, finding the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians (wherein he rebukes the apostles for ‘not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel...’).”⁵ If Marcion himself was not the writer, where had the letter been since 56, the latest date assigned to it on the assumption that Paul was the author? Either the last book of the New Testament not to show acquaintance with Paul’s

¹ “The Dutch Radical Approach to the Pauline Epistles,” *The Journal of Higher Criticism* 3/2 (Fall 1996), 163-93. In his book *Der Gefälschte Paulus: Das Urchristentum im Zwielflicht* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1995) Detering suggests that Galatians and certain other letters might well have been written by Marcion.

² *JHC* 6/1 (Spring 1999), in a review of Bauer’s *Christ and the Caesars*.

³ *JHC* 6/1, p. 133.

⁴ *Der Gefälschte Paulus*, pp. 152.

⁵ The Five Books of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullian’s *Against Marcion*, tr. Peter Holmes (Edinburgh, 1868), p. 34. Alternatively, Tertullian, *Adversus Marcion*, ed. & tr. Ernest Evans (Oxford, 1972), p. 265: “But Marcion has got hold of Paul’s epistle to the Galatians...” (Tertullian’s own words are *Sed enim Marcion nactus epistulam Pauli ad Galatas*.)

writings⁶ or the first (apart from Ephesians) to do so appears to have been Acts.⁷

Curiously enough, generally recognized users of the Epistles prior to John (125 CE?) make relatively little apparent use of Galatians whereas the author of Acts seems to make more use of it than the other letters combined.⁸ Another paradox is that both the Third Gospel and Acts would seem to serve an anti-Marcionite purpose, a hypothesis of John Knox⁹ supported by Marcion's seeming ignorance of Acts though complicated by Luke's of the Epistles.¹⁰

In 1970 Enslin restated the case for a partial dependence of Luke-Acts on the Epistles, suggesting further possible motives for Luke's non-acknowledgment of them.¹¹ One, he agrees with Knox, would be their appeal to unorthodox opponents such as Marcion; another is to obscure the evidence that Paul's own opponents were not unbelieving Jews but Jewish Christians. Far from being ignorant of the real reason for Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, the delivery of funds he had raised for the poor, Luke preferred not to disclose that the gift was refused.¹² Perhaps it was, although according to Gal 2:10 it was the leaders of the Jerusalem church

⁶ In *Paul Becomes a Literary Influence* (University of Chicago, 1941) Albert E. Barnett treats Ephesians as an introduction to a hypothetical late first-century collection of the four major Pauline Epistles and five of the minor ones, and searches later Christian writings for traces of all nine letters.

⁷ In "Luke and Paul"; *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 58, no. 1 (March 1938), Morton S. Enslin seeks to demonstrate that Luke used, misused, or simply ignored the evidence of the Epistles as best suited his purpose.

⁸ Barnett reports two virtually certain citations of Galatians in John's gospel ('A'), four highly probable citations ('B') and eight possible borrowings ('C'). Enslin's search for traces of Galatians in Acts, if summarized in the same form, would yield three 'A's, as many 'B's and at least one 'C'.

⁹ *Marcion and the New Testament* (U. of Chicago, 1942). Marcion's gospel is still generally regarded as an abridgment of Luke, but Knox views the latter as an expansion of the former and Acts as a further attempt to reclaim Paul for orthodoxy.

¹⁰ Both in his book on Marcion and a more recent essay, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus" (*Studies in Luke-Acts*, eds. L.E. Keck and J. L. Martyn, pp. 279-87), Knox finds it strange that Luke should not make more use of the Epistles than he apparently does. As for whether he even knew them, was there ever a time when he could have been aware of Marcion's gospel and not of his collection of the letters? We do not know, Knox reminds us in his essay, "how early Marcion's career and influence began...."

¹¹ "Once again, Luke and Paul," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*, Vol. 61, Nos. 3-4.

