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THE PHILOSOPHY OF PAUL

by

Julian B. Linkous

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts  
Division of Graduate Instruction

Butler University  
Indianapolis  
1949

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1
II.	WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY? . . . . . 5
III.	WHAT WAS PAUL'S PHILOSOPHY? . . . . . 20
IV.	PAUL'S RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHERS . . . 30
V.	COMPARISON OF PAUL'S IDEAS WITH THOSE OF THE STOICS . . . . . 41
VI.	OTHER INFLUENCES ON PAUL'S SYSTEM OF THOUGHT . . . 53
VII.	SOURCES . . . . . 75
VIII.	THE LIFE OF PAUL . . . . . 81
IX.	CONCLUSION . . . . . 86
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . 93

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul has become increasingly important for the student of Christianity during the years which have passed since the first century A.D. Many books with many approaches have been written about the Apostle. Works on some phase of the "life of Paul" are most numerous; and his theology has been amply discussed. His character has been reviewed, his ethics has been examined, his Christology has been discussed. However, in spite of this abundance of material, there is very little written regarding the philosophy of Paul. Here and there we find statements on this subject. Enslin writes on The Ethics of Paul,<sup>1</sup> and Ramsay has two chapters dealing with the philosophy of Paul in the work, The Teachings of Paul.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the work by Singer on The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and Paul<sup>3</sup> and the items mentioned above, there is hardly any specific material on the subject of Paul's philosophy.

Another reason for the importance of a study of the philosophy of Paul is due to the current trend of thinking

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<sup>1</sup>Morton Scott Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930).

<sup>2</sup>William M. Ramsay, The Teachings of Paul in Terms of the Present Day, (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913).

<sup>3</sup>Ignatius Singer, The Rival Philosophies of Jesus and Paul, (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1920).

among scientists. Scientists have recently been willing to admit that they cannot furnish a complete explanation of the universe from the basis of empirical observation, coupled with reason. Here, then, is a made-to-order opportunity for the minister to present the Christian explanation of the universe itself, and its meaning for mankind. In order to convince those who habitually think in terms of philosophy, it is of value to know something of the general field of philosophy, and specifically, to know what Paul thought.

There is almost unanimous agreement among the students of Paul that he was a great thinker. For example,

He [Paul] was an intellectual Hercules. No other champion of the gospel in his time measured up to his mental stature. He met no antagonist who was able to stand before the club of his argument.<sup>1</sup>

He [Paul] is a born logician, and of the first order.<sup>2</sup>

The same writer states that Paul was a greater thinker than Aristotle, because of the fact that he dealt with greater subjects, in addition to having a special guidance from above. These sentiments could be duplicated from many writers on Paul. A strong argument for the high intellectual ability of Paul is found in his writings and

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<sup>1</sup>George Francis Greene, The Many-Sided Paul, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1901), 128.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 137



the accounts of his speeches. These works will repay the careful student many times over in an increased appreciation of the mental capacity of the Apostle.

A third reason for the importance of this thesis is the fact that there is much confusion regarding the terms philosophy and theology. A part of the disagreement among scholars as to whether or not Paul had a philosophy is due to confusion and uncertainty in definition of terms. Some writers say that Paul had a philosophy, others deny this possibility. A third group takes a neutral position. If philosophy and theology were carefully defined, it would make for much clarity in a discussion of the problem.

The title of this thesis, "The Philosophy of Paul," makes the assumption that Paul had a philosophy. Because this assumption is not universally accepted by students of the life of Paul, as noted above, we shall endeavor to show that Paul had a philosophy. In other words, we shall show that our assumption is valid. Our second purpose shall be to identify Paul's philosophy.

In order to accomplish these results, we shall devote Chapter II to answering the question, "What is Philosophy?" Because the term, philosophy, has a broad meaning,

this chapter must of necessity be somewhat lengthy. First we take a negative approach and tell what philosophy is not. Then, we give a brief resume of the history of philosophy, and some of the classifications of the subject. Then we devote a brief space to statements regarding philosophy which were made by contemporaries of Paul.

In Chapter III we identify Paul's philosophy or, in other words, answer the question, "What was Paul's Philosophy?" This will necessitate a discussion of Paul's contact with the Greeks.

This contact will be further noticed in Chapter IV, in which we examine Paul's contact with contemporary philosophies. In addition to the philosophies, we shall discuss the Greek Mystery religions, the guilds, Paul's Jewish background, the influence of his conversion, and the effect on Paul of his preaching in Christian Churches.

Evaluation of the sources of information on the life of Paul will occupy the next chapter, while a brief account of his life will be given. This account will demonstrate the extent of Paul's contact with the Greek civilization of his day, in order to show that he might have been thus considerably influenced. The conclusion will summarize the points which have been made.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

We have assumed that Paul had a philosophy. It will be the object of this chapter to define the word, "philosophy" in order to determine the nature of Paul's philosophy.

To define philosophy we take a negative approach and state what philosophy is not. Philosophy is not a glorified, semi-historical, racial or individual common-sense; combined with error and superstition. Although this type of thinking may be hoary with age in parts, it does not suffice for a definition of philosophy. Philosophy is not empirical science derived from observation of the senses, and constituting a rarefied common-sense which has been purged of error and superstition. When the scientist has made and recorded his sense-observations and attempts to determine the meaning of such observation, then he may be climbing into the realm of philosophy. However, it is possible for a person to make observations for years and never give a thought to the whole meaning of such observations.



Philosophy is not a "way of living" although it may be a theory of living in a particular way. In other words, a person's philosophy may lead to his theory that life should be lived in a certain way. Philosophy is not ethics, in spite of the fact that the term is often used as being synonymous with ethics. Moreover, ethics is a part of philosophy, inasmuch as the field of ethics attempts to tell mankind what is good for him, and what social relations are best.

Philosophy is not morality, which is the practice of ethics, resulting from value-judgments of individuals and groups. Morality consists of voluntary actions of an adult responsible individual. Thus, it is not the same as social conduct, which represents man's efforts toward expediency in his group relationships. To put it another way, morality is a way of seeking happiness.

Philosophy is not theology, although the difference is in approach rather than content. The knowledge of theology comes from revelation, while that of philosophy comes from reason. Philosophy also may derive knowledge by means of intuition, but this avenue of knowledge is not the same as revelation. Certain things are known to man because of the way his mind works. These may be classed as intuitions. On the other hand, man learns some things by revelation, as for



instance, facts about the nature of God. These latter are revelations; and are not the materials of philosophy.

So much for the negative definition of philosophy. To approach a positive definition of the subject, we shall give a brief resume of philosophical thought as it is recorded in the philosophical systems of philosophers.

Credit for having been the first philosopher is usually given to Thales who lived about 542 B.C. This man, with his immediate followers, was chiefly interested in the world around him. His efforts were largely devoted to an attempt to explain the basic constitution of matter.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) was the first real philosopher, as we understand the term today. This is not to detract from the work of Socrates and Plato. As a matter of fact, many scholars would rate Plato as being greater than Aristotle. While it is true that Plato's conception of Ideas was a tremendous contribution to philosophy, Aristotle's Categories included the same conceptions as Plato's Ideas.

Aristotle was born in 385; in 367 he became a pupil of Plato; and in 334 began to teach in the Lyceum at Athens. He defined philosophy as the science of the universal. He is noted for his Four Causes: (1) the substance, (2) the specific type, (3) the act of generation, (4) the purpose of the act of generation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Metaphysics.

The Stoics and Epicureans were contemporary with the Apostle Paul and will be discussed somewhat in detail in a later section of this opus. However, they were concerned with (1) understanding the world and (2) arranging a system of conduct which would be in harmony with the world.

After the decline of interest in Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism (both of which flourished following Aristotle) philosophy became subservient to theology as expressed in the church of that day. St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, is representative of the "philosophers" of this period.

From the time of Aristotle to the era of John Locke the chief interest of philosophy was in Metaphysics. Locke gave a new direction to philosophical thought by his interest in Epistemology. This emphasis on Epistemology has continued to the present time.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of the Renaissance on philosophy. With the discovery of the Greek learning, there came a terrific impetus to inquiry of all kinds, particularly that of the philosophic label. Along with this interest there was an increased interest in matters scientific. In spite of the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, there was a tremendous spread of ideas. This, along with the discovery of America, had its influence on the field



of philosophy.

Mr. John Dewey points out that a study of the history of philosophy is a good avenue to the understanding of the subject. That is, to know what the philosophers taught, will help us to understand philosophy today.

Plato (according to Dewey)<sup>1</sup> considered God as the supremely real, right knowing as true virtue, so his philosophy was largely concerned with ethics. Aristotle found the supreme reality in God, so his metaphysics was largely theology.

It was Aristotle who gathered up the knowledge on subjects common to the special sciences he treated, and called that super-physics "Metaphysics," which dealt with God, man and the world in themselves. This conception of philosophy, as we have noted on the previous page, lasted in more or less clear form until the "Essay Concerning the Human Understanding," (1690) by John Locke, who changed the metaphysics or philosophy into epistemology, which dealt with knowledge, - what it is, of what composed, how we get it and its validity or value.

With the Neo-Platonists God was the supreme reality but he was above thought and knowledge; therefore, there

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<sup>1</sup>John Dewey, "Philosophy," Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, (ed. James Mark Baldwin), (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911) Vol. II, p 293,294,295.

appeared a kind of mystical condition of ecstasy which marked the relationship of unity with God. This type of thinking tends to become Theosophany. The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics were all agreed that the practical or ethical, should have more emphasis than the theoretical.<sup>1</sup> This was a reversal of the position of Plato and Aristotle.

In history philosophy has been defined in many ways. From Aristotle to John Locke it was metaphysics, but from the latter, (1690) philosophy has been epistemology, which is our body of knowledge about knowledge, consisting of (1) a brief statement or description of (a) the nature of our knowledge, (b) its composition, (c) its derivation, and (d) its validity or truth or utility. Locke asserted that this knowledge about knowledge is derived from (2) observation and reflection and is used to economize human energy in (a) securing more knowledge and (b) application of knowledge to appliances and machines.

The methods of securing knowledge are both inductive and deductive. Inductive science consists of physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, and the normative sciences of logic, mathematics and ethics.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



Sharply distinguished from philosophy is theology, which is (1) our organized body of knowledge about God, man and the world, (2) consisting of faith or tenets or beliefs, (3) derived from revelation, augmented by observation and reflection and (4) used to guide our thinking in securing more knowledge and directing our conduct. Natural theology is similar to the philosophy of religion.

Descartes defines philosophy as follows:

Philosophy -- embraces all that the human mind can know.<sup>1</sup>

and comments further that

To live without philosophizing is in truth the same as keeping the eyes closed without attempting to open them; and the pleasure of seeing all that sight discloses is not to be compared with the satisfaction afforded by the discoveries of philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

The following statements concerning philosophy will assist in determining a proper definition of the subject.

The fundamental truth of philosophy, as of theology, is God. Philosophy searches, religion reveals.<sup>3</sup>

Philosophy is impossible without science. The universe is the shadow of an infinite thought, to be deciphered by the slow process of philosophic inquiry. Understanding the universe the infinite thinker is understood.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rene Descartes, Principles, quoted in Marion John Bradshaw, Philosophical Foundations of Faith, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p 27.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>J. W. Mendenhall, Plato and Paul, (New York: Eaton & Mains.), p 27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 109.

