



University  
of Glasgow

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>

Theses Digitisation:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/research/enlighten/theses/digitisation/>

This is a digitised version of the original print thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study,  
without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first  
obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any  
format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author,  
title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>  
[research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAULINE THOUGHT CONCERNING LAST THINGS  
AND ITS MESSAGE FOR TODAY

By

Ronald D. Ballard  
B.S., North Texas State University, 1956  
B.D., Emory University, 1960

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Divinity  
of the University of Glasgow in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1970

ProQuest Number: 10662705

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10662705

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would be incomplete without an expression of gratitude to Professor William Barclay for his encouragement and constant guidance throughout the entire study. His willingness to take time from a busy schedule, to listen as well as to instruct, and to offer help always in the most gracious and constructive manner is something that I shall not soon forget.

Appreciation is also due to my wife, Wanda, who assisted in many unofficial capacities, not the least of which was the daily responsibility of caring for two small children.



## PREFACE

Our subject is time and the eternal in Christianity. We shall embark upon a journey into the past to discover Christianity's hope for the future, thereby illuminating its message for the present.

The spirit of the entire New Testament is eschatological, and in Paul's works and dialectic the essential elements of Christian eschatology are especially elucidated. For Paul, those who "think only of things that belong to this world" are "enemies of Christ's death on the cross" (Phil. 3:18, 19. Today's English Version). "If our hope in Christ is good for this life only, and no more, then we deserve more pity than anyone else in the world" (I Cor. 15:19. Today's English Version).

To lose sight of God's consummatory work in the future is to soon relinquish faith and effectiveness in the present. The End, prophesied and prepared in the Past, gives meaning to the present. "A Christianity shorn of its eschatological hope has in more senses than one no future."<sup>1</sup> If indifferent to the reality and the demands upon us of the life to come, whatever is called "Christianity" has, in fact, as Geerhardus Vos states it, "ceased to be Christianity in the historic sense of that word."<sup>2</sup>

Our own day, so frequently lacking the ingredient of hope, urgently needs to rediscover eschatological Christianity. Incredible

---

<sup>1</sup>A. M. Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel (London: SCM Press, 1954), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 63.

odds can be overcome when the eschatological End is envisioned, but hills can seem mountains when the eye glimpses no source of light beyond them.

Modern man's well-intentioned forays into race relations, the fight against hunger and the search for peace are commendable, yet even these efforts, when motivated by a one world philosophy, only heighten his sense of despair and hopelessness. After all, how real is this world without an other-world?

Eschatological Christianity gives both motive and meaning to Christian involvement in this life. While nothing is quite so irrelevant as an other-worldly faith which leaves no concern for the injustices and miseries of this world, history teaches that many of the greatest contributors to worldly well-being came from the ranks of those most concerned with the hereafter. As C. S. Lewis reminds us,

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.<sup>3</sup>

Today it is no longer axiomatic, even among churchmen, that man will continue to exist, that he is ultimately accountable to God, or that righteousness will finally triumph over evil. Belief in the future life is often rejected as untenable, if not repugnant. Yet suggested alternatives neither attract nor convince.

The aim of this work is to discover--or uncover--the truths found

---

<sup>3</sup>C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (London: Collins Fontana Books, 1955), p. 104.

in Pauline eschatology, to elucidate these concepts by relating them to their antecedents in pre-Christian Judaism, Greek philosophy and the Mysteries, and to invest them with contemporary importance by showing their permanent essentiality to true Christianity in every era. Conclusions are offered in the final chapter.

It is not the purpose here to discuss the problems of date and authorship regarding what has traditionally been called the Pauline Epistles. An adequate treatment of this question alone would require a separate book.

The Pauline origin of a number of epistles has been called into question but perhaps none more vigorously than the Pastorals. While it is true that most New Testament scholars today reject the authenticity of the Pastorals, it is too much to say that the opposing view is totally without support. Both Johannes Behm in his Introduction to the New Testament and J. N. D. Kelly in A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles give credible arguments in favor of accepting the Pastorals as being from the hand of Paul.<sup>4</sup>

Yet whether or not the material is directly from the hand of Paul it does represent a development of the Pauline school of thought and can in that sense be considered "Pauline." William Barclay, writing from a similar point of view, conceded that "In the Pastoral Epistles we are still hearing the voice of Paul."<sup>5</sup> But Professor Barclay

---

<sup>4</sup>Alfred Wikenhauser, New Testament Introduction (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 445-452. Wikenhauser lists some of the better known authors and the positions they take regarding the authenticity of the Pastorals.

<sup>5</sup>William Barclay, The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 17.

does not claim the letters came, as it were, directly from the hand of Paul.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, D. E. H. Whitely is convinced that Paul did not author Ephesians, "though it is in an important sense a 'Pauline' writing."<sup>7</sup> It is in this broader sense that I have chosen to use material from the following epistles and refer to it as "Pauline": First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Titus, and First and Second Timothy.

All references for the Old and New Testaments are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

D. E. H. Whitely, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), Introduction.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
I. INFLUENCES ON PAULINE THOUGHT . . . . .	1
Life to Come in Jewish Thought . . . . .	1
Old Testament Period . . . . .	1
Intertestamental Period . . . . .	27
Life to Come in Greek Thought . . . . .	46
Poetic Development of Homer, Pindar and Other Pre-Platonic Writers . . . . .	46
Philosophic Backgrounds . . . . .	64
The Mystery Religions . . . . .	102
II. PAULINE CONCEPT OF LAST THINGS . . . . .	122
Second Coming . . . . .	123
Comparison of "Day of the Lord" and "Second Coming" . . . . .	125
Eschatology and Second Coming in the Teaching of Jesus . . . . .	130
Concept of Parousia in Pauline Epistles . . . . .	139
Resurrection . . . . .	151
Background . . . . .	151
The Problem of Bodily Resurrection . . . . .	154
Pauline Concept of Resurrection . . . . .	158

Chapter	Page
Judgment . . . . .	178
Comparison of Jewish and Pauline Views of Judgment. . .	179
Influence of the Teachings of Jesus upon Pauline Thought Regarding Judgment . . . . .	184
Future Judgment As Related to Other Final Events. . .	186
Concept of Judgment Found in Pauline Material . . . .	194
Intermediate State . . . . .	197
Support for Belief in an Intermediate State . . . . .	198
Objections to Belief in an Intermediate State . . . .	214
Final Destiny . . . . .	218
Conditional Immortality . . . . .	219
Universal Restoration . . . . .	225
Everlasting Separation . . . . .	232
III. PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY FOR TODAY . . . . .	242
Understanding Pauline Eschatology . . . . .	243
Pauline Eschatology: Its Limitations . . . . .	243
The Enduring Message of Pauline Eschatology . . . . .	250
The Knowledge That Christ Came in History and Ushered in a New Age . . . . .	250
The Assurance That Christ Enters into the Present and Is with Us Now . . . . .	255
The Realization That God Holds the Future and Will Complete the Work He Has Begun . . . . .	260

## CHAPTER I

### INFLUENCES ON PAULINE THOUGHT

#### Life to Come in Jewish Thought

##### Old Testament Period

To understand Paul's eschatology, we must first understand his heritage and environment. Chief among these pre-Christian influences was Judaism. Paul was proud of his Jewish background. In writing to the Corinthians he boasted: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I" (II Cor. 11:22). He could speak Hebrew (Acts 21:40) unlike those Jews of the Dispersion who had forsaken their native tongue for Greek. He was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), a trained Rabbi, and "educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers" (Acts 22:3). As a Christian, he continued to speak proudly of his Jewish lineage (Phil. 3:4-6, Rom. 11:1, etc.). The Jewish Scriptures were his Scriptures. His God--revealed through Christ--was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Hebrew history was God's continuing process of revelation which culminated in Christ and the Church. Christianity, to Paul, was not so much a departure from the past as a divinely wrought consummation of past history.<sup>1</sup> William Barclay is correct in saying that "Paul never forgot his Jewish

---

<sup>1</sup>Harris F. Rall, According to Paul (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), pp. 11-13.

origin; he never turned his back on the faith of his fathers."<sup>2</sup> Therefore it was quite natural for him to say, "To the Jews I became as a Jew" (I Cor. 9:20).