¹² Enslin further suggests that it was misunderstood as an attempt by Paul to buy his way into the apostolate, perhaps parodied in Acts 8: 8-14 where Simon Magus vainly attempts to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit.

who had demanded it in the first place. Other Pauline allusions to the collection, however,¹³ give the impression that it was Paul's own idea. The author of 1 Cor 16 even wrongly remembers Galatians as containing instructions about the collection, while in Rom 15:13 the same or another "Paul" hopes that it "may be acceptable to the saints"—reinforcing the suspicion that it was not. Achtemeier agrees with Enslin on that point, though not with his argument for the dependence of Luke-Acts on the Epistles.¹⁴ With most scholars he is not satisfied that a literary relationship exists, leaving unexplained how Luke could have made as much use—or misuse—of some of the letters as he apparently does without being aware of them. Neither writer seems to find it strange that the Jerusalem church should turn down an offering which, according to Galatians, its own leaders had required of Paul. I myself can think of two possible explanations, both based on a hypothesis that the author of Galatians knew Acts.¹⁵

In Acts 11:27-29, in response to an appeal by the Jerusalem prophet Agabus, the church of Antioch sends famine relief to Judea "by the hand of Barnabas and Saul." Without betraying a post-Pauline knowledge of such sources, the writer of Galatians represents the collection as a condition imposed on Paul and Barnabas in a meeting with Peter, James, and John.¹⁶ A more likely motive, however, would be to advertise Paul's ignorance of the Apostolic Decree. James did have something to add to him, though not the Decree — only that he and Barnabas should remember the poor. Without any mention of the collection, and still avoiding explicit reference to the Decree, the author of Galatians now depicts a situation that would not have arisen if the latter had yet been in effect.

¹³ 1 Cor 16: 1-4, 2 Cor 8-9, Rom 15: 27-29. All four chapters were evidently unknown to Marcion and Tertullian. Had Marcion deleted those passages he would surely have also deleted Gal 2:10.

¹⁴ Paul J. Achtemeier, *The Quest for Unity in the New Testament Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 60, 98.

¹⁵ Such a hypothesis was apparently first advanced in 1850, by Bruno Bauer (Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and his Interpreters*, pp. 120-3 of 1956 edition).

¹⁶ A more widely accepted reading, supported by Bruce M. Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the New Testament*, London, 1971/75), is "James and Cephas and John." Another alternative, which might explain the two more familiar readings, is suggested by D.F. Robinson: both "and Cephas" and "Peter and" are interpolations ("Where and When Did Peter Die?", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1945, pp. 255-7). One implication of Robinson's hypothesis, to which we shall turn presently, is that Paul met only James and John on that occasion.

“But when Cephas came to Antioch,” Gal 2 begins. Which Cephas, if he and a “Peter” mentioned in Gal 2:7-8 are not identical,¹⁷ and which of two Antiochs? Although there could be some confusion elsewhere between two different apostles known as Rock — in Anglo-Aramaic “Cephas,” Anglo-Greek “Peter”— and between Antioch in Syria and a Pisidian Antioch, I assume that Gal 2:11 refers to the Palestinian Jewish apostle Peter and to Syrian Antioch. Are the events of the latter half of Gal 2 best understood as a sequel to those of the first half, to a previous visit of Paul to Peter recorded in 1:18f., or some other account involving Peter that the “Galatians” might have heard about? Gal 2 begins with a statement that “after fourteen years” Paul went up to Jerusalem — in many manuscripts, “again” to Jerusalem, implying a second visit. What reads in Tertullian’s *On the Prescription of Heretics*, 23, like an incomplete quotation of Gal 1:18 — “Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter” without either the phrase “after three years” or the further statement that Paul remained with him fifteen days— appears, in context¹⁸ and in the light of *Against Marcion*,¹⁹ to be a distortion of Gal 2: 1. Both Marcion and Tertullian were evidently aware of only one occasion, in the fourteenth year of his apostleship, on which Paul visited Jerusalem in order to see Peter. Gal 1:18-24 amounts to a rewrite of the first ten verses of the second chapter.²⁰