The primary question of philosophy relates to the possibility of a knowledge of the existence of God by the reason.<sup>1</sup>

The province of philosophy, as apprehended by philosophers themselves, --- is the discovery or declaration of the uncaused personality in the universe, as the cause of all actuality, of the phenomenal world.<sup>2</sup>

The province of philosophy is to understand man chiefly as a mind-being.<sup>3</sup>

The province of philosophy is to comprehend the universe.<sup>4</sup>

Theology and rationalistic philosophy are very closely related. The difference lies in the fact that (1) philosophy begins with intuitions or self-evident truths which appeal to human reason, and (2) theology begins with revelations from some superhuman source, which are not always self-evidently true according to the standards of human reason. From intuitions and from revelations philosophy and theology proceed to more detailed truths by reason. In that degree, both are "rational," both are producers of analytical judgments which do not add anything new to what is contained in primary intuitions or axioms, but which merely reveal the minor contained in them. From the axioms of geometry the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



whole systems of geometrical truths are found by rational analysis.

This primary distinction we must keep firmly in mind in all our succeeding study of Paul's philosophy and theology; without, however, involving a distinctive system of ethics or hedonistics - neither Epicurean hedonism nor Stoics duty-ethics, both of which were extant in his day. Paul's obligations to his fellow men came directly and immediately from his religion, and specifically from God the Father, and men as brothers, all summed up in love, which furnished both the obligation and the illumination.

Theology and philosophy were united in Christianity as represented by Paul's system of thought. The emphasis upon revelation on the part of the early Christians is well-known. This emphasis led to an accentuation of theology at the expense of philosophy; which becomes increasingly apparent as the Middle Ages unfold. This wedding of philosophy and theology became a separation, and finally a divorce following the Renaissance and the subsequent recognition of nature as an object of free inquiry. The increase of interest in Psychology paralleled the development of epistemology. The latter was given a tremendous impetus by Kant, who makes

it the basis of all philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

One of the fullest definitions of philosophy is found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in the article entitled "Philosophy and Philosophical Studies."<sup>2</sup> According to this article, philosophy is composed of two parts: (1) Ontology, and (2) Metaphysics. Ontology, the science of being, was divided by Wolff, into: (a) Psychology - the study of man, (b) Cosmology - the study of the universe, (c) Theology - the study of God. Metaphysics, the science values, is divided into: (a) Ethics, the study of the Good, (b) Logic, the study of the True, (c) Aesthetics, the study of the Beautiful.

We have here the subject-matter of philosophy, but in order to complete the picture, we must add epistemology, the science of knowledge or knowing. With epistemology included, we have a complete definition of philosophy, including all branches of learning necessary to the study.

Other classifications of philosophy are made from the standpoint of the number of fundamental principles recognized. Thus, we have Monism, Dualism, and Pluralism.<sup>3</sup> It should be obvious from the words that a philosopher who

<sup>1</sup>John Dewey, op. cit.,

<sup>2</sup>Seth Pringle-Pattison, "Philosophy and Philosophical Studies, Encyclopedia Britannica, (11th Ed.) Vol 17, p 759f.

<sup>3</sup>John Dewey, op. cit.



believes in only one reality in the universe would be a Monist; one who accepts reality as being in two divisions would be a Dualist; while one who accepts reality as consisting of many divisions would be classified as a Pluralist.

A further division of the subject may be made on the basis of the value attached to the fundamental principle chosen as a basis of organization. In this classification we have Materialism, Spiritualism, and Phenomenalism.

According to the organ or instrument of knowledge most emphasized, we classify philosophy as Rationalism, Sensationalism, Intuitionism and Intellectualism.

According to the method of investigation pursued, philosophy may be classified as: (1) Dogmatism, (2) Scepticism, and (3) Criticism.

Regarding the relation of results to the method used, philosophy may be classified as: (1) Agnosticism and Gnosticism, (2) Transcendentalism, (3) Positivism, (4) Solipsism, and (5) Nihilism.

From the point of view of the relationship assumed between subject and object in knowing, philosophy may be classified as (1) Realism, and (2) Idealism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Seth Pringle-Pattison, op. cit., p 759.

To summarize and to arrive at a definition of the word philosophy we note that the word itself is composed of two words from the Greek: PHILOS and SOPHOS. According to this, a philosopher is a lover of wisdom. However, we are then faced with the question, What wisdom? So, we need to go further.

Plato called the philosopher SUNOPTIKOS, which means one who views the universe as a whole.<sup>1</sup> This is informative, but we still must seek a more adequate definition.

Feibleman states that "philosophy includes Metaphysics, or ontology and epistemology."<sup>2</sup> This same idea is noted in the definition by Seth Pringle-Pattison on page fourteen, with the exception that Pattison, instead of making Metaphysics and Ontology synonymous, makes them component parts of philosophy.

To repeat Pattison's definition, in substance, we find that philosophy consists of (1) Metaphysics and (2) Ontology. By including Epistemology in this definition, we have the following definition of philosophy.

Philosophy includes (1) Being, (2) Value, and (3)

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>James K. Feibleman, "Philosophy," The Dictionary of Philosophy, (ed. Dagobert D. Runes), (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1942), p. 235.

Knowing. This may be expressed in Ontology, Metaphysics and Epistemology, the major divisions of philosophy. These may be further divided as follows: (1) Ontology, the science of being, deals with God, man and the World; (2) Metaphysics, the science of value, deals with the Good, the True, and the Beautiful;<sup>1</sup> (3) Epistemology deals with the process of Knowing, the thing Known, and the Knower. In other words, under Ontology we have (a) Psychology, (b) Theology, and (c) Cosmology. Metaphysics is divided into (a) Ethics, (b) Logic, and (c) Aesthetics. In dealing particularly with the Knower, epistemology might be thought to overlap Ontology in the study of Man. It is true that there is a close relationship, but the approach is different.

Both Metaphysics and Epistemology might be reduced to Ontology, but this seems to be an oversimplification.

To arrive at the definition of philosophy current in Paul's day, we consider statements of Epictetus, the Roman-slave-philosopher. He makes numerous references to the subject in his Discourses.

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<sup>1</sup>This is a departure from Aristotle's understanding of the word.



What Philosophy Professes. Philosophy does not promise to secure to man anything outside him. If it did it would be admitting something beyond its subject-matter. For as wood is the material dealt with by the carpenter, bronze by the statuary, so the subject-matter of each man's art of living is his own life. What are we to say then of your brother's life? That again is the concern of his art of living; to yours it is a thing external, like land, health, good repute. Philosophy makes no promises about such things.<sup>1</sup>

This, then, is where the philosophic life begins; in the discovery of the true state of one's own mind; for when once you realize that it is a feeble state, you will not choose to employ it any more for great matters.<sup>2</sup>

What is the Beginning of Philosophy? Here you see the beginning of philosophy, in the discovery of the conflict of men's minds with one another, and the attempt to seek for the reason of this conflict, and the condemnation of mere opinion, as a thing not to be trusted; and a search to determine whether your opinion is true, and an attempt to discover a standard; just as we discover the balance to deal with weights and the rule to deal with things straight and crooked. This is the beginning of philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

It has been necessary to deal with the definition of philosophy at some length because of the fact that there are so many definitions in use. Even so, our definition does not cover all the divisions of philosophy which are given in the dictionary definition. However, these comments are sufficient to give us a background for determining the

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<sup>1</sup>Whitney J. Oates, (ed), The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, (New York: Random House, 1940), p 251.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 270.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 301.

nature of the philosophy of Paul.

In harmony with the above study of philosophy we will adopt the long accepted usage, and treat metaphysics as ontology, or the systematic study of the things in themselves, including God, man and the world of nature; and reserve philosophy defined as epistemology for systems of thought following Locke and Kant. In epistemology we must distinguish the knower, the known and the process of knowing. Of these three,- since our study demands a close and constant discrimination between theology or a systematic organization of our knowledge about God, the human soul and the hereafter, (in Paul's doctrine derived from revelation) and philosophy - we will give larger consideration to (1) knowing, and to (2) the known. Knowing is a process of recognizing our knowledge already gained, or a process of gaining knowledge. The methods of gaining knowledge are (a) deductive, and (b) inductive, the first beginning with premises secured by revelation or intuition or by induction, and the second beginning with facts observed from which general propositions are deduced. Paul in securing his knowledge made use of both. (Gal.1:11,12; Phil. 4:8; I Cor. 7:25.)

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He secured some of this religious knowledge by revelation, some by his own experience, and some by observation of other peoples' experience. This fact compels us to discriminate between his revealed theology and his philosophy, the former giving him knowledge of God, man, and the world by revelation, and the latter giving knowledge of the same by his own reasoning from both facts observed and from premises secured by revelation or by induction. With this sharp differentiation between theology and philosophy kept in mind, we will apply our definition to Paul's works and to his formulated system of religion.



### CHAPTER III

#### WHAT WAS PAUL'S PHILOSOPHY?

Having offered a definition of what we mean by philosophy we come to our next important question. Did Paul, in his works, reveal any philosophy whatever? Or, to be more specific, was any part of his whole system of thought embraced under his Gospel, derived from his own ratiocinations? For example, was the whole Gospel in every detail revealed to him in a flash, on the Damascus way? Or, did he reflect upon it for many years and step by step deduce in singular flashes of insight, the whole final vision of a universal, eternal, world-wide religion for all men, never to be surpassed or superseded? The statement of the meaning of his philosophy is enough to answer the question in general. Our task will be to show how he interwove his philosophy with his revelations.

Any philosophy will have its axioms; and the philosophy will be largely determined by the nature of the axioms. Paul had certain fundamentals in his philosophy which might be considered as axioms. These are truths which come by way

of insight and are not quite the same as truths by revelation.

According to Ramsay the fundamental positions of the philosophy of Paul were two:-

What are the fundamental propositions of Paulinism, the axioms on which Paul builds up his philosophy? There are two; and of these two axioms the second is merely the complete statement of the first. The first axiom is this: "God is;" the second axiom is: "God is good."<sup>1</sup> The first is valueless except through the second.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Paul met with a crisis on the road to Damascus. He was faced with the necessity of changing his entire outlook. The question is, was this change a sudden, immediate work, or did the change come while Paul was quietly thinking out a philosophy of life to fit in with his newly discovered truths of religion. When we say "discovered" we do not intend to indicate that Paul found these truths by his own power; on the contrary, Paul received a direct revelation. Nevertheless, the question remains as to the extent of the time of the change in Paul's mind. Ramsay feels that Paul had ample time to think out a philosophy.

It was when he had to recreate the whole religious and philosophic foundations of his life, during the two years of quiet meditation which followed on the epoch-making experience of his conversion, that he began to

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<sup>1</sup>W. M. Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day, (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913), p 20.



comprehend what lay in the idea of Universal Brotherhood as taught by Jesus: "there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

Ramsay sees in the Pauline thought a necessity for education in Greek philosophy.<sup>2</sup> This education, however, came before Paul was converted to Christianity. It was not necessary for Paul to spend long hours in the study of Greek philosophy. He grasped the essentials at once and had no need to pore over documents to know what was taught and thought.

Ramsay likens Paul to a mathematician who can absorb the most complicated formulas of the subject with little effort. This, says Ramsay, was the manner of Paul's learning Greek philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

Another period in the life of Paul when he may have been studying Greek philosophy was the period he spent in Cilicia and Syria following his flight from Jerusalem. At this time Paul had not completely thought out his philosophic basis for life. Much of his thinking must have been done during his sojourn in Arabia.<sup>4</sup>

Paul's aversion to philosophy as expressed to the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 48.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 109.