Paul's debt to Judaism is nowhere more obvious than in the field of eschatology<sup>3</sup> where he frequently made use of Old Testament ideas and later apocalyptic material. Paul's dependence upon his Jewish past will become more apparent as we examine the development of Jewish eschatology in the Old Testament and Intertestamental periods.

The Old Testament, like the New, is a story of God's progressive revelation and activity. This continuing revelation profoundly shaped and altered the beliefs of the Israelites. Nowhere is this development more apparent than in the Jews' expanding concept of the life to come.

Before the time of Moses, Jewish thought was not noticeably different from other forms of paganism. Then, largely because of their progression to monotheism, this began to change. By the eighth century and on into the sixth, the prophets began increasingly to challenge their people with the implications of this "new" faith. Soon it became evident that the evolving concepts of monotheism could not be held within the narrow tribal confines of the past.

Sheol was one of the traditional beliefs that had to be reexamined in the light of this new monotheism. Soon it was realized that

---

<sup>2</sup>William Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul* (London: Collins Fontana Books, 1965), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>H. J. Schoeps, *Paul* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 43; H. A. Guy, *The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things"* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 103.



Yahweh's influence penetrated every corner of the universe and that no part of creation was beyond his reach. The implications of this were far-reaching, and the development of thought which followed can be adequately explained only in terms of God's continuing revelation of himself. As man's idea of God developed, the transformation of Sheol became inevitable. This step was necessary before Israel could move toward a more mature understanding of the future life.

Such a transformation of thought did not come overnight, and one cannot appreciate this process of emancipation without being familiar with God's activity among the Israelites. R. H. Charles reminds us that,

At the Exodus, God took Israel, Semitic heathens . . . for the most part, and taught them in the measure of their capacity: revealed Himself at the outset as their God, the God of their nation, and claimed Israel as His people. He did not then make Himself known as the Creator and Moral Ruler of the world, for in the childhood of Israel's religious history these ideas would have been impossible to comprehend. Yahweh was Israel's God, and Israel was the people of Yahweh. Yahweh was a righteous God, and required righteousness of His people. From this stage the divine education of Israel is carried forward, till in Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah God becomes known to Israel as the Sole Supreme All-loving Creator and God of all mankind.<sup>4</sup>

Generally speaking, three stages of development characterize Israel's growing awareness of God.<sup>5</sup> It is important that we understand the nature of this development, since Hebrew thought was later to exert

---

<sup>4</sup>R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life in Israel, in Judaism and in Christianity, or Hebrew, Jewish and Christian Eschatology from Pre-Prophetic Times till the Close of the New Testament Canon, 2nd. ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), pp. 3-4. (This work is cited as Charles, Eschatology, later.)

<sup>5</sup>William Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed (London: Collins Fontana Books, 1967), p. 352.

such influence upon Paul. To do this we shall now consider in some detail just how this expanding concept of God affected Jewish eschatology and belief in immortality and life to come--especially as it is reflected in writings of the Old Testament. The first stage was henotheism.<sup>6</sup> At this point Israel was convinced that Yahweh was the only God for them and it was he who dutifully watched over his "flock."

By personal intervention Yahweh rescued the enslaved Hebrews from the hands of Egyptian oppression and entered into a covenant with them: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2). This was convincing, but Israel still made no sharp and final break with the past and thought it only proper for each nation to have its own god.<sup>7</sup> She quite willingly accepted the idea that other nations would serve different gods who were as valid for them as Yahweh was for her. In Judges 11:24 Jephthah sent the following message to the king of the Ammonites: "Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all that the Lord our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess." In I Kings 11:33 we read of the following national deities: ". . . Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, . . . " In Numbers 21:29 we read:

---

<sup>6</sup>One expects a certain amount of overlapping when speaking of "stages" in the religious development of the Jews. Yet by using these terms and this approach we are better able to convey the idea of forward movement while still recognizing that some of the characteristics of each "stage" may be found in each period.

<sup>7</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 8.

Woe to you, O Moab!  
 You are undone, O people of  
 Chemosh!<sup>8</sup>

Regardless of how belief in Yahweh originated or how long it took to become monotheistic, it was most certainly through Moses that he became the national God of Israel.<sup>9</sup> Being the head of the Nation it was inevitable that religion and history would be woven together from the beginning.<sup>10</sup> The Israelites saw their God as having definite characteristics.

First of all, Yahweh was a God of War. As head of the Nation he naturally was her leader in battle.<sup>11</sup> Moses led his people in singing:

The Lord is a man of war;  
 the Lord is his name. (Ex. 15:3)

Saul spoke of fighting "the Lord's battles," but likewise he meant fighting Israel's battles (I Sam. 18:17). The armies of Israel were also the armies of God (I Sam. 17:26, 36). David made it clear that the enemies of Israel were also "enemies of the Lord" (I Sam. 30:26). Earlier he had challenged Goliath by saying, "I come to you in the name of the

---

<sup>8</sup>David complained that being driven from his own land forced him to forsake the worship of Yahweh for other gods. "Now therefore let the lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering; but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying 'Go, serve other gods'" (I Sam. 26:19).

<sup>9</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>H. E. Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1938), p. 5.

Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (I Sam. 17:45). Even the sacred ark had a military aspect: the enemy scattered as it was brought into the field (Num. 10:35). H. Wheeler Robinson described the ark as "at one and the same time the primitive sanctuary and the battle standard."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Israelites thought of their God as a superhuman leader who would do battle for his people and lead them to victory.

Secondly, Yahweh was characterized by an ethical nature. He was the God of righteousness, justice, and purity. Yahweh was the Supreme Judge and his authority was not to be questioned. The law rested in his sanctuary and his priests interpreted his will. The nature of this teaching was both moral and legal and eventually became the written law of the Pentateuch.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there were no immoral practices associated with the worship of Yahweh as were common among the religious ceremonies of other deities. This does not deny the fact, however, that certain immoral practices were found in the temple of Jerusalem (II Kings 23:7) and elsewhere among the Israelites (Hos. 4:12-14) before Josiah's reform in the seventh century. Also, of course, it is impossible to maintain that Yahweh's ethical nature freed him from certain very human moods, such as his excessive wrath when he killed Uzzah for trying to prevent the ark from toppling over (II Sam. 6:6-7) at the threshing floor of Nacon, or when the men of Bethshemesh met the same fate for looking "into the ark" (I Sam. 6:19). Nevertheless, the two chief characteristics of Yahweh--namely, his warlike and ethical character--did much to determine

---

<sup>12</sup>H. Wheeler Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), p. 56.

<sup>13</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 11.

the external and internal destiny of Israel.<sup>14</sup> Since the interests of Israel were also the interests of Yahweh, the people were forced to explain times of peril and adversity in either one of two ways: Yahweh had temporarily forsaken them or he was intentionally chastising them. This was another of the defects which clung to the worship of Yahweh in preprophetic times.<sup>15</sup>

Notice now a significant difference between Yahweh and the deities of surrounding nations. The heathen gods remained on the same moral level as their worshippers, whereas Yahweh called for spiritual effort and even personal sacrifice, thereby encouraging religious development. During this period of passing into a true monotheistic belief the superior righteous character of Yahweh was stressed at the expense of the other neighboring gods. R. H. Charles speaks of passing through the stage of "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me" to a later position of true monotheism better expressed by the conviction that "There are no other Gods but Me."<sup>16</sup>

As the national God of Israel, Yahweh was thought to be primarily concerned with the well-being of the nation and to have neither interest nor jurisdiction in the life of the individual beyond the grave. Therefore, since the early Israelites' eschatological thought could not be Yahweh-centered, they were thrown back on their heathen beliefs,<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

which some describe simply as ancestor worship.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that some of our customs today such as putting food on graves as in China, or flowers, as with Westerners, are a carry-over from earlier times. Similar offerings seem to have been made in the Old Testament period (II Chron. 16:14). We know that blood-covenants with the dead were not uncommon during this time.<sup>19</sup> As a result of this practice it was decreed, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead" (Lev. 19:28).