¹⁷ A possibility seriously considered by Kirsopp Lake, D.W. Riddle and Samuel Sandmel—see Sandmel’s work *The Genius of Paul* (New York, 1958), pp.182-4. Oscar Cullmann dismisses the idea as “completely unfounded” (*Peter: Disciple-Apostle-Martyr*, p. 18), while H.D. Betz (*Galatians*) does not even mention it and J.C. O’Neill (*The Recovery of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (London, 1972),37) would omit the references to “Peter” in Gal 2: 7-8 as glosses to support Mathew’s portrayal of him as the leader of the Jewish Christian church, a picture not supported by the rest of Galatians. I myself would omit both verses in their entirety as interpolations, but nevertheless allow for the possibility that Peter and Cephas were not one and the same man.

¹⁸ Accordingly they “gave him the right hand....and arranged...that each should preach....the same message to different persons, Peter to the Circumcision, Paul to the Gentiles” – more or less as in Gal 2: 6-9.

¹⁹ “But with regard to...Peter and the rest of the apostles, he [Paul] tells us that ‘fourteen years after [an unspecified event] he went up to Jerusalem’ lest perchance he should all those years have been running...in vain....Rightly, then, did Peter and James and John give the right hand of fellowship to Paul, and agree....that Paul should go to the heathen, and they themselves to the circumcision” (5.3).

²⁰ Quite possibly the redactor made other changes, but what they may have been is outside the scope of this paper.

Conservative scholars who differentiate between the Apostolic Council depicted in Act 15 and the meeting described in Gal 2:1-10²¹ treat the visit of Peter to Antioch (2:11f.) as earlier than the former. Logically, if ever persuaded that the events of Acts 15 correspond to those of Gal 2, such critics would have to reconsider the temporal relationship between the Pauline visit to Jerusalem recorded in verses 1-10 and the incident in Antioch. That relationship has indeed been questioned by D.F. Robinson,²² though on other grounds: Peter was no longer alive when Paul met James and John²³ in Jerusalem, thus he and Paul must have met in Antioch at an earlier date. But the sole epistolary reference to Peter or even Paul in Antioch (Gal 2: 11)²⁴ appears to presuppose the reader's knowledge of Acts 15:35, in which Paul and Barnabas have returned to Antioch, and the reference by James (Acts 15:14) only to the testimony of "Symeon"²⁵ casts doubt on the presence of either Peter or Paul at the Apostolic Council. Together, the division of Jewish and Gentile missionary effort depicted in Gal 2:9 and the incident at Antioch (2: 11f.) closely parallel Luke's version of relations between Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. Barnabas is first mentioned in Acts as having sold a field and given the proceeds to the apostles at Jerusalem for distribution among needy believers (4: 36-37). Does this perhaps anticipate the appointment of "Barnabas and Saul" by the church at Antioch as bearers of famine relief for Judean Christians (11: 27-30)? Or the requirement by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, in Gal 2:10, that Paul and Barnabas should "remember

²¹ E.g. Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961* (London, 1966), p. 145.

²² "Where and when Did Peter Die?"—see above, note 16. On the evidence of Acts 12: 1-17 Robinson presents a strong case for Peter's death in Jerusalem in 44 CE. The farewell message of an apparently resurrected Peter — "Tell this to James [Jesus' brother?] and the brethren"— recalls Mark 16: 7, "...tell his [the risen Jesus'] disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee..." The "other place" to which Peter went (Acts 12: 17), Robinson suggests, was not Rome some twenty years later but heaven.

²³ The disciples James and John respectively, the James to whom Gal 1:19 refers as "the Lord's brother" and the disciple John; or the former and another John?

²⁴ The Antioch to which one of the Pastoral Epistles refers (II Tim 3:11) is Pisidian Antioch.