Church at Corinth, (1 Cor. 2:1) may be explained by the fact that he felt that the Corinthians were not sufficiently informed to be able to absorb the ideas of the Christian religion, if such ideas were presented in the language of the Greek philosophers. According to Ramsay,

Paul knew well that there is a time for everything, and that only among them that are full grown should he speak philosophy. Most dangerous was it to talk philosophically to the Corinthians, a middle-class audience, who possessed that half-education or quarter-education which is worse than a lesser degree of education combined with greater rustic sympathy with external nature.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unreasonable to assume that any man's philosophy will be a combination of what he has learned and the experiences he has had in life. This is particularly true of Paul. In him we notice a mingling of the Eastern and the Hellenic minds. According to Ramsay:-

In the philosophy of Paul the Eastern mind and the Hellenic have been intermingled in the closest union, like two elements which have undergone a chemical mixture.<sup>2</sup>

A part of the philosophy of Paul is his philosophy of history. This phase of his thought cannot be understood apart from his theology. For Paul, God was a dominant

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 109.

<sup>2</sup>W. M. Ramsay, The Cities of Paul, (New York: Geo. H. Doran Co., 1907), p 6.



reality. The course of history was the working out of the plans of God in the lives of men. This idea is based on the second phase of Paul's thinking, i.e., that God is good, the result being a growth for the individual and for society as a whole.

I should, in the first place, ask you to glance at the Philosophy of History, as Paul declares it. To him the Philosophy of History was the History of religion, for in his view there is nothing real except God, things are permanent and firm only as they partake of the divine.<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing, we may decide what kind of a philosophy Paul had. It was, to some extent, Metaphysics, in that he believed in and accepted the being of one God, and taught that He was a Spirit. This conception of God came first from the Old Testament and later from Jesus Christ. How much of this conception came from reason and how much from revelation is a hard question to decide. We know that Paul's idea of God was enlarged and elaborated by his vision of Jesus Christ. It is probable that Paul's original idea of God approached somewhat the idea of the Stoics of a World-Soul.

Paul's epistemology, as revealed in First Corinthians 2:10-16 is definitely "Idealism" in which each person's self-conscious spirit knows its own thinking, feeling and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 10.

willing. Paul's epistemology probably grew out of his opposition to Gnosticism which taught that each man had within himself an "inner light," or intuition which taught him and gave him immediate "gnosis" or knowledge, which was certain. The difficulty arose when it was discovered that these inner lights, in spite of being certain, contradicted each other. Paul met this Gnostic doctrine of the inner light with his statement that man has a spirit which thinks, feels, wills, and is conscious of its own thinking, feeling, and willing.

Paul avoided the contradictions of individual spirits by insisting that God's spirit, which knows God's mind, was in the individual Christian believer, and so conveyed to the Christian immediately, by revelation, the truth or certainty that God enjoys. (Gal. 1:11,12) So Paul received his Gospel by revelation of Christ to him, or through the Holy Spirit.

Paul calls his philosophy SOPHIA, or wisdom. (1 Cor. 2:6). Its content is knowledge; it is valid and true. The knower is the spirit of man or of God. The things known are included in value-judgments as to the worth of things. It is in value-judgments rather than existential judgments, that Christian philosophy consists.



According to Clement of Alexandria SOPHIA is the source material for the study of philosophy. Wisdom is knowledge of things divine and human. This seems to cover the field of knowledge completely, if we allow Clement a broad latitude in the interpretation of his terms. Clement also defines wisdom as the object and desire of philosophy.

For philosophy is the study of wisdom, and wisdom is the knowledge of things divine and human; and their causes. Wisdom is therefore queen of philosophy, as philosophy is of preparatory culture.<sup>1</sup>

This wisdom then -- rectitude of soul and of reason, and purity of life -- is the object and the desire of philosophy, which is kindly and lovingly disposed towards wisdom, and does everything to attain it.<sup>2</sup>

Clement's use of the term SOPHIA gives us a clue as to the usual meaning of the term in his day. Since Clement was not too far removed from Paul, we can arrive at an idea of the meaning which Paul gives to the word wisdom by a consideration of the foregoing definitions.

As we define Wisdom to be certain knowledge, being a sure and irrefragible apprehension of things divine and human, comprehending the present, past, and future, which the Lord hath taught us, both by His advent and by the prophets. And it is irrefragible by reason, inasmuch as it has been communicated. And so it is wholly true according to (God's) intention, as being known through means of the Son.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clement, Vol II, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, (ed) Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), p 306.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 493.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Christianity has its own wisdom, which does not come through the senses, but is rather the product of revelation. God revealed this wisdom to mankind. In Galatians, 1:11,12 Paul indicates that God's method of revelation is not dependent upon words, but is immediate. In Paul's discussion of marriage and its relation in First Corinthians 7, he admits that he had secured knowledge by his own judgment. In Philippians 4:8, Paul advises his hearers to "think about these things," thus admitting the possibility of securing knowledge by reflection.

As pointed out in a previous paragraph, Paul's chief idea in philosophy was God. It may be remarked that this idea is the basis of religion. Precisely, and it is here that philosophy and religion are one. The main difference is that the philosopher arrives at the conception of God through reason, while the man of religion arrives at the same conception through revelation.

God is; He is a spirit; and He is good. The same spirit which dwells in the believer dwells also in God, which accounts for the value-judgments of the Christian on this present world.

A person's value-judgments will determine what that individual sees in the world, for we see those things which



we hold to be of value. In this way, the worldling misses much that is eternal because his mind is on the things that are below. Paul advised his readers to "have that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2:5) If the spirit of God thinks, feels, and wills in the believer, then that believer has the mind of Christ within him.

Paul's SOPHIA, then, comes not through the senses, although Paul is unwilling to cast out observation as an avenue of knowledge. The wisdom given from God is a true wisdom which elevates the believer above the wisdom of this world. The natural man, evaluating things from a physical standpoint, misses much of things of the spirit. The tendency is to hold spiritual things in low esteem and so the worldly man misses, or does not receive, the truths about spiritual things.

God may be revealed in nature, as well as by direct revelation:-

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.<sup>1</sup>

This in general gives Paul's philosophy; composed of Metaphysics and Epistemology mingled together. Although the

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<sup>1</sup>Romans 1:20.

two are mingled, it is the Epistemology which is more revealing as to the mind of Paul. His philosophy was idealism in that it affirms that it is the spirit which knows. Paul was monistic in the fact of his affirmation that the basic reality of the universe is spirit.



## CHAPTER IV

### PAUL'S RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHIES

The two schools of philosophy which were most prevalent in the time of Paul, and therefore, which might have influenced him, were Stoicism and Epicureanism. Stoicism was founded about 300 B.C. in Athens, and dominated Hellenic thought for 400 years, and remains today in duty ethics. It borrowed some from the moral ideals of the Semites. The knowledge of the Greeks contributed heavily to Stoicism, and the Roman methods of law and education were partially a result of Stoic influences. Zeno is usually given credit for being the founder of Stoicism.

The Stoics were the members of a philosophical school founded in Athens about 300 B.C., which in its development became characteristic of the whole Hellenistic area and age. Rooted in the strong moral instincts of the Semites, it grew to embrace the scientific knowledge of the Greeks, and branched out in the logical and practical methods of Roman law and education. Its range in time extends over the three centuries of that era; that is, it synchronizes with the history of the Roman empire. Since that time its forces have been absorbed in the development of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

The subjects of Stoicism as outlined by Zeno were

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<sup>1</sup>E. V. Arnold, "Stoics," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, (ed. James Hastings), Vol XI, p 860.

God, Man, and the Universe. His system, as a matter of fact, was an attempt to find complete harmony (HOMOLOGIA), in the three:-

About 300 B. C., he Zeno founded a school of his own, which (broadly considered) was based on the concretion of all these schools of thought, and the dogma of complete harmony (OMOLOGIA, convenientia) in God, the universe, and man.<sup>1</sup>

The philosophy of Zeno was roughly divided into three sections: logic, physics, and ethnics. Zeno held that these three were inseparable, and that one could not be understood without the others. The logic of Zeno was, in reality, what we now think of as epistemology; that is, the body of knowledge about knowledge and knowing. Zeno affirmed the certainty of knowledge. Knowledge is attained by reason, but reason is not infallible. The task of the Stoic, then, is to keep reason upright.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrine of the tabula rasa is often attributed to the Stoics, but appears rather to be opposed to their system.<sup>3</sup>

The study of definitions, syllogisms, paradoxes, and the like was all included in the Stoic logic, which also embraced the whole field of etymology, grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p 861.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 862.



The study of physics, or natural science, as understood and practiced by the Stoics, included practically everything except logic and ethnics.

Under the heading of physics are included all the problems of metaphysics, physics in the modern sense, astronomy, religion, anthropology, and psychology; in fact, we might briefly say that physics includes all subjects except logic and ethnics. More definitely, physics is the study (1) of the universe, (2) of man.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Stoics, religion is man's recognition of his relation to the deity and involves prayer, self-examination and praise. This conception as opposed to many contemporary ideas of religion as ceremony and sacrifice, brought the Stoics into conflict with popular notions of religion. In Roman life this conflict led to an emphasis on principles of interpretation and conformity, or ethnics.<sup>2</sup>

Ethics is built upon physics; what man ought is derived from what man is.<sup>3</sup>

We will next consider some quotations as to the beliefs of the Stoics and then will compare some of Paul's ideas with the ideas of the Stoics. The object being to determine the extent of Stoic influence in the life of Paul.

That "virtue is the supreme good, and the wise man" alone can be happy; that external circumstances, such as health, wealth, and good name, do not (as the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 863.



Academics say) contribute to happiness even one atom; that a short and a long life may equally be complete-- these and the like are paradoxes which Stoicism draws from its Cynic root.<sup>1</sup>

This rule of life was first summed up in the phrase "to live consistently," later "to live consistently with nature."<sup>2</sup>

If man can only be brought to act in strict accordance with the mind of God -- or law of nature -- he is sure of perfect well-being, because he can do nothing as it should not be done. If he can only arrive at such perfect operation of his mental processes, he will necessarily be the perfect speaker, the perfect ruler, the perfect draftsman, the perfect performer of every task, including the securing of his own happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Learn therefore to obey reason and reason only.<sup>4</sup>

The condition of your mind is everything; as long as its operation is right, you are living in the right way. Your mind may act as rightly in poverty as in riches; you may be equally wise and virtuous whether you have the external advantages or not. You must therefore learn to ignore these things -- pain, grief, fear, joy, and all the other perturbing influences.<sup>5</sup>

We perceive that the Stoic idea is that man should be indifferent to his surroundings and that he should live in harmony with nature. The "sage" is the man who can think perfectly and follow out the results of his thinking with a minimum of difficulty.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>T. G. Tucker, Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911), p 410.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p 411.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The speech of Paul in Athens is usually thought to reveal a special connection between the Apostle and the teachings of the Stoics. In fact, it was in Athens that Paul was classed as a "seed-picker." It is probable that Paul knew more philosophy than he revealed to his audience, but one must conclude that his attempt to impress the professional philosophers at Athens was not too successful. On the assumption that we have an accurate transcript of Paul's speech and the reaction of his hearers, we would not conclude that the Athens speech of Paul was the most successful of his career, for making converts.

Also side by side with the serious and earnest philosophers, as deeply learned in the books of his sect as a modern divine, there were charlatans and dabblers. It is unfortunately in the last light that the Apostle Paul appeared to the professional Stoic and Epicurean teachers of Athens.<sup>1</sup>

One is inclined to question the term "unfortunately" in the above quotation. If it was unfortunate, for whom was the misfortune? Certainly not for Paul, because he realized that he need to concentrate on the gospel of Jesus Christ and leave philosophy to those who were especially prepared in that field. (1 Cor. 2:1) Certainly the church benefitted from Paul's humiliation in Athens. The Stoics may have gained from this event, also, due to the fact that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 413.



Paul was willing thereafter to leave philosophy to them. Had he made a tremendous success, his whole ministry might have been vastly different.