Those suggesting that ancestor worship was part of the early Hebrew religion point out that the teraphim (household gods) were originally images of ancestors and were included in the accepted religious practices of the day:

Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods. (Gen. 31:19)

Moreover Josiah put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.<sup>20</sup> (II Kings 23:24)

Such beliefs indicated that the dead continued to remain in touch with this life. Since people were fearful of the ghosts of the dead, who only brought evil to the present world, everything possible was done to

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-20. Others doubt the validity of serious ancestor worship, but do recognize strong Old Testament evidence indicating that the dead were of great importance to the living (Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, pp. 258-259).

<sup>19</sup>Nor was the practice of cutting one's hair in times of sorrow, lamentation and mourning uncommon (Jer. 2:29; Amos 8:10; Mic. 1:16; Ezek. 7:18, 27:31).

<sup>20</sup>Additional instances are recorded in Gen. 35:4, 31:30-35; I Sam. 19:13, 16. Prophets were later to rebuke these customs.

keep the spirits away and prevent them from interfering with this life. Close relatives were said to disguise themselves in other clothes in order not to be recognized by the spirit of the dead. It was thought that these spirits stayed near the place of burial for at least three days and during this time still needed food (Deut. 26:14). The living were careful to provide these necessities, but the motive was more fear than love. By the sixth century this practice was openly condemned in the name of Yahweh.<sup>21</sup>

The next stage of Israel's development was monotheism. At this point she was aware that there were no national limitations on Yahweh. He was God of the entire world. This was the time of the prophets. Yahweh's authority was extended to cover a wider territory, but his power was still limited to this side of the grave. The dead were still beyond recall, but the living could be raised (body intact) while they lived as was the case with Enoch (Gen. 5:22-24) and Elijah (II Kings 2:11-12). Except in such instances as just mentioned, rewards and punishments were limited to the earthly life, since Sheol was outside the jurisdiction of Yahweh.<sup>22</sup>

Since it was generally believed that all who died descended into Sheol, it would be helpful to look briefly into the burial beliefs of this time. The ancient Hebrew world was tripartite: the sky (or heaven) was above, the earth was below that, and underneath was Sheol,

---

<sup>21</sup>Ronald G. Macintyre, The Other Side of Death (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), pp. 14-15.

<sup>22</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 56-58.

the dwelling place of the dead.<sup>23</sup> Proper burial was extremely important to the ancient Hebrew, because this was a prerequisite for offering sacrifice. The fact that sacrifices were generally offered at graveside added further significance to the burial.<sup>24</sup>

The soul and body were believed to be connected even after death. This meant that any indignity done to the body would likewise affect the departed soul.<sup>25</sup>

It was also important not only to receive burial, but to be buried in the family grave, thereby allowing the departed to move into the fellowship of his ancestors. Therefore we find that Jacob and Joseph gave directions that at death they should be taken back to the family grave: "But let me lie with my fathers; carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place" (Gen. 47:30). "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, 'God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here'" (Ex. 13:19). Because of the solidarity of the family which later included the tribe and entire nation, a common graveyard was decided upon. This place of the dead came to be known as Sheol.<sup>26</sup>

As time went by, the idea of Sheol was regarded as the final habitation of all nations, thereby making it embrace all mankind,

---

<sup>23</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 259.

<sup>24</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 31-32.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33.



both good and bad alike.<sup>27</sup> Parts of the Old Testament give an idea of how Sheol must have been thought of by people during that time.

Notice first the description of it. Sheol was commonly thought of as a "pit":

Then will I thrust you down with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you to dwell in the nether world, among primeval ruins, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you will not be inhabited or have a place in the land of the living.<sup>28</sup> (Ezek. 26:20)

Since it was situated in the underworld (Ps. 63:9, Ezek. 31:14), it received no light. The book of Job described it as

. . . the land of gloom and deep  
darkness,  
the land of gloom . . .  
where light is as darkness. (Job 10:21-22)

There were various chambers (Prov. 7:27), bars (Job 17:16), and gates (Ps. 107:18, Job 38:17) in this land of death. Sheol was an open yawning mouth (Is. 5:14) which swallowed up the dead. Add to this the chaos of which Job spoke (Job 10:22) and one gets an idea of the ancient Israelite's image of Sheol.

Notice the occupants of Sheol. All dead shared this same fate regardless of their character. There were neither punishments nor rewards in Sheol. Here the dead--often called "shades"--lived a shadowy, strengthless life:

Sheol beneath is stirred up  
to meet you when you come,  
it rouses the shades to greet you  
. . . . . (Is. 14:9)

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>28</sup>See also Is. 38:18; Ezek. 32:23.

for her house sinks down to death,  
 and her paths to the shades;  
 none who go to her come back  
 nor do they regain the paths of  
 life. (Prov. 2:18, 19)

They were "dead, limp shades," semblances of their true selves, but "bereft of strength."<sup>29</sup> Such occupants were more like ghosts than actual beings. The soul was believed to "subsist" after death, although it was not thought to actually "exist." This subsistence was so shadowy and negative that all the faculties of the soul were suspended in Sheol and this dwelling place of the dead became synonymous with Abaddon, or destruction (Prov. 15:11, 27:20).

The living person becomes in the Beyond a dead person, retaining a negative existence, a weakened edition of his former self, his faculties dormant, without strength, memory, consciousness, knowledge, or the energy of any affection. The identity continues; the form persists, so that he can recognize and be recognized; the consciousness is capable of waking up in some degree out of his deep slumber.<sup>30</sup>

The appearance of Samuel before Saul (I Sam. 28:14) indicated that the dead would continue in the afterlife in a form not totally different from their earthly bodies. In spite of this, however, the existence was such as to make the Israelite draw back at the thought of what death held in store. The Psalmist cried,

"What profit is there in my death,  
 if I go down to the Pit?  
 Will the dust praise thee?  
 . . . . ."  
 (Ps. 30:9)

---

<sup>29</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 348.

<sup>30</sup>S. D. F. Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p. 201.

This brings us to the third major point concerning Sheol, namely, the hopeless pessimism with which the Israelites contemplated it. Such hopelessness regarding life after death permeates the Old Testament. The fundamental reason for such despair was that the early Israelite believed Sheol to be completely beyond the power of Yahweh. The dead were deprived of all opportunities of worship and cut off from any communication not only with living men but also with God himself.<sup>31</sup>

For in death there is no remembrance  
of thee;  
in Sheol who can give thee praise?  
(Ps. 6:5)

The dead do not praise the Lord,  
nor do any that go down into  
silence (Ps. 115:17)

For Sheol cannot thank thee,  
death cannot praise thee;  
those who go down to the pit cannot  
hope  
for thy faithfulness. (Is. 38:18)

Dost thou work wonders for the  
dead?  
Do the shades rise up to praise  
thee? (Ps. 88:10)

Intensifying this gloom was one's realization that there was no escape or hope for anything better. There was no exit from Sheol. The possibility of even a momentary return to earth for the departed was ruled out by Hebrew thought during this time.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

As the cloud fades and vanishes,  
 so he who goes down to Sheol does  
 not come up. (Job 7:9)

One of the greatest expressions of hopelessness and despair regarding  
 life after death is in the fourteenth chapter of Job:

"Man that is born of a woman is  
 of few days, and full of trouble.  
 He comes forth like a flower, and  
 withers;  
 he flees like a shadow, and con-  
 tinues not." (14:1-2)

"For there is hope for a tree,  
 if it be cut down, that it will sprout  
 again,  
 and that its shoots will not cease.  
 Though its root grow old in the  
 earth,  
 and its stump die in the ground,  
 yet at the scent of water it will bud  
 and put forth branches like a young  
 plant.  
 But man dies, and is laid low;  
 man breathes his last, and where  
 is he?  
 As waters fail from a lake,  
 and a river wastes away and dries  
 up,  
 so man lies down and rises not again;  
 . . . . . " (14:7-12)