²⁵ Achtemeier cites a hypothesis to the effect that the spokesman quoted in Acts 15: 7-11 as Peter, and whose remarks are attributed in verse 13 to one Symeon, was not Simon Peter but rather Symeon Niger of Antioch (*Quest for Unity*, p.16). Nevertheless, as we shall see, the author of Galatians recreates him as Cephas.

the poor”? Or even the final visit in Acts of Paul to Jerusalem with funds for the poor (24: 17)? Or is it not just possible that all four stories are different versions of a single Pauline visit to Jerusalem, with or without Barnabas and not necessarily having anything to do with charity? In Acts, when the church at Jerusalem first hears about the existence of a Gentile church in Antioch, it sends Barnabas there to investigate (11:12). It was also Barnabas who, according to Acts 9:27, had introduced a recently converted “Saul” to the apostles. A brief allusion to his experience on the road to Damascus strikingly parallels what appears to be a Pauline version of the same meeting in Jerusalem and a peculiarly Lucan account of the experience of two lesser apostles on another road, plus their return to Jerusalem. Let us now compare these three accounts, each in context:

Luke 24:13-35

That very day [Easter Sunday] two of them were going to...Emmaus... and talking... Jesus himself drew near and...said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding...?”...And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth,...and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death....But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel...” And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer all these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...When he was at table with them...they recognized him....And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven²⁶ gathered together and those who were with them,²⁷ who said, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to

²⁶ The twelve immediate male followers of Jesus, appointed by him as “apostles” (emissaries) in Luke 6: 12-16, less Judas Iscariot (to be replaced in Acts 1: 26 by Matthias).

²⁷ Including Mary Magdalene and other women mentioned in verses 1-8 as having visited Jesus’ tomb, finding it empty, and being told by “two men...in dazzling apparel” that he had risen. The male disciples, now also known as apostles, do not believe them.

Simon!²⁸ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Presumably Luke had read Mark 16:7-8, in which the women fail to relay a message for “his disciples and Peter” to return to Galilee for a meeting with their risen master. He may well also have read the final chapter of Matthew in which Jesus himself comes to meet the women, bids them to tell his disciples to go to Galilee, and subsequently meets them on a designated mountain. In Luke’s gospel, however, he appears to them in Jerusalem, though not before an appearance to Simon (Peter?) and one to the visitors to Emmaus. If Jesus had literally returned from the dead, and had sufficiently recovered from his crucifixion to walk and talk with them, why do they recognize him only after a long discourse? For the same reason, I suggest, as the others at first “supposed that they saw a spirit” (Luke 24:37); nevertheless Jesus convinces them of his reality.²⁹ What he had said at Emmaus he now repeats, reminding them of scriptural proof “that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.”³⁰ In an expanded Luke 24:51, as in Acts 1:3, 9 forty days later, he then disappears upward into heaven.

Acts 9: 1-27

But Saul...went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way...³¹ he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he... approached Damascus,...suddenly a light from heaven

²⁸ In both of his articles on the literary relationship between Luke-Acts and the Pauline Epistles, Enslin suggests indebtedness to I Col 15: 5, “...he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” No resurrection appearances, however, are mentioned by Tertullian in his remarks on this letter (*Against Marcion*, 135). I suggest that both its catalogue of such events and the appearance to Simon recorded in Luke 24: 34 are interpolations of apocryphal origin.

²⁹ “See my hands and my feet...for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39); misquoted by Marcion, however, as “A spirit, as you see me to be, hath not bones” (*Against Marcion*, 5.43).

³⁰ Unspecified old Testament “prophecies” applied to Jesus; generally treated as redundant, if not irrelevant, in view of reported resurrection appearances.