The meeting of Paul with the Stoics and Epicureans in Athens is hardly evidence enough to justify the conclusion that he was influenced by either philosophy. He is thought to have quoted from Cleanthes, one of the Stoic poets, but Craig has a different idea:-

Five hundred years earlier, Epimenides had driven a flock of sheep through the city in order to stop an epidemic. Where one sheep would stop, he would set up an altar and sacrifice to the "fitting deity," unknown though he might be. It is interesting that the quotation, "In him we live and move and have our being," was ascribed to this same Epimenides.<sup>1</sup>

If Zeno founded Stoicism in 300 B.C., the man named Epimenides could hardly qualify as a Stoic poet five hundred years before Paul's Athens speech. If the fact that Paul quoted from a Stoic poet were the only reason for believing that he was influenced by the Stoics, our case would be very weak.

The Apostle could have been influenced by Stoic philosophy in Tarsus. While it is generally conceded that he did not attend the university there, he still may have had contact with various Stoic philosophers. Tarsus was one

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<sup>1</sup>Clarence Tucker Cragg, The Beginning of Christianity (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p 232,233.



of the great university centers of the world of Paul's time. There were larger schools at Athens and Alexandria, but Tarsus had a most noted Stoic teacher.

Tarsus was the third university center of the ancient world. According to the geographer Strabo, it ranked after Athens and Alexandria. Athenodorus, one of the most noted Stoic teachers had come from there. But we may be sure that this devout young Jew did not go to the university for instruction. The quotation from one of Meander's comedies in First Corinthians is no more indication that he had studied Greek literature than the words "To be or not to be" on the lips of a modern American is proof that he is a Shakespearean scholar.<sup>1</sup>

That Paul absorbed some influences in Tarsus is almost certain. Just how much of this influence was of the Stoic variety is a question. He must have gathered some habits of speech and modes of argument from the Greeks in his native city.

Of course Paul could not help absorbing some influences from the pagan environment. -- He readily absorbed the methods used in the cynic diatribe, and the phraseology of the Mysteries and of popular Stoicism.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the rhetorical devices of Paul are similar to those employed in the Stoic-cynic propaganda.<sup>3</sup>

There can be no doubt that he [Paul] was educated first at home in Tarsus, and that, if he proceeded to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of Gamaliel, it was later,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 158,159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 158.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 220.

when the language had been learned and all the life of a Greek town made thoroughly familiar to the boy.<sup>1</sup>

He would hear Stoic and Cynic doctrines preached at the street corners and would pick up their tricks of rhetoric. -- He would not attend the university; for him there was a different learning from that taught there; but he would pick up a tincture of what was taught and valued there and pervaded the whole spirit of the city.<sup>2</sup>

These quotations serve to show that Paul could have absorbed much of the Stoic influence during his stay in Tarsus. We shall next consider statements of various authors as to whether or not Paul did absorb such influence.

That Paul possessed a knowledge of Greek philosophy, and particularly of Stoicism, is practically certain. He came from Tarsus in Cilicia, and Cilicia was the native home of many leading Stoics, including its greatest representative in all antiquity.<sup>3</sup>

Stoicism came early into contact with Christianity through the Apostle Paul. The similarity in tone and content between parts of the Pauline epistles, the writings of Seneca, and the records of the teaching of Epictetus has long been familiar to students of Christian theology; the simple explanation is that Paul was brought up in Tarsus in a society permeated by Stoic thought.<sup>4</sup>

In all these appeals including Paul's Athens speech Stoical notions appear--that God is not to be worshipped in the way of sacrifice, that God's goodness and care for men are evident in the works of creation, in the provision made to supply the wants

<sup>1</sup>Allan Menzies & William Edie, "Paul," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, (ed) James Hastings, IX, p 681.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Tucker, op. cit., p 414.

<sup>4</sup>Menzies & Edie, op. cit., XI, p 864.



of His creatures, and in His creation of man with such a nature that he should feel constrained to seek after his Maker.<sup>1</sup>

Of the two philosophies, Paul would have felt more at home with Stoicism than with Epicureanism. The latter sets up pleasure as the supreme goal of life. It is hard to imagine the great apostle to the Gentiles being content for very long with a philosophy which only attempted to give him personal pleasure. Paul placed happiness secondary to duty. The strong mind of Paul would have been at home with the Stoic brand of philosophy. In fact, if those are correct who see a large Stoic influence in the life of Paul, it may be partly from this philosophy that he developed his strength of character.

The Stoics were the Pharisees, the Epicureans the Sadducees, of pagan philosophy. As the Pharisees were the most Hebraic of the Hebrews, so it was Stoicism that came to be the characteristic Roman creed.<sup>2</sup>

Persons of the sterner type of mind, caring comparatively little for the physical comforts and gracious amenities of life, and possessed of a strong sense of duty and decorum -- inclined, perhaps, not only to piety and self-abnegation, but also to be somewhat dour and uncompromising -- were naturally attracted to Stoicism. Those of the complementary character preferred the doctrines of Epicurus.<sup>3</sup>

The writer of the latter statement might have had in mind the Apostle Paul, so nicely does his description of one

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 687.

<sup>2</sup>Tucker, op. cit., p 407.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



who would normally be attracted to Stoicism fit the Apostle. One can almost hear Paul's statement, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4:11) There is a nice question here, which might place this idea in either Stoicism or Epicureanism. The Epicureans sought peace of mind. Although this high ideal was part of Epicureanism, it was not long until such ideas led to a lazy, slothful, vicious attitude which was far removed from the original teachings of Epicurus. Paul may have been thinking of the peace of mind desired by the Epicureans or the "apathy" which was part of the Stoic's attitude toward life.

We conclude, then, that Paul had ample opportunity to come under the influence of the Stoics, and that opportunity at a time in his life when he was particularly impressionable. We find in some points of Paul's thinking definite indications that he was familiar with the ideas of the Stoics. We find in the character of Paul such traits as would be attracted by the stern, unrelenting factors in Stoicism. We know that Paul's teacher, Gamaliel, was versed in Greek learning. A detailed examination of the teachings of Gamaliel would probably reveal that if they were not definitely sympathetic toward the Stoics, at least there would be little in the Rabbi's precepts which would be contradictory to the followers of Zeno.

The monism of the Stoics would appeal to Paul, even if their pantheistic outlook was foreign to his thinking. Paul thought of God as being a person, while the Stoics usually held to the idea that God was a world-soul.

Furthermore, Stoicism in the time of Seneca and Epictetus held a stern doctrine of duty. As Craig says,

In addition to this mystical Stoicism there was the ethical Stoicism found in Seneca and Epictetus. This was a stern doctrine of duty which found its ideal in detachment. The wise man might exercise benevolence toward his brethren, but he was not to show love or pity or sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

One needs only to be reminded of Paul's teaching concerning love in First Corinthians 13 to realize that it is here that Paul and the Stoics differ radically. Not only would Paul show love, but he recognized love as the principle of relationships between Christians. Nor would Paul subscribe to the principle of "apathy" which was so large a part of the philosophy of the Stoics. Paul was a man of large sympathies and emotions, as well as large thoughts. Not for him the indifferent waiting for what fate might bring him.

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<sup>1</sup>Craig, op. cit., p 221



## CHAPTER V

### COMPARISON OF PAUL'S IDEAS WITH THOSE OF THE STOICS

#### A. God

For the Stoics God was coextensive with the universe. God and the world, as conceived by them, are identical.

To the question What is God? Stoicism rejoins: What is God not? In this original state of Pneuma God and the world are absolutely identical. But even then tension, the essential attribute of matter, is at work. Though the force working everywhere is one, there are diversities of its operation, corresponding to various degrees of tension.<sup>1</sup>

This is a confused notion which remains today in God being conceived as some form of energy. In another sense, God is the soul (spirit) of the world, or universe. The apparent inconsistency is explained by the idea that variations occur in condensations of Pneuma.

What God is for the world that the soul is for man. The Cosmos must be conceived as a single whole, its variety being referred to varying stages of condensation in Pneuma. So, too, the human soul must possess absolute simplicity, its varying functions being conditioned by the degrees or species of its tension.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Drew Hicks, "Stoics," Encyclopedia Britannica, XXII, p 564.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 565.



The universe, according to Stoic doctrine, was a gigantic replica of the human being, with a world-body (universe) and a world-soul (God).

Note the parallel between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The soul of the world fills and penetrates it; in like manner, the human soul pervades and breathes through all the body, informing and guiding it, stamping the man with his essential character of rational.<sup>1</sup>

The Stoics taught that God had no personal interest in human beings. He was only a creator or Moving Force, which both created the universe and the things contained therein, and then left it to its own devices.

-----the Stoic is conscious of no personal God to whom he owes reverence and love. Sonship to God did not mean for him personal relationship, but that man shared the rational life of God and should see in the workings of the universe the acts of divine Providence.<sup>2</sup>

Against such an idea Paul reacted with all his might, for this idea of God eliminated from the Stoic thought the conception of sin so fundamental to a Jew and a Pharisee, and even Christians. If there were no personal God, then man need have no concern whatever about sin as disobedience to God.

So, it follows that for the Stoic there could be no consciousness of sin. "All men have erred;" but

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Morton Scott Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), p 24.

that meant "missing the mark," falling short of the ideal of the perfect man, running counter to the laws of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

It was from the world, not from revelation or Torah, that the Stoic moralists secured their deism. Their universe consisted of a plemum surrounded by layers of concentric rings, with the earth as a center. This conception of the universe dominated thought through Aristotle to Copernicus. (1543).

These statements are sufficient to indicate the ideas of the Stoics concerning God. That they were pantheistic is indicated by the conception that God and the universe are in essence one. That they were materialistic is indicated by the statements that the world is composed of physical causes and effects.

#### B. Man

The Stoic psychology was not well defined, but it reflected the psychology current at the time. From the viewpoint of modern psychology the Stoic attempts to understand and explain man seem to be quite crude and confused.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



However, their explanation of man was consistent with the balance of their thinking. For example, the indifference of the Stoics to fate led them to the idea that men should do that which is good with complete indifference to the consequences of their acts.

Man should do that which is good, independently of surrounding influences and circumstances; and, having done that which is good, he shall feel happy, independently of the sufferings and misery which may result from his acts.<sup>1</sup>

The soul of man is an emanation from the world-soul; which, in turn, emanated from the primitive ether. The soul of man is likened to a "fiery breath" or a "spark of the celestial fire."<sup>2</sup> It is corporeal, capable of extension in three directions, and capable of equable distribution over all the body. The soul is at once reason (LOGOS), mind (NOUS), and ruling principle, (HEGEMONIKON).<sup>3</sup> This divine origin of the soul led some of the Stoics to make statements derogatory to any conception of God:-

-----in virtue of its [the soul's] divine origin Cleanthes can say to Zeus, "We too are thy offspring," and a Seneca can calmly insist that, "if man and God are not on perfect equality, the superiority rests rather on our side."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Schaff, (ed) "Stoicism," A Religious Encyclopedia, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co.,) IV, p 2250.

<sup>2</sup>Hicks, op. cit., p 565.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



The soul is the unifier in man, and consequently all physical processes are combined in the soul. According to the Stoics the soul has sensations, assents to judgments, has desires, thinks and reasons. The soul is embryonic and these powers represent a blank tablet,<sup>1</sup> ready to receive any and all kinds of impressions. This rules out any kind of intuition or innate ideas. Knowledge must of necessity come from the senses and the thought which manipulates the materials of sense.<sup>2</sup>

The ideas which we have are copied from stored up sensations. In other words, we know only that which comes through the senses plus stored-up images from previous sensations. A part of all sensation is the mind's assent or dissent, representing the Stoic idea of "tension." The Stoics admitted that hallucination was possible and therefore that all sensations are not equally true or valid.

Zeno compared sensation to the outstretched hand; the clenched fist to simple apprehensions; and the clenched fist held in the other hand to knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Here we see again the idea of "tension." The soul, in man received the impressions of the senses; it became wise or foolish; it survived

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold to the contrary notwithstanding. Cf. supra, p 35.