Gradually introduced into early Jewish ideas of the afterlife  
 was the concept of Gehenna, final place of punishment for all wicked.  
 Gehenna was spoken of in Old Testament times as the "valley of Hinnom"  
 or the "valley of the son of Hinnom" (Josh. 15:8, Gen. 11:30, II Chron.  
 28:3, Jer. 7:31). It became so well known that it was referred to later  
 as simply "the valley" (Jer. 2:23) or by similar terms (Neh. 2:13, II  
 Chron. 26:9). The location of this infamous place was thought to be  
 south and southwest of Jerusalem. It appears that its religious

significance began with its use as a place of heathen sacrifice (II Kings 16:3, II Chron. 33:6). This "valley of Hinnom" was a gorge outside the gates of Jerusalem where idolaters had sacrificed their children to Molech. Even after Josiah's reform the Jews thought of the spot with horror as it came to be the burning place of refuse and of bodies of animals and criminals and anything unclean.<sup>33</sup> Jeremiah prophesied that it would one day be called "the valley of Slaughter" (7:32). Leckie refers to this place of putrefaction and burning as an emblem of doom and notes a parallel in Isaiah 66:24:<sup>34</sup> ". . . their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, . . . "

At this point it is important for us to understand the early Jewish notion of guilt, individual and collective. The individual was related to Yahweh only as a member of the nation, and solidarity was manifest between ancestors and descendants. Indeed, the effects of sins and failures were passed from one generation to another. Such thought was summed up in the familiar proverb of Jeremiah:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes,  
and the children's teeth are set on  
edge." (Jer. 31:29)

Messages of judgment were pronounced upon nations because collective punishment was expected for collective guilt. Jeremiah was first to underscore the individual's responsibility as a separate person by promising that the day would come when "they shall no longer say: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on

---

<sup>33</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 282.

<sup>34</sup>Joseph H. Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918), pp. 103-104.

edge.<sup>1</sup> But every one shall die for his own sin; each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge" (Jer. 31:29-30). Jeremiah's concept of individual guilt was later adopted and expanded by Ezekiel to include an immediate relationship and personal responsibility to God: "Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). Ezekiel went on to say that the individual who was faithful to Yahweh was free from the effects of his own sinful past.

"But if a wicked man turns away from all his sins which he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; . . . " (Ezek. 18:21-22)

Neither should the individual be affected by the sins or righteousness of his ancestors.

. . . The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Ezek. 18:20)

The prophet took this belief in retribution to mean that all men were to receive their full share of punishment or blessing in this life. This conclusion was inevitable, since the belief was that man at death passed beyond the dominion of God. This being the case, a man's outward prosperity was a true barometer of his spiritual condition.<sup>35</sup> It is not difficult to find this thought again as it is carried over into the Psalms and Book of Proverbs.

Trust in the Lord, and do good;  
so you will dwell in the land, and  
enjoy security. (Ps. 37:3)

---

<sup>35</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 64-65.

If the righteous is requited on earth,  
 how much more the wicked and the  
 sinner! (Prov. 11:31)

There were, of course, variations and exceptions. Sometimes adversity was sent to the righteous as a disciplinary measure. In that case blessings and prosperity would follow after the period of "discipline." In the midst of his distress Job was counseled by his friends to remember,

if you are pure and upright,  
 surely then he will rouse himself  
 for you  
 and reward you with a rightful  
 habitation.  
 And though your beginning was  
 small,  
 your latter days will be very great.  
 (Job 8:6-7)

Fundamental to this view was one's assurance that God would watch after and care for his own.

I have been young, and now am old;  
 yet I have not seen the righteous  
 forsaken  
 or his children begging bread.  
 (Ps. 37:25)

In the same chapter the psalmist promised that the prosperity of the wicked would not last.

Fret not yourself because of the  
 wicked,  
 be not envious of wrongdoers!  
 For they will soon fade like the grass,  
 and wither like the green herb.  
 (Ps. 37:1)

. . . . .  
 . . . the enemies of the Lord are like  
 the glory of the pastures,  
 they vanish---like smoke they van-  
 ish away. (Ps. 37:20)

These two views of Ezekiel--namely, that individuals suffered for their own sins rather than the sins of their fathers and that every person received his exact due in this life before death--were two ideas that were challenged by both Ecclesiastes and Job. For the most part, the writer of Ecclesiastes denied there would be any retribution at all and declared that wicked and righteous would meet the same fate:<sup>36</sup>

. . . Everything before them is vanity, since one fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man, so is the sinner; and he who swears is as he who shuns the oath. (Eccles. 9:1-2)

Especially in Job are we conscious of further development regarding the question of individual immortality.<sup>37</sup> His own experience suggested that justice was not always done in this life. His ill fate was unexplained, for he had lived a righteous life, having believed, like his contemporaries, that this would assure him of God-sent good fortune and prosperity. So confident was he of this that he wanted to place his case before God himself (Job 23:3-7).

Although the afterlife was never mentioned as such in Job's arguments, a foundation for individual immortality was being laid and logic compels one to begin looking in that direction. For instance, man's individual worth was underscored. There was also the faith he had in a righteous God. Yet somehow the establishment of this relationship between man and God gave no real relief from the burdens and pains of life or any hope that his life would be easier than that of a Godless man.

---

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 69.



Why do the wicked live,  
     reach old age, and grow mighty  
     in power?  
 Their children are established in  
     their presence,  
     and their offspring before their  
     eyes.  
 Their houses are safe from fear,  
     and no rod of God is upon them.  
 Their bull breeds without fail;  
     their cow calves, and does not cast  
     her calf.  
 They send forth their little ones like  
     a flock,  
     and their children dance.  
 They sing to the tambourine and the  
     lyre,  
     and rejoice to the sound of the  
     pipe.  
 They spend their days in prosperity,  
     and in peace they go down to  
     Sheol.  
 They say to God, "Depart from us!  
     We do not desire the knowledge of  
     thy ways.  
 What is the Almighty, that we should  
     serve him?  
     And what profit do we get if we  
     pray to him?" (Job 21:7-15)

Although the thought was never brought to full view, the expectation began that in some future time God would make all things right--if not in this life, perhaps in another life. It would be necessary to alter the traditional concept of an afterlife if this were true. The author of Job must have had this in mind when he was inspired to write those lines that Handel later set to music:

For I know that my Redeemer lives,  
     and at last he will stand upon the  
     earth;  
 and after my skin has been thus destroyed,  
     then from my flesh I shall see  
     God,

whom I shall see on my side,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not  
another.

. . . . . (Job 19:25-27)

At this point the writer jumped far beyond the thought of his day to promise one thing for certain. Whether in this life or the life to come, God would ultimately redeem and set free the man who puts his trust in him.

Thus we enter the third stage in Israel's religious development as we observe the power of Yahweh extending even into Sheol. He was the recognized Sovereign over heaven, earth, and Sheol, and man could nowhere escape his presence and power. One need not assume with Fosdick that the prime motive for this extension of Yahweh's rule to the nether world was reluctance to grant the sinful a shelter from judgment in the world beyond.<sup>38</sup> It is enough to say that once men conceived of God's universal presence in terms of the threefold Hebrew cosmos, the logical inference was that even death could not separate a person from God.

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy  
presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou  
art there!  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of  
the sea,  
even there thy hand shall lead me,  
and thy right hand shall hold me.

(Ps. 139:7-10)

With the emergence of this idea of individual responsibility and dignity there was also a keen interest for individual justice. H. W.

---

<sup>38</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 263.

Robinson claims that in the Book of Job one finds "the first tentative demand for a life beyond death."<sup>39</sup> The seeming injustice of an upright, God-fearing man (Job 1:8) being plagued with such incredible suffering and calamity was enough to encourage hope that the righteous would ultimately be vindicated even if it meant that they had to die first. In his highest moments man longed for this, and occasionally this longing would burst forth in expression:

But God will ransom my soul from  
the power of Sheol,  
for he will receive me. (Ps. 49:15)

Gradually the land of the afterlife became less and less a "land of darkness, gloom, and chaos" (Job 10:21-22) and became ethically significant as an instrument of God's reward and punishment. Along with this transformation of Sheol came the hope of future restoration and the entrance into a better life.<sup>40</sup>

It was inevitable that a faith with such an ethical dimension would soon develop a real eschatology of its own. These beginnings are clearly seen in the Book of Job and even more fully in some of the Psalms.<sup>41</sup>

I keep the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand,  
I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my  
soul rejoices;  
my body also dwells secure.