³¹ Damascene Christians or refugees from Jerusalem? One of two references in Galatians to Paul’s reputation as a former persecutor is equivocal; the other (1:22-23) amounts to a denial that he had ever persecuted Judean Christians. Only in the generally rejected 1 Timothy (1:13) and certain verses of Philippians and I Corinthians evidently not known to Marcion or Tertullian (respectively 3:6 and 15:9) does an epistolary Paul recall having ever persecuted Christians anywhere.

flashed about him. And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him... "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."³²

Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision... "Rise and go to...the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul...a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ...For several days he [Saul] was with the disciples at Damascus. And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying "He is the Son of God."...and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

When many days had passed, the Jews...were watching the gates day and night, to kill him; but his disciples³³ took him by night and let him down over the wall, lowering him in a basket.

And when he had come to Jerusalem he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.³⁴ But Barnabas... brought him to the apostles,³⁵ and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him....

Not only is the initial revelation to Saul as depicted here not complete: it is shared with Ananias. Did Saul preach that Jesus was the Son of God in a different sense than that already being preached in Damascus? Does proving that he was the Christ mean "more than just a prophet" or, whatever the term implied,

³² In 22:1-17 and again in 26:12-26 the story is repeated, with variations, in the first person. Either the author or, perhaps more likely, an editor of I Cor equates Paul's encounter with the risen Jesus with previous resurrection appearances to others, not necessarily yet listed in the fifteenth chapter, and in effect redefines apostleship in such terms (9:1). Luke nowhere explains his own use of the word but, except in Acts 14:14, seems to reserve it for those credited with having seen the risen Lord in the flesh.

³³ Those converted by Saul, though not necessarily to the same beliefs as he had previously—according to Luke—tried to suppress.

³⁴ Literally, a "learner"; not necessarily either of Jesus himself or of a particular learner of Jesus. Were the disciples referred to here simply not satisfied that Saul was a true believer, not having ever heard that he had formerly persecuted them?

³⁵ Barnabas was apparently not himself an "apostle" of special status, nor is it certain that the Jerusalem church ever recognized Paul as one. Even Luke applies the term to them only once, in Acts 14:14, and in a broader sense.

that Jesus and not someone else was it? For whatever reason the Jews planned to kill Saul—if indeed they ever did—why did they do so only after “many days”? How long after his departure from Damascus did he come—not return?— to Jerusalem? As for his reception there, Barnabas credits him with having actually “seen the Lord,” which is more than Luke ever does in his own words.

2 Cor 11:22-12:9

Are they [unidentified rival apostles]³⁶....servants of Christ? I am a better one... with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.... If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.... At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city... in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands. I must boast: there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.

Verses 23-27 recall Acts 9:16: “for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” Similarly, 2 Cor 11: 32-33 parallels Luke’s account of Saul’s escape from Damascus. (Concerning the relationship between both versions of the incident and a further mention of Damascus in Galatians, see note.³⁷) There is also a three-way relationship, which we shall

³⁶ Jack T. Sanders concludes on the internal evidence, uninfluenced by views concerning opposition to Paul reflected in 1 Corinthians and Galatians, that they were Hellenistic Jewish-Christian missionaries “in many ways duplicates of Paul...who try to best him at his own game” (*Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants* (London, 1993), 211).

³⁷ Let us suppose, tentatively, that Paul had somehow antagonized the Arabian political authorities and taken refuge in Damascus. The governor under King Aretas has posted a guard outside the city walls with orders to seize him should he attempt to leave (2 Cor 11:32) — hence an escape not from danger but through danger. Luke, characteristically wishing to commend Christianity to Rome as a politically harmless movement, represents Paul as a victim of Jewish persecution in Damascus for purely religious reasons; yet in Acts 9:26 we next find him, of all places, in Jerusalem. The author of Galatians, on the other hand, seeks both to reinforce 2 Cor against Acts and improve on it. Thus in Gal 1:17 Paul goes into Arabia, where he is actually in danger, and subsequently returns to Damascus for undisclosed reasons.

now examine, between the pre-ascension appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Saul's encounter with the heavenly Jesus on the Damascus road, and his first contact with the apostles at Jerusalem.