<sup>2</sup>Hicks, op. cit., p 565.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 566.

death and was received back into the world-soul. Zeno was never quite sure whether the souls of the unphilosophic common people would survive death.

For the Stoic, virtue was knowledge and strength of will. The wise man was the virtuous man. Wisdom in relation to others is justice, it is temperance in all sorts of endeavor, and in endurance it is courage or fortitude. There was no middle ground, a man either had all virtues or he had none. Virtue is defined as "conformity to the all-controlling laws of nature," or "agreement between the human and the divine will."<sup>1</sup>

Virtue is thus the unconditional good; it is at once the absolute end and the means to the end.<sup>2</sup>

All mankind fall into two classes, -- the wise or virtuous, the unwise or wicked, -- the distinction being absolute. He who possesses virtue possesses it whole and entire; he who lacks it lacks it altogether.<sup>3</sup>

The Stoics had a high conception of the part which reason plays in the life of man. It was the reason which seizes upon the generic quality of things and where there is conflict between sense and reason, reason must make the decision. Paul's Christian emphasis upon love departed from

<sup>1</sup>Philip Schaff, op. cit., p 2250.

<sup>2</sup>Hicks, op. cit., p 568.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 570.



the Grecian rationalism at this point.

We may summarize the views of the Stoics regarding man and the world in the following statement by Craig.

Stoicism taught a pantheistic monism. Matter was endowed with reason. God was a fiery ether that permeated all reality. This immanent divinity was in all men. The idea that there is a spark of divinity dwelling in man comes from Stoicism. It is very different from the Biblical view that man is a creation of God and made in his image. The Stoics usually hold that this "spark" would be reabsorbed into the everlasting whole.<sup>1</sup>

This view is reflected by Epictetus who said that man is a "little soul, carrying a corpse."<sup>2</sup>

### The Ideas of Paul

#### A. God

One fact that stands out in reading the works of Paul is that he had a personal God and that his conception of God was monotheistic. Paul accepted, without attempting to argue the point, the fact of the existence of God; that there was one true God, the God of the Jewish people. (Rom. 1:9; 11:36, etc.)

As a contrast to this conception of a God who demanded a high standard from his worshippers we have seen the vague idea of God held by the Stoics. This monotheism of

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<sup>1</sup>Craig, op. cit., p 221.

<sup>2</sup>Oates, op. cit., p 466.



Paul is one of the points at which he is quite different from the Stoics, and at which he displays his Hebrew heritage.

The God of Paul was not congruent with the universe in any sense. Instead he was a spirit and did not need the ministrations of human hands for his own benefit. (Acts 17:25) God was not a being who had set the world in motion and then departed from it, leaving it to struggle along as best it could. God was in the world, revealed in Jesus Christ.

We have seen that for Paul there is but one God, who is supremely revealed in Jesus Christ whose nature is divine, and who dwells through Christ in the life of every believer as the life-giving Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

A somewhat full definition of religion, including the idea of God as Paul thought of Him, serves to present a fair picture of the Gentile Apostle's view of his religion as a

--- sentiment toward God consisting of (1) an idea of his nature, (2) the emotions naturally growing up about such an idea, (3) the practices flowing congruently from that idea and those emotions; the idea itself arising (a) through revelation, and (b) through a study of the actual world; the (4) whole functioning (a) to unify a man's thought system of the universe and (b) practically, to unite him with God and (c) unify himself into an integrated personality serving in his social group.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 133.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Holmes, The Mind of St. Paul, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p 57.

## B. Man

Paul's idea of God had much to do with his conception of man. In Paul's thinking, God had made a promise of salvation which was both the free gift of God and at the same time had to be earned by man. This enables man to strive, or to "press on" to perfection, as Paul suggested in Phil. 3:7-15. When the perfect union with God is reached, the individual will be perfect.

All men have sinned (Rom. 3:23) but all men also have the privilege of gaining life through Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6:8). Paul realized the natural limitations of men and spoke in "human terms" because of the imperfections of his hearers. (Rom. 6:19). The knowledge of man is imperfect, as Paul points out in discussing "love" in First Corinthians 13.

Man is either fleshly, spiritual, or carnal. Paul uses the three words: SARKIKOS, PNEUMATIKOS, and PSEUCHIKOS to describe man. SARKIKOS is the carnal man, as revealed by the Apostle in First Corinthians 3:1,3,4; Romans 7:14; Second Corinthians 10:4, etc. In Romans 8:7, the carnal mind is contrasted with the spiritual mind. The spiritual mind, or PNEUMATIKOS, is the mind that can understand the

things of the Holy Spirit of God. The natural man, PSEUCHIKOS, is not able to receive the things of the spirit, which are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor. 2:14)

Man is God's offspring and therefore is of the same substance and nature because of the fact that "like begets like." (Acts 17:29). Men have been made of one - that is, every nation has a common beginning, according to Paul in his Athens speech. (Acts 17:26)

Not only was God the creator of man, but He was so careful a creator that He arranged the very organs of the body. (1 Cor. 12:18) As God has adjusted the parts of the body, so has he adjusted the various factors in the church. (1 Cor. 12:24) It is the spirit of man which will inherit the Kingdom of God and immortality. These things cannot be inherited by "flesh and blood." (1 Cor. 15:50)

The apostle to the Gentiles had a high conception of the innate worth of mankind. This is expressed in his idea that men are the "temples of God." (2 Cor 6:16) Men can be perfect in holiness and the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1) Men were called to freedom, which came through Christ. (Gal. 5:1,13) Those who live by the spirit should show forth the spirit in their lives. (Gal. 5:25)



The Apostle advises his hearers to fill their minds full of things which are "true, honorable, pure, lovely, of good report, gracious, excellent, and that which is praiseworthy." (Phil. 4:8)

The converted Christian was a "new man" who could grow towards the perfection demonstrated and revealed in Christ. The Christian was freed from guilt, sinful passions, (Gal. 5:1) and moved by his own desire for self-betterment and love for the Righteous God, forever pushes toward the ideal or Perfect Man. (Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:6) In this new conception Paul left the Mosaic Law far behind and recognized the natural moral aspiration in man so emphasized by the Stoics.

### C. The Universe

The Apostle has an interesting conception of the universe. He undoubtedly accepted the current theory of astronomy, which declared that the universe was geo-centric rather than helio-centric. The universe was peopled with various beings, both good and evil. Of the evil population, the Devil was the chief leader. (2 Cor. 11:14) In addition to Satan, there were beings that "were not gods" to whom the Galatians had been in bondage. (Gal. 4:8) The Christians

were saints (Eph. 6:12) but there were in the world "principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and the spiritual hosts of wickedness." (Eph. 6:12) There were "elemental spirits" in the world, to which the Christian had died with Christ. (Col. 2:20).

Paul regarded the whole creation of God as being good. This would seem to negate the idea that matter is evil, sometimes thought to be a part of the mental furniture of the Apostle to the Gentiles. (1 Tim. 4:4). It is God who gives life to all things. (1 Tim. 6:13).

## CHAPTER VI

### OTHER INFLUENCES ON PAUL'S SYSTEM OF THOUGHT

#### A. Jewish Influence

In a study of Paul, we must remember that he was a Jew. In his own words, we find:

They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee.<sup>1</sup>

-----circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Paul indicates his Jewish background. While the fact that he was of the tribe of Benjamin had little to do with his thinking, the fact that he was a Pharisee had much to do with his mental processes. However, this influence, as with most of the Jewish influence, was of a theological nature rather than philosophic. Since the Pharisees were the strictest sect of the Jews, we can see their influence in Paul's tendency to be separatistic in his outlook.

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 26:5.

<sup>2</sup>Philippians 3:5,6.



From the Pharisees Paul received a deep interest in religion and a belief in the resurrection. He was a devotee of the Mosaic Law, the Rabbinical lore and traditions. Many of the ideas acquired through his Jewish background were never relinquished by the Apostle.

This interest in the law, begun in the orthodox home of Paul, was continued when he went to Jerusalem and entered the school of Gamaliel. The teaching of the school consisted almost entirely of the interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures, and examination of the requirements of the Law.<sup>1</sup> Paul reflects this training in the manner in which he uses the Old Testament Scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

----- the apostle Paul was in emotion and thought a Jew, one whose "goodly heritage" became the source from which, even after he became a Christian, he never ceased to draw inspiration and strength and resources which, for the most part, determined the abiding and pre-eminently Jewish form of his thought and feeling.<sup>3</sup>

Practically all students of the life of Paul recognize the importance of the Jewish influence in his later work and thinking. This influence, as noted before, would seem to be largely theological. There is not entire agreement in assessing this factor in the life of Paul.

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<sup>1</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p 198.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 199.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

While most scholars agree that the greatest influence outside of Christianity upon the life and thought of the apostle Paul was Judaism, all are not agreed as upon the type of Judaism from which that influence came.<sup>1</sup>

Basically, however, there is little difference between the type of Judaism which existed in Jerusalem and that which was found in Tarsus and other Hellenic cities. The impact of Greek thought on Judaism was very slight, owing to the tendency of the Jews to be aloof and to maintain their separation from the Gentiles among whom they lived.<sup>2</sup>

In Paul's philosophy of history as revealed in his conception that God supplied the real meaning of the onward progression of mankind, we find a specifically Jewish heritage. A similar carry-over from Judaism is noticed in Paul's conception of the church.<sup>3</sup>

Paul's knowledge of God and his ideas on immortality had a dual source - the Jewish heritage and his knowledge of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Andrews points out that Paul was a Jew and that we must remember this fact, although we are not forced to interpret and understand all his sayings and writings from the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 201

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 206, 208.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Wilson, St. Paul and Paganism, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), p 7.



Jewish viewpoint. Paul's contact with Greek civilization, according to this writer, had little influence upon the basic pattern of his thinking, which was fundamentally Jewish.

We conclude, then, that Paul was greatly influenced by his early Jewish environment; and that his mature thinking was affected by his training in the school of Gamaliel. This influence is especially evident in Paul's religion. It is difficult to find any philosophic influences in Paul's Jewish background.

### B. Mystery Cults

In addition to the Jewish influence in the thinking of Paul, there is the possibility that his philosophy and theology were influenced by the Greek mystery cults. Again, as with the Stoic influence, we find that writers do not agree as to the extent of the influence of the cults. Some writers state that Paul was a member or "adept" of one of the cults; other writers feel that Paul had absolutely no contact with these Mystery groups. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two extremes. Ramsay feels that the influence of the Mysteries on Paul is based on a false assumption and understanding of the thought of the Apostle.



This theory [that Paul was influenced by the pagan Mysteries] rests (as I think) on a complete misunderstanding of the thought of Paul, and is therefore valueless for our present purpose;-- 1

We have now his clear, explicit, and thorough condemnation of the attempt to introduce into the teaching of Christianity any element, or idea, or rite, or method that was characteristic of those pagan Mysteries and a convincing statement of his reason for condemning them: the religion of Jesus is spiritual, the ritual of the Mysteries is external and non-spiritual.<sup>2</sup>

Edman takes a dubious view on this question, contenting himself with saying:--

It must be granted at the outset that all attempts to ascertain the exact relations between Paul and the mystery religions have remained inexact and indecisive.<sup>3</sup>

No one coming upon the mystery religions and the Pauline cult of Christianity, could fail to be struck by the similarities of method and atmosphere.<sup>4</sup>

Here, again, we have an influence that might have had a bearing on the thought of the Apostle, but the Mysteries themselves were of a religious nature, so it is hard to find in them any specific philosophic influence. It may be that Paul had no first-hand information regarding the Mystery religions. At any rate, we shall deal with the larger cults individually.