---

<sup>39</sup>Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 94.

<sup>40</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, pp. 264-265.

<sup>41</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 23.

For thou dost not give me up to  
 Sheol,  
 or let thy godly one see the Pit.  
 Thou dost show me the path of life;  
 in thy presence there is fulness of  
 joy,  
 in thy right hand are pleasures for  
 evermore. (Ps. 16:8-11)

Nevertheless I am continually with  
 thee;  
 thou dost hold my right hand.  
 Thou dost guide me with thy counsel,  
 and afterward thou wilt receive me  
 to glory.  
 Whom have I in heaven but thee?  
 And there is nothing upon earth  
 that I desire besides thee.  
 My flesh and my heart may fail,  
 but God is the strength of my  
 heart and my portion for ever.  
 (Ps. 73:23-26)

The individual began to understand that God cared for him specifically rather than collectively. Thus, with this assurance, the idea of a personal religion was born and strengthened and, with it, a notion of the preciousness of each soul in God's sight. This concept enabled the Israelites to refine significantly their thought regarding the life to come.

We have seen how Israel's expanding concept of God moved from a primitive, tribal view to one of universal dimensions, and how this development of thought affected her eschatology and belief in the next life. Yet there was another factor that shaped Israel's eschatological outlook, a factor that can be found in the disastrous events in the nation's history. William Barclay is correct in saying that "circumstances in Jewish history almost inevitably led the Jews to believe in

a life to come."<sup>42</sup> Through their long nomadic and often disastrous history the Jews continued to believe that they were God's people in a special sense and that their nation was chosen by God above all other nations. Despite this, however, they seemed to meet disaster constantly. They were a "whipped and humiliated people."<sup>43</sup> One by one they were conquered by the marching armies of foreign empires: the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. How could a Jew explain this? How was he to reconcile the persecution and degradation which were his constant companions with the idea of a faithful and just God who kept his promises? It became increasingly clear that if these promises were to be fulfilled, then another life was absolutely necessary.<sup>44</sup> The hope of ultimate restoration became a "psychological necessity" for the Israelite and had the practical effect of holding together a discouraged people and sustaining them through a history of disaster.<sup>45</sup>

Related to this was the messianic hope which varied from age to age.<sup>46</sup> This was often spoken of as the "day of the Lord" (or Yahweh) and is first noticed in Amos (5:18-20). Though the general understanding of this phrase was the expectation of a national victory for Israel, the

---

<sup>42</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 352.

<sup>43</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 269.

<sup>44</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, pp. 352-353.

<sup>45</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 269.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

prophets used it to express a day of punishment for Israel's sins.<sup>47</sup>

"You only have I known  
of all the families of the earth;  
therefore I will punish you  
for all your iniquities." (Amos 3:2)

Therefore because of you  
Zion shall be ploughed as a field;  
Jerusalem shall become a heap of  
ruins,  
and the mountain of the house a  
wooded height.<sup>48</sup> (Mic. 3:12)

This concept was significant for several reasons.

First of all, this day had important ethical significance. It was a day of victory, or salvation, for the faithful and a day of terror for the unfaithful, including the enemies of Israel.<sup>49</sup> Salvation and judgment were both a part of God's work.

Say to those who are of a fearful  
heart,  
"Be strong, fear not!  
Behold, your God  
will come with vengeance,  
with the recompense of God.  
He will come and save you." (Is. 35:4)

Also included in this day was the alteration of existing physical conditions.

"For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
and the former things shall not be  
remembered  
or come into mind.  
But be glad and rejoice for ever  
in that which I create;  
. . . . ."  
(Is. 65:17-18)

---

<sup>47</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 46.

<sup>48</sup>And also in Hos. 4; Is. 17:1-9.

<sup>49</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 46.

Again we read:

. . . . .  
 For the day of the Lord is near  
     in the valley of decision.  
 The sun and the moon are darkened,  
     and the stars withdraw their shin-  
     ing.                      (Joel 3:14-15)

For the stars of the heavens and their  
     constellations  
     will not give their light;  
 the sun will be dark at its rising  
     and the moon will not shed its  
     light.                      (Is. 13:10)

Furthermore, this day had particular eschatological significance,  
 for it promised the final and complete triumph of righteousness. The  
 prophets did not predict the exact day, but each spoke as though it were  
 near at hand.

Wail, for the day of the Lord is near;  
     as destruction from the Almighty  
     it will come!              (Is. 13:6)

"Behold, I am against you, O proud  
     one,  
     says the Lord God of hosts;  
 for your day has come,  
     the time when I will punish you.  
                                 (Jer. 50:31)

This coming was to establish a kingdom upon earth with Jerusalem as its  
 focal point and the nation of Israel as the means of blessing for all  
 other nations. At the time, however, this event did not suggest any  
 idea of resurrection. With the exception of Isaiah 26:19, such thought  
 was first expressed in Daniel 12:2-3 and only in the apocalyptic period  
 did the idea of the day of the Lord and the resurrection of the body  
 come to be associated in one great experience. Since this resurrection  
 hope was centered on the day of the Lord, it is not difficult to find

its influence in Christian thought concerning the Parousia.<sup>50</sup>

Being apocalyptic literature, the Book of Daniel has certain characteristics in common with other similar writings. It was written in a time of national distress, was pessimistic about the present, and saw hope only in the future by God's direct intervention into human affairs.<sup>51</sup> At the same time the first occurrence of the phrase "everlasting life" is found here.<sup>52</sup> This idea began to encourage hope that at least some of those in Sheol would be restored to life. It did not seem right that only the ones fortunate enough to be alive at the time of the great day would be saved. What about those faithful ones who labored and sacrificed for Yahweh but had since passed on to Sheol? Justice seemed to demand that they also be included in the messianic reign on earth; therefore in the Book of Daniel we find strong evidence of a resurrection hope.<sup>53</sup>

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. 12:2-3)

Although such faith in the future life was uncommon among Israelites of this time, these passages pointed with hope to the world beyond and demanded a rethinking of the ancient concept of Sheol.

Even here the passage does not speak of a universal resurrection.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-48.

<sup>51</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 270.

<sup>52</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 270.

<sup>53</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 270.



It states that many, but not all, shall rise. And the same is true for the familiar passage in Isaiah:

Thy dead shall live, their bodies  
shall rise.  
O dwellers in the dust, awake and  
sing for joy! (Is. 26:19)

This also was a limited resurrection, for an earlier passage in the same chapter made it clear that the wicked ". . . are dead, they will not live; / they are shades, they will not arise; . . . " (Is. 26:14). But this is enough to indicate that the Old Testament was not completely devoid of any future hope. The Israelites vaguely sensed alternatives to the tormenting fires of Gehenna and the faceless and shadowy existence of Sheol. Certainly the dominant mood of early Hebrew thought could be described in no milder terms than "pessimism and despair," but at least there were instances where God's revelation seemed to burst through the gloom of the times and reveal his promise for something better.<sup>54</sup> This development in the idea of resurrection was still only partial and incomplete.<sup>55</sup> During the following interim period great changes occurred, changes that grew out of these early stages in the religious history of the Jews.

### Intertestamental Period

As we move into the intertestamental period we are confronted

---

<sup>54</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 349. (Not listed here are four passages from the Psalms [71:20-23, 16:8-11, 49:15, 73:24-26] and the well-known verses from Job [19:25-27]. Although these are also moving toward a more complex notion of God and the future life, they are not nearly so clear and definite as the two mentioned in Isaiah and Daniel.)

<sup>55</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 271.

with a group of non-canonical material which is often baffling and inconsistent. Christians still differ as to the value of these writings. But perhaps more than any other literature this body of material reflects the mood of Jewish thought just prior to and during the time of Paul. Therefore, we will first consider the significance of this literature and the contribution it makes toward our present study. We need to know something of the setting in which this literature was written and to become familiar with characteristics of apocalyptic eschatology. Only then shall we be prepared to appreciate the development of eschatological thought as it appears in the two classes of literature under consideration, namely, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. This will be done under the headings of Day of the Lord, Messianic Kingdom, Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven (Paradise), Sheol (Hades), and Gehenna.