Elements common to Luke 24:15-31, Acts 9:3-6, and Acts 9:27 are (a) the authorship, (b) the presence of one or more men on a road, and (c) an apparition, with a message. Even if the main author of Luke's gospel and that of Acts were two different persons — a possibility rarely considered — the three passages in question give the impression of coming from the same hand. In each case one man on the road is named, whether as Cleopas or Saul/Paul, and at least one other remains anonymous. In the case of Acts 9:27 Saul appears to have reported his experience to Barnabas who in turn tells the apostles "how... he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him..." In what terms would Paul himself have described the experience and what Jesus had said to him? Hardly as quoted elsewhere in Acts³⁸ or impersonated in 1 Cor 15:8-9,³⁹ but let's take a closer look at 2 Cor 12.

Just as Luke, in Acts 9:15-17, passes from an allusion to Paul's future sufferings back to a vicarious revelation and thence to Paul's escape from Damascus, so in 2 Cor "Paul" recounts his sufferings and another version of his escape from Damascus (11:23-24). Now paralleling Acts 9:27, in which Barnabas, tells the apostles about the Lord having appeared to Saul and spoken to him, 2 Cor 12:3 introduces "a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven [and] ...heard things that cannot be told..." On behalf of that man the writer will boast—just as Barnabas had in effect boasted about Paul's vision

³⁸ Especially 22:17-21, in which Saul has returned to Jerusalem and, in a trance, sees Jesus telling him to get out of the city "because they will not accept your testimony about me" and, for that reason, to "go far away to the Gentiles."

³⁹ Perhaps even stronger evidence against the presence of these verses in second century manuscripts than the complete silence of Marcion and Tertullian is an apparent paraphrase by Ignatius, in his letter to the Romans, of certain remarks not having to do with either appearances of Jesus or a Pauline persecution of the church. Here Ignatius blushes to "be reckoned among them [previous martyrs] ...being the least of them and an afterthought." Is he quoting "Last of all, as to one untimely born," etc. (1 Cor 15:8) out of context, or is the ensuing description of Paul as "unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" derived from Ignatius? Whatever the relationship, the reference to pre-Pauline Christianity as the church of God is a blatant anachronism, and what recipient of a vision of the Lord could have known that his own was the final one even if it were?

fourteen years afterwards.⁴⁰ In short, the first five verses of 2 Cor 12 are a spoof on Barnabas' commendation of the Paul of Acts to the apostles at Jerusalem.

If Paul went up to Jerusalem "by revelation" in order to present his gospel to "those...of repute" lest he should somehow have been running in vain for the past fourteen years (Gal 1:1-2), why should he have been accompanied by Barnabas and others? Because in Acts 15:1-2 the entire party is appointed by the church at Antioch to get a ruling from Jerusalem on the question of Gentile circumcision. Without too obviously betraying his knowledge of Acts, the author of Galatians doubly contradicts that explanation for the visit.

In view of James' reference only to the testimony of one "Symeon," apparently overlooking that of Paul and Barnabas, Achtemeier suggests that they were not even present,⁴¹ and that the delegation from Antioch was in fact headed by Symeon Niger.⁴² Nevertheless the remarks attributed to this spokesman and/or Peter in Acts 15 strikingly recalls Simon Peter's defiance, four chapters earlier, of criticism for having eaten with the uncircumcised. But if neither Peter, Paul nor Barnabas was present when James decided that Gentile believers need only "abstain from the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood" — the Apostolic Decree — where were they at that time? On the evidence of Gal 2:11-13, Achtemeier supposes that all three were in Antioch, enjoying a freedom of association not provided for in the existing arrangement "that we [Paul and Barnabas] should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised" (Gal 2:8). Sole leadership of the church in Jerusalem has passed to James,⁴³ the supposition continues, and through "Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas" (Acts 15:22) he issues the Decree to Gentile believers in Antioch and elsewhere.