<sup>1</sup>W. F. Ramsay, The Teachings of Paul, op. cit., p 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 304.

<sup>3</sup>Irvin Edman, The Mind of Paul, (New York: Henry Hold & Co., 1935), p 122.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 137.

Angus lists the Mystery Cults as: The Orphic, Pythagorean, Great Mother and Attis, Isis, Adonis of Syria, Persian Mithra, Greek Eleusinia, Gnostic Fraternities, Phrygian Sabazios, Dionysius, Hermeticists.<sup>1</sup> Of these, the cults of Orpheus, the Eleusinian Mysteries, the cult of the Great Mother, the cult of Adonis, and the cult of Mithras are the more important.

Orpheus. The cult of Orpheus is ably discussed in the work entitled, *From Orpheus to Paul*, by Vittorio D. Macchioro. In this cult, Zagreus, the son of Zeus and Persephone, was torn to pieces by the Titans. Athena rescued his heart, which was swallowed by Zeus. This led to the rebirth of Zagreus as the son of Zeus and Semele. The Titans were blasted by Zeus, and from their ashes arose mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Macchioro points out the similarities between Christ and Zagreus: (1) Zagreus is the son of Zeus, (2) The Titans killed him, (3) Zeus called him back to life, (4) Zeus takes him to heaven, (5) he is given a kingdom.<sup>3</sup> The author supposes that Paul was an initiate of the cult of Orpheus.

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<sup>1</sup>S. Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p 77.

<sup>2</sup>Vittorio D. Macchioro, *From Orpheus to Paul*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), p 29.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p 189, 190.



In a word, there is definitely a mythological agreement between the Orphic Dionysius and the Pauline Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Now, how are we to explain this deep Orphic element in Paulinism? Are we entitled to surmise that Paul had a personal acquaintance with the mysteries? In other words, may we suppose that he had been initiated? Strange as this idea may appear at first sight, there is no reason for rejecting it.<sup>2</sup>

The Orphic cult, at times, had a representation that Orpheus was crucified and that he was a "good shepherd."<sup>3</sup> The similarity to Christ in these items is readily noticed. Orphism was different from the other Mystery Cults in that it set forth a definite system of thinking; deity is further removed from man; more exalted than in most of the other cults.<sup>4</sup> The teachings of this cult are summarized as: (1) man had a divine origin, (2) men could be reborn and made pure, (3) they were assured of ultimate union with the deity, (4) a strong antithesis between flesh and spirit, (5) high ecstasy of their spiritual life, (6) direct appeal to the individual, (7) devotion to the ideal of brotherhood, (8) other-worldliness, (9) certainty of eternal bliss for all who through initiation have attained purity.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 191.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 203.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, op. cit., p 98. (footnote).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p 100.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 99.



The Eleusinian Mysteries arose out of the worship of Demeter, the mother of Persephone, in the province of Attica. The secrets of the cult were revealed only to initiates. Only those of the Greek race were admitted, including slaves but rejecting those under bloodguiltiness. In the initiation, there were three stages: (1) the lesser mysteries, (2) the greater mysteries, and (3) the mystic visions. The acts of initiation were: (1) fasting, (2) processional with sacred objects, (3) sacrifice of a pig at the sea, (4) purification by washing in sea-water, (5) procession to Eleusis, (6) drinking of KYKEON, a mixture of water and barley meal.<sup>1</sup>

In the purification by washing in sea-water and the drinking of the KYKEON, we can detect a slight similarity to the Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the early Christian churches. The Eleusinian Cults gave a high place to women, and was deeply interested in the mystery of growth in nature. The Eleusinian Mysteries finally became a rival of Christianity.

At the same time there were fundamental differences between the religion of St. Paul and the religion of Eleusis, and there can be no doubt that,

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<sup>1</sup>J. Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1921), p 217.

if the Eleusinian Mysteries influenced primitive Christianity, they were at the same time one of the real rivals of Christianity in the religious life of the first century A. D.<sup>1</sup>

Mithraism was another of the Mystery Cults which had a rather striking similarity to Christianity. Some similarities are: (1) revelation, (2) personal immortality, (3) divine retribution, (4) a last judgment, (5) resurrection of the dead, (6) destruction of the universe in fire, (7) heaven and hell, (8) the use of the term "brother," (9) observance of Sunday, (10) baptismal rites, (11) standard of personal morality, (12) demand for self-mastery.<sup>2</sup>

Paul may have come into contact with Mithraism in Cilicia, for that cult may have gained a considerable following in Paul's native province several generations before the time of Christ. This cult was one of the most outstanding cults of the Greek Mystery religions.

Nevertheless, Mithraism is, after Christianity, at once the purest, and manliest, of faiths. There is reason to believe that it was already an important element in the religious atmosphere which St. Paul breathed in the days of his childhood.<sup>3</sup>

Hermes (of the Hermetic religion) was originally the god of herds and flocks - i.e. the good shepherd. He

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 105.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 107f.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 110.



finally became the messenger of Zeus, was regarded as the Demiurge, and was the revealer of gods to men. In the preaching which formed an important part of the worship of Hermes, we see a superficial similarity to the Christian religion. Teachings common to the Hermetic Cult and Christianity are: (1) God is all in all, (2) God is creator of nature, (3) fatherhood of God, (4) freedom of choice combined with predestination, (5) association of death with sin, (6) God as the source of revelation.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the differences are: (1) conception of the deity, (2) the spirit of the two (e.g. humility regarded as a weakness in Mithraism) (3) man possessed of a double ego, the lower part of which could sin with impunity, (4) difference in conception of PNEUMA and PSUCHE, (5) mysteries.<sup>2</sup>

The guilds were widespread and had a large influence on Christianity. They may be classified as (1) real societies, (2) professional associations, (3) temporary associations of tradespeople. The following list of similarities between the guilds and the Christian Churches will indicate that the two groups had much in common.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 114f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 117f.



(1) Both guilds and Christianity are brotherhoods, (2) the two groups were in touch with each other, (3) both practiced complete equality, (4) the term "presbyter" was common to both, (5) indwelling spirit, (6) Passion, death and resurrection of a god, (7) guilds "broke bread" at various homes, (8) guilds had the practice of "sharing with one another" (9) cosmopolitan attitude, (10) desire for realization of democratic ideals, (11) both tried to give a sense of personal worth, (12) marriage and burial were religious festivals, (13) both supported rights of womanhood, (14) both were schools of moral discipline.<sup>1</sup>

The model for the Christian communities of the Gentile Church is not to be sought in the synagogue, but in the Pagan Guilds.<sup>2</sup>

When we consider, alongside of each other, the Pagan Guilds and the primitive Christian communities, we discover that it is not only that there are striking similarities in purpose and usage; but we must recognize that these guilds contributed a very large share towards determining the character of the Christian communities, and indeed their work is to be regarded as part of the providential preparation of God for the coming of organized Christianity, as truly as the preparation of Judaism and the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

The conception of baptism as an initiatory rite for admission into the early churches is thought by some writers

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 135

to have been borrowed from the mystery cults. The cults, it is true, had certain initiatory rites, but whether these rites were borrowed by the early Christians is questionable.

And there was also a class of private cults, to which only those were admitted who were qualified by passing certain tests, which were carried on in secret, and the order and procedure of which was not to be spoken of, except among the votaries themselves, these latter were called Mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

Purification by water, whether by sprinkling or immersion, was a well-known feature of some of the Mysteries.<sup>2</sup>

Gardner points out that Justin (circa. 150 A. D.) compares the communion service of the Christians with the rites of the Mysteries. Justin even goes so far as to accuse the followers of the cult of Mithras of imitating the communion service in their rites. According to Gardner, the writings of Justin indicate a tendency to drift toward the heathen mysteries on the part of the first Century Christians.<sup>3</sup>

The three characteristics of the mysteries which are somewhat similar to Christianity were: (1) rites of purification, (2) communion with some deity, (3) extension of view beyond the present life - to that which is to come.<sup>4</sup> It is safe to say that practically every known religion had these three factors in one form or another. To burden Paul with

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<sup>1</sup>Percy Gardner, The Religious Experience of Saint Paul, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), p 58.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 120.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 103.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p 69.



the fault of bringing these influences into the Christian religion is to saddle him with a greater burden than he should be called upon to bear. After all, there were certain initiatory rites which introduced the proselyte to the Jewish religion. It is certain from Paul's own writings that he was familiar with these rites as practiced by the Jewish community. Why, then, do we need to introduce a vague possibility that Paul was influenced by the mystery cults?

Be that as it may, the mystery religions were highly popular in the time of Paul. Reasons for this popularity are given by Gardner as: (1) they were ancient, therefore venerable, (2) they were full of obscurity which passes for profundity, (3) they suited the pessimistic outlook of the time, (4) they brought a hope of future life, (5) they were built upon a sense of sin and misery.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps this popularity which leads to the idea that Christianity borrowed from the pagan mysteries.

The relation of Paul to the Mysteries of the ancient world is far-reaching. It is not only that Christianity as he views it, has certain secrets which belong only to the believer. But in the very nature of those secrets, and in the whole character of Christianity as understood by Paul, we may trace great and undeniable likenesses

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 69.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

to the pagan Mysteries. I do not mean to assert that he plagiarized from them. When he speaks of them it is in terms of the greatest dislike and contempt. It is not a field in which he would choose to dig, even for pearls of price.<sup>1</sup>

With a little imagination, one can visualize the Apostle, coming into contact with the mystery cults, realizing their similarity to his view of Christianity with its consequent danger of becoming confused with them, and marshalling his forces to prevent the confusion from spreading further.

When we realize that the methods of thought employed by the Greeks were the same as those employed by the Jews and the Christians, we can account for the fact that there were likenesses between the cults and Christianity as it was understood and taught by Paul. It is not necessary to postulate the idea that Paul slavishly borrowed his ideas from the mysteries.

The use of the term mysteries by Paul (1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Cor. 14:2; 1 Cor. 13:2; 1 Cor. 15:41) usually indicates something which was specially revealed by God and belonged to the Christians or to the church - to those especially initiated into the faith in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p 79, 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 73.



Paul also referred to the gospel that he preached as a "mystery," but the meaning of that word in his vocabulary was something quite different from the "secret knowledge" of the initiate of a cult.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of the mystery cults appears to be less on the Apostle Paul than on the Christians of his day. Most of the Christians had come either from a Jewish or a Greek background. It is quite reasonable to suppose that the Greek converts to Christianity would understand this new religion in terms of what they had known of the religion from which they came to Christianity. Paul faced these problems in relation to the church at Corinth. (1 Cor. 8:1f).

With respect to the mystery cults and their influence we conclude: (1) that Paul was acquainted with the practices and beliefs of these cults, (2) that he used terms familiar to the followers of the mystery cults in order to bring such followers to better understanding of the Christian religion, (3) that the early Christians were not entirely free from the influences of the cults from which they had come, (4) that Paul contended against the practices of the cults, which had crept into the Christian community, and (5) that these facts account for the superficial similarities noted between the Mystery cults and the Christian religion.

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<sup>1</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p 185, 186.

It should also be noted that the resemblances between Christianity and the Guilds are chiefly in matters of organization. The aims of the two groups were somewhat similar, which would account for the fact that the practices of the groups were alike. In other words, two groups setting out to elevate the condition of the poor, for example, would be likely to follow somewhat the same over-all plan.

A further observation is in order, viz., since there is hardly any evidence that Paul was influenced by, or was favorable to, the official state religion of Greece, we have not discussed that religion.

#### C. Paul's Conversion

Because of the brevity of its extent in time, Paul's conversion has often been neglected in the evaluation of the influences which went into the making of the mind of the Apostle. There has been much discussion as to whether certain elements in the conversion were real or whether the entire account was merely a psychological experience of Paul. Some writers feel that Paul was merely describing what took place in his own mind and that the events of the conversion were not physically visible to anyone else. Other writers raise the question as to whether or not Paul actually saw Christ in his conversion vision.