There was no canonical literature written during the two centuries preceding the birth of Christ except the Book of Daniel and a few Psalms.<sup>56</sup> It was during this time (200 B.C.-A.D. 120), however, that a considerable amount of noncanonical literature was written which has proved to be of no small value in helping fill the gap which would have otherwise existed in the history of Jewish thought. These writings "constitute the living link between the prophetic teachings and ideals of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in Christianity."<sup>57</sup> We know this literature, which is largely apocalyptic in

---

<sup>56</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 50.

<sup>57</sup>R. H. Charles, "Apocalyptic Literature," in A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1898), vol. I, p. 109.

character, as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup>The Apocrypha consists of books which contain enough orthodoxy to make profitable reading for the pious (Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 50). Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, and the Books of Maccabees all make significant contributions to the expanding belief in immortality, although the entire Apocrypha is sometimes accused of representing the Hebrew faith after its modification by Hellenic thought (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 405-409).

The Book of Sirach (190-170 B.C.) belongs to what is generally referred to as the Wisdom Literature of the Hebrews. Ben-Sira's teaching on death is completely consistent with Old Testament thought. He solemnly reminds one that death "is the destiny of all men" and our only comfort is that "in Sheol there are no reproaches concerning life" (G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley, "Sirach," in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introduction and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books, 2 vols., ed. by R. H. Charles [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914], vol. I, p. 269). (Later references to this work will be cited as Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.)

The Wisdom of Solomon has been called "the most attractive and interesting book in the Apocrypha" and was probably written sometime after 50 B.C. The first section of this work is eschatological in nature and expresses a definite belief in immortality (Samuel Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, vol. I, pp. 518-521).

The Books of Maccabees are helpful for their insights concerning Jewish beliefs from the middle of the second century before Christ to the first century after Christ. The Second Book not only gives strong witness for a belief in immortality, but speaks at length concerning the resurrection and judgment (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 408; W. O. E. Oesterley, "First Maccabees," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, vol. I, pp. 59-124; James Moffatt, "Second Maccabees," in Ibid., vol. I, pp. 125-154).

The other class of non-canonical Jewish literature is the Pseudepigrapha. This group of apocalyptic writings was less orthodox than those of the Apocrypha and came to be known as the "outside books." Furthermore, the books came to be known as "Pseudepigrapha" because each is written under an assumed name such as Moses, Solomon, Enoch, etc. (Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, pp. 53-54). In spite of their limitations, these writings are a rich field of Jewish thought and give significant insight into an important period of Jewish development. Among the most significant of these contributions are I Enoch, IV Ezra, II Baruch, Book of Jubilees, Assumption of Moses, The Martyrdom of Isaiah, The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, The Sibylline Oracles, and The Psalms of Solomon.

Charles speaks of I Enoch as "being practically the only historical memorials of the religious development of Judaism from 200 B.C. to 100 A.D. . . ." (R. H. Charles, "Book of Enoch," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, vol. II, p. 163). This work is mentioned in Jude (verses 14-15) as being a real contribution of Enoch and is generally recognized as one of the most significant contributions of Jewish

While the bulk of this non-canonical literature is inferior in some respects to that of the Old Testament, it does represent something

---

literature during the intertestamental period (Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 55).

IV Ezra, written sometime between 120-130 A.D. (G. H. Box, "Fourth Ezra," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, pp. 552-553) places particular eschatological emphasis (in chapters four through eight) on the signs of the last times.

II Baruch was written sometime near the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and throws light upon some of the Judaistic doctrines held by the Pharisees during the first century A.D. (R. H. Charles, "Second Baruch," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 470).

The Book of Jubilees (before 105 B.C.) has been called "a glorification of legalistic Judaism and of the priesthood" (Charles, Eschatology, p. 236). The Messianic Kingdom was expected in the immediate future (R. H. Charles, "The Book of Jubilees," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 1).

The writer of The Assumption of Moses (perhaps 30 A.D.) believed the end was near (H. H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic [London: Lutterworth Press, 1944 and 1947], p. 108). The Messianic Kingdom will insure Israel of her exalted place in heaven and her enemies will perish in Gehenna (Charles, Eschatology, pp. 301-302).

The Martyrdom of Isaiah was probably written during the first century A.D. (R. H. Charles, "The Martyrdom of Isaiah," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, pp. 157-158). This book, which anticipates the Second Coming of Christ, is thought by some to be the oldest non-canonical Christian writing (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 410).

The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs is dated between 109-197 B.C. (R. H. Charles, "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, pp. 289-290). Its major eschatological contribution lies primarily in references concerning the resurrection.

The Sibylline Oracles is an unusual combination of Jewish and Christian writings which cover a span of time from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. and possibly later. The apocalyptic material is found largely in the early Jewish writings (Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, pp. 74-75).

The Psalms of Solomon is not typically apocalyptic literature, but is usually included in such a grouping because of the strong contribution of Psalm 17 (Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, p. 77). The date of composition is the middle of the first century B.C. (Buchanan Gray, "The Psalms of Solomon," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 625). Though barren of significant apocalyptic material, it has been called "one of the most important memorials of Jewish belief during this period" (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 411).

of an advance in religious thought concerning the doctrine of immortality.<sup>59</sup> The importance of these writings assumes new meaning and significance as we are reminded that "prophecy had died long before the Christian era, and its place had been taken by the apocalyptic . . . and it was from the apocalyptic side of Judaism that Christianity was born."<sup>60</sup>

As we have already seen, the eschatological ideas of the New Testament had their beginnings in early Hebrew thought. But it was during the two centuries before Christ that these ideas began to take definite shape. Oesterley spoke of this as the "Apocalyptic Movement" which was eschatological in its development and popular in character.<sup>61</sup> The tone of these writings becomes more intelligible when we recall something of their historical background. Although the prophets had been promising the day of the Lord and the coming of the Messianic Kingdom on earth, it had not yet come. Furthermore, there seemed to be no indication that the immediate future of Israel would be any different from its past which, with few exceptions, was one long disaster. At that very moment, freedom and prosperity were only memories (or a faint hope in the future), and the present condition was one of oppression. Courage and faith were still to be found, but many were beginning to cry:

---

<sup>59</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 193.

<sup>61</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, The Doctrine of the Last Things (London: John Murray, 1908), p. 70.

How long, O Lord? Wilt thou  
 forget me for ever?  
 How long wilt thou hide thy face  
 from me?  
 How long must I bear pain in my  
 soul?  
 and have sorrow in my heart all the  
 day?  
 How long shall my enemy be exalted  
 over me? (Ps. 13:1-2)

It was from this setting that the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha developed. These writings reflect the hopes, dreams, and anxieties of a people who desperately needed some form of expression. That most of this literature has a distinct apocalyptic flavor is hardly surprising.<sup>62</sup>

In dealing with this type of material we do well to remember that

Apocalypse is prophecy expressed in concrete terms of the imagination, and dealing with things that transcend knowledge and experience, and are thus incapable of logical proof or purely spiritual exposition. It is an "unveiling," a "revealing," but it is so after a peculiar fashion of its own. It does not declare doctrines; it tells visions. It does not teach principles; it paints pictures. The writer of Jewish "revelation" does not tell us that we shall be judged of God; he shows us a great white throne, and One who sits thereon encompassed by angelic hosts. Instead of saying, "The wages of sin is death," he reveals to us a burning fiery furnace. He is not content to declare that the good cause will be victorious; he pictures an army of the righteous that destroyed the wicked, and a Messianic Kingdom established in a new and glorified earth.<sup>63</sup>

This being true, Rowley insists the purpose of the apocalyptists was "essentially practical, to proclaim a great hope to men and to call them to a great loyalty and watchfulness."<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 50.

<sup>63</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 8.

<sup>64</sup>Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, p. x.

In the following discussion we will refer to both the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha since, as far as eschatology is concerned, no clear line can be drawn between the two.<sup>65</sup> As one would expect, however, the bulk of these references will be from what are commonly called the apocalyptic books.