⁴⁰ Acts 9:26 does not say how long after leaving Damascus Saul returned to Jerusalem. In Gal 1:17-2:1 a fourteen-year interval between a second departure from Damascus and a first visit meeting with the apostles is reduced, as we have seen, to three years and the better attested first visit becomes a second. In Gal 2:1 (with or without the gloss "again"), as in Acts 9: 27, Paul is accompanied by Barnabas, though in a different role.

⁴¹ *Quest for Unity*, p.15.

⁴² Above, note 25.

⁴³ In the *Gospel of Thomas* (ca 200 CE), verse 12, Jesus names James as his direct successor, though in terms that make Jesus himself a mere forerunner of a more exalted James. To the present writer it seems more likely that James became head of the church in Jerusalem on the death of Peter (see again note 22).

Cephas, “fearing the circumcision party,” now stops eating with the Gentiles, as do the rest of the Jewish Christians of Antioch including “even Barnabas.” Paul then accuses Cephas — why not the bearers of the Decree? — of compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews.⁴⁴

As a further allusion to the Apostolic Decree, I myself would add “but if I build up again those things which I tore down” (Gal 2:18), though why should Paul only allude to the Decree if it was in fact the issue? Because the author of Galatians in effect denies its existence: the only condition imposed on Paul and Barnabas in his version of the meeting in Jerusalem is that they should “remember the poor” (Gal 2:10). The issue in Antioch, according to Gal 2:11-12, had to do with table fellowship between Jewish Christians and Gentile believers. The Symeon (Peter?) who, in Acts 15, is overruled by James somehow re-emerges in Antioch as someone who stops eating with Gentiles on the arrival of “certain men...from James,” incongruously referred to as a “circumcision party” — a term that makes sense in Acts 11:12 and 15:1-2 and 5, but not here. The anonymous emissaries of James are obviously the bearers of the Apostolic Decree, identified in Acts 15:22 as Judas Barsabbas and Silas, although in Galatians they are just as silent about the Decree as they are concerning circumcision.

Peter has withdrawn from a mixed gathering, or perhaps repeatedly failed to attend one, with or without explanation. All the other Jews of the congregation, including Barnabas, have since also separated themselves. Why does Paul only now rebuke Peter (Gal 2: 13), and how “before them all”? Alternatively, why does he not first confront the men from James or, finally, Barnabas? Because the author has brought Peter to Antioch for the sole purpose of incurring Paul’s censure, in a re-enactment of the formulation of the Apostolic Decree by James and its acceptance by Peter, Barnabas and — according to Acts 15: 30-35 — even Paul.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Quest for Unity*, pp. 24-5, 50-5.

⁴⁵ For opposing views of the connection between the Apostolic Decree and an actual dispute between Peter and Paul see O’Neill, *Recovery*, pp. 37-9; Nicholas Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem* (Sheffield, 1992), p. 141; and, again, Achtemeier, *Quest for Unity*, pp. 54-5. All three writers agree only on the reality of Peter and the Pauline authorship of Galatians. O’Neill postulates that the Decree had been in effect for some time but Antiochene Jews were demanding further concessions. Achtemeier supposes that the Decree itself was the issue, only Paul resisting it, while Taylor suggests that it had yet to be introduced.

If in having previously eaten with the uncircumcised Peter had become as one of them, how indeed can he now “compel the Gentiles to live like Jews”?⁴⁶ This charge does not fit any action imputed to Peter in preceding verses of Galatians, but it would cover the imposition of the Apostolic Decree. Similarly, the remarks that follow (Gal 2:15-21), though still without any explicit references to the Decree, serve to explain why Paul would not have accepted such token observance of the Law. Ironically, this explanation has become to many Christians a gospel in itself — “justification by faith.”⁴⁷

The defection of Barnabas and a reminder of how he and Paul first preached to the “Galatians”⁴⁸ parallel Luke’s account of a quarrel between Barnabas and Paul and the latter’s return to the South Galatian cities of Derbe, Lystra and Iconium without Barnabas (Acts 15:36 –16:2). Barnabas and John Mark⁴⁹ are last mentioned in Acts as having sailed for Cyprus, and both are again mentioned together only in one of the more disputed minor Epistles.⁵⁰ Elsewhere in the New Testament Barnabas’ name appears only in 1 Cor 9:6, a verse not quoted by Tertullian and probably not present in Marcion’s text.⁵¹ Mark, on the other

⁴⁶ In his letter to the Magnesians (early 2nd century) Ignatius of Antioch denounces people who “talk Jesus Christ” and yet live like Jews (*Early Christian Fathers*) (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 97), although he does not appear to be quoting Galatians or even to know the Epistle. I suggest that the author of Galatians is the borrower.