Without attempting a critical analysis of Paul's conversion, either from the psychological or literal standpoint, we may realize that whatever the nature of the experience, Paul was profoundly affected by it. There is no particular reason to doubt Paul's own account of his conversion. Certainly he would be better qualified to describe the experience than anyone else. Second in weight of evidence we might consider the statements of those who were with Paul at the time.

Ramsay speaks of Paul's conversion as a great crisis in his life.

While we must regard Paul's thought as developing in an ordered fashion from the childhood of a Jewish boy in a Greek city and in the position of a Roman born, we must also bear in mind the great crisis of his life, viz., his Conversion.<sup>1</sup>

Goodspeed gives importance to the conversion of Paul in the following statements.

And his conversion remains the most conspicuous example of a complete and instantaneous about-face in religion.<sup>2</sup>

Saul's conversion was not only a spiritual emancipation; it was a great intellectual release. Not only his spirit but his mind was set free.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul, op. cit., p 14.

<sup>2</sup>Goodspeed, op. cit., p 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 19.

Anyone who is familiar with the story of Paul will immediately recognize the weight of these statements. Saul had come persecuting the followers of Jesus; he returned to become the first great missionary to the Gentiles. Between these two events something had happened. Paul was not the same man as Saul who had started from Jerusalem to the city of Damascus.

According to Dr. Arthur Holmes, there were three conversions and their influence

----- transformed from a crowd of warring inherited and acquired desires, contradictory ideas, and divergent actions into an organized, integrated person, with one sole end and aim in life, with all his desires focused upon that end, and all his activities converging upon the accomplishment.<sup>1</sup>

Andrews attaches great importance to the conversion of Paul:-

This spiritual experience was the decisive hour in Paul's religious history, and certainly the most vital and formative influence in his whole life.<sup>2</sup>

To lose sight of the influence of Paul's conversion upon his life is to overestimate the impact of Greek philosophy, to exaggerate the influence of the mystery cults, to present a one-sided view of the mind of Paul.

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<sup>1</sup>Holmes, op. cit., p 87.

<sup>2</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p 15.



### D. Influence of Christianity

Growing out of Paul's conversion and partially as a result of his consequent associations, we have a neglected factor in the development of the mind of the Apostle. That is, the effect of Christians and Christian Churches. We must keep the fact in mind that Paul wrote his Epistles only after about twenty years of preaching to Christian Churches. To think that this preaching was without its influence on his mind is to neglect the obvious. In his contacts with churches we have a key to understanding Paul; his mind, his philosophy and his writing.

Paul was called upon by his new converts to give them guidance about such things as eating meat sacrificed to idols. In giving guidance Paul found it necessary to think very clearly on the matter. That this thinking and writing had no influence on Paul is inconceivable. We have a two-fold influence; Paul influenced the churches and the churches influenced Paul. For example, the question has been raised as to whether Paul originated the "Eucharist." Ramsay says:

So far from being an invention of Paul's (as

has sometimes been maintained), or from having been seriously modified by Paul, the Eucharist in its entirety was taken over by Paul from earlier ritual. He found it in the Church, and he transmitted it to the Church as he found it.<sup>1</sup>

Moffat points out that Paul had been a missionary for about twenty years before he attempted to write any of his Epistles.

He did not begin to write the letters by which he is best known until he had been a Christian for about twenty years, and he was over forty when he inaugurated the Gentile propaganda in Asia Minor and Europe.<sup>2</sup>

In matters of eschatology Paul reveals himself as a Christian rather than a Jew, a Greek, or a Roman. This is doubtless due to the fact that there was no well-defined eschatology in Greek philosophy, Roman thought, nor Jewish religion.

A modern finds it, perhaps, hardest to think himself back into the eschatological world of the apostle, and yet this effort of the imagination is essential, for it is there that Paul reveals himself not as a Greek, nor as a Hebrew, nor even as a Roman, but as a Christian of the first generation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsay, Teaching of Paul, op. cit., p 196, 197.

<sup>2</sup>James Moffat, Paul and Paulinism, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1910), p 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 63, 64.



### E. Other Influences

There are several possibilities of influence in the thinking of Paul which should be discussed. We have passed over the official Greek religions as being generally disliked by Paul.

#### Chaldean.

St. Paul clearly shows the influence of what were originally Chaldean astrological ideas. This is specially shown by what he has to say about "the elements" "the prince of the power of the air" and demons. (Gal iv. 3,9; Col ii. 8,20; Eph ii. 2; Rom viii. 38; Eph i. 21; vi. 12; Col ii. 15).<sup>1</sup>

#### Roman Citizenship.

That Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship is indicated in several places in which he states that he was a Roman. The power of Rome in the beginning was exercised to protect the Christians, although this condition was radically altered by the time of Nero. Paul may have received some of his ideas of church government from the Roman political organization.

#### Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc.

These great philosophers had given their thought to the world long before the time of Paul. While he may not

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, op. cit., p 16.

have read after the philosophers specifically, he could hardly avoid coming into the great currents of philosophic thought which were prevalent in the Graeco-Roman world. It is possible that Paul was influenced by the Platonic thought of Philo, although this is not beyond doubt.

Caesar-worship. This type of worship arose directly out of the hero-cults and was quite prevalent in the time of Paul. To Paul the assumption of divinity by the Caesars must have appeared an ignorant travesty on real religion as represented by the one God and his son Jesus Christ.

Household gods. The Roman had many household gods with which Paul must have been familiar. It is highly improbable that the worship of these gods had any great or lasting influence on Paul.

Since this work is not intended primarily to trace the genesis of Paul's thought, this will suffice for an evaluation of the formative influences in the life of Paul.



## CHAPTER VII

### SOURCES

The sources of information regarding the Apostle Paul are found in the Book of Acts, the books of First and Second Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philip-  
pians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians. This list does not include Hebrews, which is thought to have been written by someone other than Paul. Nor does it include the Pastoral Epistles, because of the fact that their authorship has been seriously questioned. However, after we eliminate the doubtful books we still have ample material from which to discover the facts about the philosophy of Paul. As pointed out by James F. Clarke:-

Ample materials for the study of the Pauline ideas are to be found in those Epistles the authenticity of which the most destructive criticism has not questioned. ----- But it is very possible that the other writings attributed to Paul in the New Testament, as well as the Book of Acts, will continue to be regarded as valid sources of knowledge, after full justice has been done to the exceptions raised against them by modern investigation.<sup>1</sup>

As to the validity of various writings of Paul, we find that Origen in De Principiis, refers to certain works

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<sup>1</sup>James Freeman Clarke, The Ideas of the Apostle Paul, (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1884), p iv.

as having been written by Paul. Since Origen was writing near the time of Paul, we feel that considerable weight must be attached to his statements. We find the following:

----- there is an illustration in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians,-----<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, in the Epistle to the Galatians --, he [Paul] says-----<sup>2</sup>

And in the Epistle to the Colossians, --- he [Paul] says-----<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, -- he [Paul] writes -----<sup>4</sup>

These quotations establish the fact that Origen thought that Paul wrote First Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews. In another connection, Origen attributes the book of Romans to Paul.<sup>5</sup> While this does not constitute adequate proof of the authorship of these books the statements have value. It is not within the province of this work to inquire extensively into the various questions which have been raised concerning the authorship of the works usually attributed to Paul, but we need to establish some kind of a basis for drawing on the books for the philosophy of Paul.

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<sup>1</sup>Origen, De Principiis, Vol. IV, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, (ed) Roberts & Donaldson, (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), p 360.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 361.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p 362.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



Probably the book of Hebrews has been questioned as much as any other of the works usually attributed to Paul. This is indicated by the statement of Hawkins regarding the case against Pauline authorship of the book.

The clearest case is that of Hebrews; every consideration, whether of style, vocabulary, religious point of view, or even the uncertainty of traditional testimony as to its genuineness, must alike testify to the impossibility of its having been written by Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The Pauline authorship of First and Second Timothy and Titus has also been questioned by New Testament scholars; as noted in the following quotation, the case is based on the advanced development of church life as reflected in these works.

The case in regard to the Pastorals (I and II Timothy and Titus), is scarcely less clear; scholarship is almost as unanimous as in the case of Hebrews in ascribing them to some author other than Paul. This is because they evidently reflect a time much later than that of the apostle; the church organization is much more developed with bishops, elders, deacons, and even widows enrolled upon relief; doctrine appears equally developed; it has crystallized into an orthodoxy; particular care is to be given to scrutinizing the channels through which it is received, and to seeing that it is transmitted without any variation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Martyr Hawkins, The Recovery of the Historical Paul, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1943), p 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 13.

Ephesians has not entirely escaped scholarly doubts as to its Pauline authorship:-

More recent, and less general, is the challenge to the authenticity of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It, too, differs vastly from materials recognized as genuinely Pauline in style and diction.<sup>1</sup>

Colossians and Ephesians are judged by Hawkins to be more Johannine than Pauline.

The very close connection between Ephesians and Colossians has long been recognized. The greatly developed Christology and Ecclesiology of these epistles must provoke our earnest challenge; they are far more Johannine than Pauline.<sup>2</sup>

Second Thessalonians has been judged to be the work of someone other than Paul on the grounds that the apocalyptic material contained therein is not Pauline.

Difficulties have also long been acknowledged in connection with the genuineness of II Thessalonians. --- The chief difference is the communication of some most dubious apocalyptic materials.<sup>3</sup>

Luke's work in the Book of Acts, insofar as it covers the life of Paul, does not escape the critical doubts of Hawkins. Doubtless the works of Paul, if considered genuine, are a better source as to what Paul thought, but we are not justified in rejecting Luke entirely. Hawkins

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p 14.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



makes the two statements below, which seem to be slightly contradictory.

But whatever may be thought of "Luke's" value as a church historian, he must be peremptorily challenged as an authority for the life of Paul. ---It should go without saying that Paul's own letters must in every case be given the precedence over any other account.<sup>1</sup>

The only account of the life and work of Paul which has come down to us in the New Testament is that contained in the Acts of the Apostles. This is supposed to be written by Luke, who was a companion of Paul. Hence it is thought to be a firsthand account, written by one who was a participant in much of which he related, and who had the best of opportunities to ascertain the truth of the rest. This should, therefore, be taken as the foundation upon which our interpretation of Paul must be built.<sup>2</sup>

Hawkins has a great enthusiasm for the Book of Philemon. While we agree that this work demonstrates the ability of Paul to think clearly and write effective Greek, there is little in the book to indicate the philosophy of Paul.

He who would understand Paul must make this letter to Philemon part of the most familiar furnishing of his mind and heart. It exhibits the apostle as one who could and did think clearly and in the simplest terms in situations of greatest emotional tension. It also reveals him as one who could write the very simplest, clearest, and most beautiful Greek. The playfulness

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6-7.

of some of his expressions would be possible only to one completely at home in the medium in which he is expressing himself.<sup>1</sup>

James Freeman Clarke is not quite as critical as Hawkins of the genuineness of the books usually attributed to Paul. Clarke points out that the Epistles of Romans, Corinthnians, and Galatians have never been questioned.

The genuineness and veracity of the chief Epistles of Paul ---those to the Romans, Corinthnians, and Galatians ---have never been questioned.<sup>2</sup>

While it would be possible to discover the philosophy of Paul from these works and the Book of Acts, we do not need to limit ourselves to them. As Clarke says:

Postponing a further examination of the authenticity of our canon till the end of my book, I will only add here that most of the characteristic ideas of Paul are to be found in the writings universally accepted as genuine.<sup>3</sup>

As noted previously, Origen attributes certain works to Paul, the Pauline authorship of which later scholarship has questioned.