### Day of the Lord

The concept of the day of the Lord began in the Old Testament and continued, in one form or another, to be found in the Jewish writings of the intertestamental period. Its chief characteristics, however, remained much the same as in the past, and one recognized the familiar signs of the approaching end. Confusion and calamity would be manifest among men and "the inhabitants of the earth shall be seized with great panic" (IV Ezra 5:1). Omens would appear in nature, such as the sun suddenly shining forth at night and the moon by day. Stars would change their course, the sea would cast forth its flesh, the stones would cry out and blood drip from the trees (IV Ezra 5:4-12). The "mountains shall be shaken, and the high hills shall be made low and shall melt like wax before the flame" (I Enoch 1:6). "The earth shall be (wholly) rent in sunder" (I Enoch 1:6). Judgment and destruction were inevitably associated with this day. His judgment was to "have no respect of persons" (I Enoch 63:8) and would come upon the kings and mighty alike (I Enoch 62:1 ff.).<sup>66</sup> Only a few would be saved. "There are more who perish than shall be saved, even as the flood is greater than a drop!" (IV Ezra 9:16).

---

<sup>65</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 54.

<sup>66</sup>One description of judgment is given in IV Ezra 7:31 ff.

The eschatology of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha was highly inconsistent. Because of the composite nature of the material, it is not uncommon to find divergent views represented within the same book. Nevertheless, Oesterley pointed out that there were two main kinds of eschatology represented in apocalyptic literature. First there was the kind which longed for the political reestablishment of the Israelite nation, its authority over other nations of the world, and its guaranteed prosperity. All enemies of Israel (and therefore enemies of God) would be destroyed with the coming of God on "that day." Psalms of Solomon (17:23 ff.) reflect the idea of triumphant Jewish nationalism on earth.

The other eschatology of these noncanonical books, however, emphasized spiritual well-being rather than material and physical prosperity. More important than Israel's world rule and the destruction of her enemies was the destruction of all evil and the resurgence of true goodness and happiness. Individualism replaced Jewish nationalism, and the real struggle was seen to be not between Hebrew and Gentile, but between good and evil.<sup>67</sup> It was God's intervention of "that day" in the future which insured the ultimate triumph of goodness and the utter destruction of evil.

The concept of resurrection was associated with the coming of the end and the notions of the day of the Lord, judgment, and the Messianic Kingdom. As we have seen, resurrection of the dead never became an actual part of Old Testament belief; however, by the time of Jesus this

---

<sup>67</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha (London: S.P.C.K., 1935), p. 62. (1 Enoch 45:3-5 reveals the hope for such a "spiritualized" kingdom.)



doctrine was gradually accepted, though not by the Sadducees (Acts 23:8).

Here again one finds great diversity of opinion among the writers of the intertestamental period. Sometimes the resurrection would occur prior to the messianic period (I Enoch 51), and on other occasions it was mentioned as following it (Apocalypse of II Baruch 30:1, 2). Although resurrection was associated with the coming Messianic Kingdom and the day of the Lord, one notes concepts of both universal resurrection (IV Ezra 7:32) and resurrection for the righteous only (II Maccabees 7).<sup>68</sup> Occasionally (e.g. in the Wisdom of Solomon) one finds that the influence of Platonism<sup>69</sup> had led to a belief in the immortality of the soul as opposed to bodily resurrection.<sup>70</sup> At other times the idea of resurrection seemed to be rejected altogether,<sup>71</sup> as in Sirach 17:28. In the face of these "variations" it is still possible to note certain fundamental concepts that remained constant. The day of the Lord, for instance, continued to be anticipated as a time when God would break in upon the human scene and bring punishment to the wicked and reward for the righteous. This was to be a terrible day in which the whole world would be thrown into confusion and chaos. Judgments would be severe, and none of the

---

<sup>68</sup>Torrey states that belief in the resurrection of the dead appears more clearly and emphatically in II Maccabees than anywhere else in pre-Christian Jewish literature (Charles C. Torrey, The Apocryphal Literature [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945], p. 77).

<sup>69</sup>Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. I, p. 52.

<sup>70</sup>A further treatment of resurrection beliefs in the intertestamental writings may be found later in this section and again in Paul's concept of last things: resurrection.

<sup>71</sup>Edmond Jacob, "Immortality," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), Vol. II, p. 689.

wicked should escape; it would be a time of dread for the ungodly. However, since God was at the very center of this event, this would be a day of rejoicing for the righteous. The new age had come. The righteous dead would be raised, and all the faithful (living and dead) would be part of that heavenly community, the kingdom of God.

### Messianic Kingdom

The Messianic Kingdom (or kingdom of God) was the central concept of apocalyptic writing. We find the kingdom expressed in different ways (II Enoch 65:6-10; Psalms of Solomon 17, 18; IV Ezra 6:25-28), and the ideas related to it are not always clear, but as Leckie said, "The Kingdom is the ruling planet in the sky" and other beliefs were "subordinate to the vision of the City of God."<sup>72</sup>

Of course the concept of the Messianic Kingdom had its roots in the Old Testament. Despite continued oppression and discouragement, the faithful Jews held to the belief that God was going to usher in a new age when Israel would dominate the world and become a means of blessing to others. Although there was usually a definite connection between the Messianic Kingdom and the Messianic King, there was also a certain distinction between them which apocalyptic writers tended to stress. Charles mentioned that the Messiah was referred to only four times in the second century.<sup>73</sup> In the Book of Jubilees and the Assumption of Moses one reads of a period of great blessing and obvious expectation of the kingdom without any reference to the Messianic King. From earlier days the Jewish

---

<sup>72</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 27.

<sup>73</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 245.

people always interpreted the coming kingdom as being directly the work of God. To the Hebrews, God had to be completely exalted over all.<sup>74</sup> The Messiah, therefore, was only a figurehead. The real King was God himself.<sup>75</sup>

The Messiah arose in I Enoch (90:37, see Charles's accompanying note at bottom of page), not divine, but only a superior human. This supernaturalness was a developing concept that came to include sinfulness (Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, Judah 24:1). He was also a Prophet and Priest (Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, Levi 8:14-15) and held the power to "open the gates of paradise" (Levi 18:10). He was identified with the Son of Man: ". . . And His face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels . . . this is the Son of Man who hath righteousness . . . " (I Enoch 46:1-3).

Until late in the apocalyptic era it was thought that the kingdom would be established on earth (I Enoch 90), but the apocalyptic writers were not completely free from the Old Testament idea of an earthly Messianic Kingdom of everlasting reign, ruled over by a descendant from the lineage of David. Though the apocalyptic writings go in many directions, there was this tendency to move from this position toward belief in the appearance of a new heaven and a new earth.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 58.

<sup>75</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Primitive Christianity (Edinburgh: Collins Fontana Library, 1960), p. 96.

<sup>76</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, pp. 60, 66. Charles mentions that the hope of a temporary Messianic Kingdom was substituted for the hope of an eternal kingdom following the strong influence of dualism prior to the first century A.D. (Eschatology, pp. 298-299). Also IV Ezra 6:25-28, II Baruch 29:1, 30:1. Some even defined the duration of

The goal of all their striving was the kingdom. Sometimes it was conceived of as an earthly kingdom which was transformed into a glorious abode for the righteous. On the other hand, it was conceived of as a new heaven and earth ruled over by the saints or perhaps through that superhuman leader himself who was identified with angelic beings. Sometimes the kingdom was thought of as temporary and at other times as endless. Sometimes the righteous dead were thought to be raised to share in the glories of this kingdom. At other times they were not mentioned. But persisting throughout these variations was the assurance of the apocalyptic writers that this kingdom would be brought about by God's direct intervention in the affairs of his helpless creatures.<sup>77</sup>

### Resurrection

As noted earlier, there was no doctrine of a personal resurrection in the Old Testament. There are similar resurrections expressed in passages such as Isaiah 26:19 or Daniel 12:2-3 or certain places in Job or the Psalms, but those views were relatively vague and certainly did not reflect accepted beliefs. Although the early Hebrew faith was basically noneschatological, it was inevitable that as the Jewish religion developed there would eventually emerge a doctrine of the future. At first this was conceived of only in terms of the nation itself, and

---

the kingdom for 1,000 years (II Enoch) and 400 years (IV Ezra 7:28-29). This thought of a temporary kingdom seemed to continue rather than diminish, and the idea may have given rise to the "first resurrection" spoken of in Rev. 20:5-6. This resurrection also came to involve the raising of Old Testament heroes with the idea that they would accompany the Messiah when he came to reign on earth (Charles, Eschatology, pp. 359-360).