⁴⁷ In “The Shape of Justification” (*Bible Review*, April 2001) N.T. Wright redefines this as “a second-order doctrine” and Paul’s gospel as “the announcement that the crucified and risen Jesus is Lord,” a belief which I myself do not find peculiar to Paul.

⁴⁸ Gal 2:13, 3:1; both interpreted in the light of Acts 13-16, especially 14:8-18.

⁴⁹ In Acts 12:12-17 it is at the house of John Mark’s mother, in Jerusalem, that an apparently resurrected Peter leaves a message for James. The same John subsequently joins Barnabas and “Saul..., who is also called Paul” on a missionary tour but for some unexplained reason leaves them and returns to Jerusalem (Acts 12:25-13:13). Herman N. Ridderbos, in *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 89, rejects an anonymous theory identifying this John with the one mentioned in Gal 2:9; I have since independently considered that possibility (“Did Paul Write Galatians?”, *Hibbert Journal*, Winter 1967) and would upgrade it to a strong probability. Whoever he was, Barnabas’ desire that he should accompany Paul and himself on the next tour is given in Acts 15:30-39 as the cause of the quarrel with Paul.

⁵⁰ According to Col 4:10, a verse not cited by Tertullian and perhaps not known to Marcion, Barnabas and Mark were cousins.

⁵¹ When he [Paul?] teaches that “every man ought to live of his own industry,” Tertullian quotes 1 Cor (*Against Marcion*, 5.7): “he begins with... examples – of soldiers, and shepherds, and husbandmen” – verse 7. What of verse 6, “...is it only Barnabas and I [unlike ‘the brothers of the Lord and Cephas’] who have no right to

hand, is mentioned three more times⁵² and is also identified—rather doubtfully—as the author of the earliest Gospel.⁵³ Is all this not an attempt, perhaps by a single third-century editor, to assure readers that Barnabas' dispute with Paul was only of a minor, personal nature and that apostolic harmony was eventually restored?

As for G.A. Wells' argument that only Paul himself would have represented the issue in Antioch as unresolved,⁵⁴ where in Galatians does the writer do any such thing? What he does say is that all the Jewish Christians of Antioch followed Peter's example, resulting in separate Jewish and Gentile congregations. Ignatius, as the overseer of several Gentile churches in Syria, has something to say about Judaizing⁵⁵ but shows no knowledge of the past controversy depicted in Gal 2 or even of Galatians itself. If Marcion did not write that letter, the actual author has yet to be identified.

refrain from working for a living?" Whatever the intended purpose of the missing verse, one apparent implication is that Paul and Barnabas have made up and are now preaching together in Corinth. On the other hand, the writer may not have yet read that they had ever parted company.

⁵² In 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon, 24; and 1 Peter 5:13. The first and third letters are generally recognized as forgeries, and to the present writer Philemon seems too closely related to Colossians and Ephesians to be taken more seriously.

⁵³ One would expect a gospel by John Mark to be strongly Petrine in character and somewhat anti-Pauline. Pending a redefinition of such terms, however, I must agree with Samuel Sandmels (*Genius*, pp. 166-75) that the gospel named after Mark is anti-Peter and Paulinistic.

⁵⁴ Above, note 2.

⁵⁵ Magnesians, 10; Philadelphians, 4-8 (*Early Christian Fathers*, pp. 96-7, 108-10 respectively).