Our sources for information for Paul's life and character are the last part of the Book of Acts, and his own letters. The authenticity of these writings rests on the general consent of opinion in the Christian Church as early, at least, as the end of the second century.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Clarke, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Clark., op. cit., p. vi.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 23-24.



Perhaps the best summary is given by Stevens in  
The Pauline Theology.

The burden of proof clearly lies upon the objectors. The epistles claim to be Pauline; tradition is abundant and distinct in its testimony to the validity of this claim; a general Pauline character is admitted by all to belong to them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>George B. Stevens, The Pauline Theology, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1892), 82.

## Chapter VIII.

### THE LIFE OF PAUL.

It is not possible to construct a complete biography of St. Paul. Most of the information considered in this dissertation will be based on the account given by Luke in the Book of Acts. This information will be supplemented by a few quotations from various writers on the life of Paul.

Of Paul's mother we know nothing. We know from Paul's own statement that his father was a Pharisee. (Acts 23:6)<sup>1</sup> Furthermore the father of Paul was a Roman citizen. This is indicated by Paul's statement, "I was free born." (Acts 22:28) Paul had at least one sister who lived in the city of Jerusalem and whose son aided Paul at the time of his arrest. (Acts 23:16) Paul was a member of the tribe of Benjamin and was himself a Pharisee. (Phil. 5:3) He was born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia but was educated in the city of Jerusalem under Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3) In addition to his studies under Gamaliel, Paul mastered the

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid excessive footnotes, references to scripture texts will be given in this manner.



art of tentmaking. He worked at this trade during his stay in the city of Corinth, together with Aquila and Priscilla at whose home he stayed. (Acts 18:2,3)

At the time of the stoning of Stephen, Paul was one of the consenting witnesses as indicated by the fact that the garments of other witnesses were laid at the feet of Paul, (Acts 7:58) and as stated in Acts 8:1. During this time Saul, as Paul was then called, was engaged in violent persecution of the Christians. (Acts 8:3) It was while engaged in this activity that Paul made his journey to Damascus on which he had his well-known vision of Christ. (Acts 9:1ff).

This vision changed the name of Saul to Paul and changed his entire viewpoint regarding the Christians. From a violent persecutor of the followers of Christ, Paul became one of the most ardent proclaimers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Acts 9:20; 22:21; 26:19) He began his preaching in the city of Damascus, made a trip to Arabia, returned to Damascus and after three years went to Jerusalem. (Gal. 1:17,18) At Jerusalem he became involved with the Grecians who set about to kill him. By way of Caesarea he went to Tarsus. (Acts 9:30) Of this visit to Tarsus, we shall have more to say later.

The requirements of this paper do not necessitate a

detailed account of the ministry of Paul. He preached at Antioch, where he was set apart as a missionary. (Acts 11:26; 13:2,3) On his first missionary journey he visited Cyprus, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. (Acts 13,14) From Derbe he returned to Antioch in Syria, his starting point.

Paul's second missionary journey, like his first, started at Antioch in Syria. He visited Tarsus first and then traveled to Antioch in Pisidia by way of Lystra and Derbe. Leaving Antioch, he visited Troas, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. From Athens he went to Corinth, then to Ephesus, and to Caesarea, thence to Jerusalem and back to Antioch. (Acts 15, 16, 17, 18.)

The third missionary journey of the Apostle to the Gentiles was begun at Antioch. He visited Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, detoured into Galatia, and passed through Phrygia to Ephesus. His itinerary took him to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, back to Berea, and after a detour into Macedonia by way of Thessalonica and Philippi, to Neapolis. He sailed from Neapolis to Assos. From Assos he traveled to Rhodes, via Mitylene, Trogyllium, and Miletus. He sailed from Rhodes to Patara and to Tyre. Leaving Tyre he traveled to Ptolemais,



Caesarea, and concluded his journey at the city of Jerusalem.

The final journey of the Apostle Paul was from Jerusalem to Rome. After a change of ships at Myra; a stop at Fair Havens; a shipwreck at Melita; Paul finally arrived at Puteoli from where he traveled overland to Rome. (Acts 27:28) According to Luke, the Apostle lived in Rome for two years, preaching and teaching. (Acts 28:30,31)

It is not clear from the scriptures what happened to Paul in Rome. Clarke thinks that both Paul and Luke may have perished in the massacres of Christians which Tacitus describes.<sup>1</sup> Jacques Maritain, the Roman Catholic author of The Living Thoughts of Saint Paul, believes that Paul was released at the end of the year 61, was imprisoned again from 66 to 67, and was finally put to death in the year 67 at the place known today as Three Fountains.<sup>2</sup> This account is largely guesswork as is indicated by Maritain's use of such expressions as, "it is believed," "supposed," and "probably." However, this seems as near as anyone can come to an accurate account of the last days of Paul.

Clarke says:-

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<sup>1</sup>James Freeman Clarke, op. cit., p 23.

<sup>2</sup>Jacques Maritain, The Living Thoughts of Saint Paul, (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1942), p 31.

As he approached the end of his life, the galling Roman chain freezing on his stiff limbs, with hardly a companion or friend near him, the churches he had founded still full of evils, and new forms of error springing up in their midst, he became more certain of the triumph of good over evil.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Clarke, op., cit. p 61.



## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

There are only three possible conclusions in a thesis on this subject. They are: (1) Paul had no philosophy, (2) Paul had a philosophy, (3) The matter is in doubt. Our conclusion, as stated previously, and as stated in the title of this work, is that Paul had a philosophy. Since philosophy and theology are closely related, we are faced with the necessity of making a distinction between the two fields. We assume, as a matter hardly questioned, that Paul had a theology.

What, then, are the differences between philosophy and theology. Both are similar in the subject matter with which they deal: God, man, and the world. The difference is in the manner in which knowledge is received, or attained. Theology receives knowledge through revelation, while philosophy receives knowledge through reason.

We shall show that Paul, by his own statements, received some knowledge through revelation. In this investigation we hope to arrive at the meaning of the term revelation as Paul used it. Since this thesis is concerning Paul,

it is thought that his statements are more important than those of any writer following him.

For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11,12)<sup>1</sup>

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about obedience to the faith —, (Rom. 16:25,26).

Now brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation of knowledge or prophecy or teaching? (1 Cor. 14:6).

What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. (1 Cor. 14:26).

I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain. (Gal. 2:2).

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, — (Eph. 1:15,16,17).

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<sup>1</sup>From the Revised Standard Version, as are the quotations following.



For this reason I Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles — assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. (Eph. 3:1,2,3).

I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations in the Lord. (2 Cor. 12:1).

And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. (2 Cor. 12:7).

In the foregoing statements Paul says: (1) That the gospel came through revelation; (2) this revelation was kept a secret for long ages and is now disclosed through prophetic writings; (3) revelation might be composed of knowledge, prophecy, or ideas taught; (4) a revelation might be a part of the contributions of individual Christians to the assembled group; (5) he went up to Jerusalem by revelation; (6) he prays that God may give the Ephesians a spirit of revelation; (7) he states again that the mystery was made known to him by revelation; (8) he speaks of visions and revelations of the Lord and then gives an account of a man's experience fourteen years before, who was caught up to the third heaven; (9) apparently there were many revelations to Paul.

We conclude from these statements that: (1) Paul received the Gospel by revelation, but that was not all that

he received since, (2) he went to Jerusalem by revelation and (3) he had an "abundance of revelations." Revelations were not limited to Paul but were also received by other members of the Christian community. It seems evident also, that Paul did not receive all his revelations at one time, but that they were distributed throughout his life. Paul says nothing concerning the method of revelation although he does allow for the possibility of communication of a revelation to others.

We now consider statements from Paul in which he indicates the use of reason.

Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. (Rom. 1:20).

I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. (Rom. 9:1,2).

I speak to sensible men, judge for yourselves what I say. (1 Cor. 10:15).

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. (1 Cor. 13:11).

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking: be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature. (1 Cor. 14:20).

I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine; and he who is troubling you



will bear his judgment, whoever he is. (Gal. 5:10).

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Phil. 4:8).

Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thess. 5:19-22).

In the first quotation we meet the old cosmological argument for the existence of God. While Paul was writing this particular statement about the Gentiles, he seems to be saying that it is possible to know God through the reason. At the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that God was known to Paul by revelation. From this we conclude that Paul probably thought of God as having been made known to the Jews by revelation, because they were the chosen people. Nevertheless, he admits the possibility of arriving at some notion of God by means of reason.

In the second quotation, Paul speaks of his conscience bearing witness in the Holy Spirit. It hardly seems likely that Paul would read reason out of conscience. In fact, it is hard to conceive of conscience apart from reason.

When Paul asks his writers to "judge for yourselves what I say," he admits that his readers are capable of making

such a judgment. Then, too, the word sensible is somewhat synonymous with rational or reasonable. If his readers are capable of making judgments, they are using reason in such judgments.

In the statement in 1 Cor. 13:11 Paul admits that a child can reason and that the reasoning of maturity is not the same as that of childhood. This is a personal illustration, but it also has an universal element in it by means of which it appeals to all men. In other words, Paul's experience is an experience common to all men. Therefore, all men can reason and as they reach maturity their reasoning power matures.

The same idea is brought out in 1 Cor. 14:20 in which Paul advises his readers to be mature in their thinking and to no longer be children.

Paul's confidence that his readers will "take no other view than mine" or to arrive at the same conclusion, is expressed in Gal. 5:10. In this he assumes that his readers are capable of arriving at a conclusion. It hardly seems likely that Paul expected his hearers to "jump at conclusions."

When Paul exhorts his readers to "think about these things" in Phil. 4:8, a logical question is, "To what purpose?"



He must have had a reason for suggesting such mental exercise. Furthermore, he must have expected his readers to arrive at some conclusions from their thinking. Otherwise his suggestion is that they merely board a mental carousel for nothing more than the fun of the ride. Think about these things - to what end? To the end that the thinker will develop in Christian character. We can hardly leave reason out of this process.

Paul's advice to "test everything" is not given in regard to material things. This is indicated from his language. He is not talking about tests of weight, measurement or other physical properties. Then we must conclude that he is speaking of judgments of the things of the spirit. Such judgments, of necessity, must involve reason.

We have indicated in the above quotations and discussions that Paul not only used reason himself, but commended it on occasion to his readers. While it is not possible to re-create his philosophy in detail, we may conclude that he had a philosophy, acquired by means of his own reason, and upon which he based much of his thinking.

Our problem in discerning Paul's philosophy has been much the same as we would face in a similar situation with

any other writer. Paul was writing his letters to churches on practical problems which the churches faced. Most of the time he stuck to his purpose and only occasionally does he digress into personal remarks of any kind. Still less frequently does he reveal his philosophy.

As noted elsewhere in this work, philosophy since John Locke has been largely epistemology. God has revealed things to man which have not been perceived by the senses or the intellect, according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:10-12. The means of this revelation, and perhaps all revelation as Paul used the term, is the spirit of man. The Spirit of God reveals truth to the spirit of man.. Only the spirit of God knows his thoughts; only the spirit of a man knows the thoughts of the man.

Our conclusion is, then, that Paul had a philosophy of which it is possible to get an occasional glimpse in his works, as shown above. Paul was not a formal philosopher, in the sense that he had a school of philosophy or a distinctive system such as that of Aristotle or Plato. Nevertheless, he had a philosophy. At times it is extremely difficult to discern where his philosophy ends and his theology begins.



We have not identified his philosophy and labeled it because the minute we label his philosophy we meet with a difference in the meaning attached to the terms. Furthermore, it is doubtful if we have enough material to classify and pigeonhole his philosophy.

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