<sup>77</sup>Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, pp. 180-182.

the implication for the individual was articulated later.

When a doctrine of personal resurrection did finally emerge, it was associated with the Messianic Kingdom. As we have already seen, it was late in the apocalyptic era before the coming Kingdom was thought of in any terms other than an "earthly kingdom." With this understanding it was natural to wonder whether the departed righteous would have any part in the new Kingdom. Surely God would not forget those who had been faithful to him and who had been zealous in their righteousness. While the Messianic Kingdom was thought of in "earthly" terms, there was only one way in which the departed saints of Israel could share in it. They simply must return to life again in an earthly body.<sup>78</sup>

Although II Maccabees belongs to the first century B.C., its view of bodily resurrection was that of the second century, when most Jews thought of the Messianic Kingdom as being eternally established on earth. During the first century, however, this view of the Kingdom was generally abandoned for that of a new heaven and new earth or for that of the righteous rising into heaven.<sup>79</sup> Although it was generally accepted that only the righteous would rise, there are reasons to believe that others strongly felt that the resurrection included both the righteous and unrighteous (I Enoch 51:1, 2).

Even the latest apocalyptic writings never completely agreed on who would be resurrected. In IV Ezra (7:32) a resurrection of all people

---

<sup>78</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, p. 66. In I Enoch the righteous are expected to be raised in the body and participate in the Kingdom (90:33, 92:3).

<sup>79</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 294-296.

was claimed.<sup>80</sup> There was even more dispute as to how one would be resurrected. As mentioned earlier, I Enoch 91-104 spoke of an immortality of the spirit rather than bodily resurrection. Something other than a resurrection of the body was also assumed in The Book of Jubilees (23:31), the Assumption of Moses, the Wisdom of Solomon, and IV Maccabees. After having pointed out these beliefs which seem to be less than typical, Macintyre observed that "the prevalent view was that the resurrection would involve a rising again of the body which had been laid in the grave."<sup>81</sup> II Maccabees, I Enoch, IV Ezra, and II Baruch are examples of the materialistic view of the resurrection that appeared to be the accepted thought of the day.

A broad view is helpful at this stage in pointing out that there were two major teachings in apocalyptic literature regarding the resurrection. First, there were those who thought of the resurrection as being only for Israel. At times, however, a wider view included all people everywhere. Then there were teachings to indicate that only the righteous would rise from the dead: ". . . Then shall ye see Enoch, Noah, and Shem, and Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, rising on the right hand in gladness" (Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, Benjamin 10:6). "Then all who have fallen asleep in hope of Him shall rise again"<sup>82</sup> (II Baruch 30:2). The exception comes, of course, when this view is widened to embrace

---

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 358. Charles claims, however, there are two exceptions. All other Jewish literature in first century A.D. contemplate resurrection of only the righteous.

<sup>81</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, pp. 69-71.

<sup>82</sup>Also in II Baruch 51:3.

both good and bad alike:<sup>83</sup> "And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received" (I Enoch 51:1). "Then also all men shall rise, some unto glory and some unto shame" (Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, Benjamin 10:8). Although these views were, on the whole, still far from the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, they are invaluable in helping bridge the theological chasm between the two Testaments.

### Judgment

The idea of judgment after death was virtually insignificant in the Old Testament except for the closing periods when the concept of a personal judgment began to emerge. Even then there was nothing conclusive regarding its nature or character. Only the fact of judgment seemed to be certain. Even when individual judgment in the next life was taught, it was limited to the Israelite. As yet there was no concept of a universal judgment for the quick and the dead. The doctrine of judgment played an important part in the apocalyptic literature. Basically it started where the Old Testament left off and then moved on to develop the concept of a universal judgment without losing sight of the personal significance for each individual.<sup>84</sup>

The Book of Enoch (I Enoch) employs a number of terms in describing the final judgment: "The great Judgment" (16:1), "The day of the great judgment" (10:6), "The eternal judgment" (104:5), "grievous

---

<sup>83</sup>Oesterley, The Doctrine of the Last Things, p. 121.

<sup>84</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 313-314.

judgment" (102:8). Judgment was usually thought of as coming at the beginning of the Messiah's reign.<sup>85</sup> This judgment was to begin immediately at death (I Enoch 22), but a final judgment would come later (10:12-13, 16:1). It would be administered "on that day [by] mine Elect One who shall sit on the throne of glory and shall try their works" (45:2). A similar idea is expressed in The Sibylline Oracles (3:652-656).

By the first century A.D. the final judgment was to include man and angels (II Enoch and II Baruch) and would take place at the close of the Messianic Kingdom. If there was no Messianic Kingdom, then judgment would come at the close of the age. There would also be a preliminary judgment with the Messianic Kingdom, but this was not to deny the final one which would still come.<sup>86</sup> Despite these conflicting views, Christianity is indebted to apocalyptic Judaism for its assumption that every person must one day give an account of this life to God,<sup>87</sup> a thought which came to occupy a significant place in Pauline eschatology.

### Heaven (Paradise)

Paradise had earlier been thought of in connection with only two men, but now we read: "All the holy ones who are in heaven shall bless him and all the elect who dwell in the garden of life" (I Enoch 61:12). Paradise is referred to as the "Garden of the Righteous" in I Enoch 60:23. From Paradise the righteous pass on to the Messianic Kingdom.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>86</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 356-357.

<sup>87</sup>Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic, p. 189.

<sup>88</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 290-291.



II Enoch gives an impressive picture of heaven which is divided into seven levels. I Enoch describes the joy of the righteous "dwelling . . . forever in the presence of God." They will be clothed in "garments of glory" and will "eat of the tree of life." The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch states that ". . . they shall be made like unto the angels, and be made equal to the stars, and they shall be changed into every form they desire, from beauty into loveliness, and from light into the splendor of glory" (II Baruch 51:10).

By the first century A.D. heaven was thought of by some to be the final abiding place for the righteous (II Baruch 51, The Assumption of Moses 10:9). Often no differentiation was made between heaven and paradise, and frequently paradise itself seemed to be the final destiny of the righteous.

For for you  
 is opened Paradise,  
 planted the Tree of life;  
 the future Age prepared,  
 plenteousness made ready; (IV Ezra 8:52)

And then shall the pit of torment appear,  
 and over against it the place of refreshment;  
 The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest,  
 and over against it the paradise of delight.  
 (IV Ezra 7:36)

A more elaborate description is given in chapters eight and nine of I Enoch.

#### Sheol (Hades) and Gehenna

Apocalyptic writers enthusiastically described the plight of the wicked: ". . . fire, snow, and ice [is] made ready for the day of judgment, in the righteous judgment of God" (Testaments of the XII Patriarchs; see also Levi 3:2). "But the souls of the wicked, when they

behold all these things, shall then waste away the more. For they shall know that their torment has come and their perdition has arrived" (II Baruch 30:4-5).

Sections in I Enoch and II Baruch (23:5) pictured Sheol (or Hades) as the abiding place of both the wicked and the righteous, the immediate destiny of all the departed. The same thought was also found in IV Ezra (4:35, 41-43) though the wicked were not specifically named. Yet in all these instances Sheol was only a temporary dwelling for the righteous. During this time the wicked suffered in pain: ". . . recline in anguish and rest in torment till thy last time come, in which thou wilt come again, and be tormented still more" (II Baruch 36:11).

The concept of Gehenna changed little during the apocalyptic period. It was still believed to be the final place of punishment for the wicked.<sup>89</sup>

. . . then shall the pit of torment appear,  
and over against it the place of refreshment;  
The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest,  
.....  
(IV Ezra 7:36)

There was a tendency to identify Sheol with hell in apocalyptic literature. Although Sheol was sometimes thought to embrace all souls while later releasing the righteous to have part in the Messianic Kingdom, it also gradually took on the character of torment. Gehenna, on the other hand, was always considered a "furnace" or "torment" and was spoken of as such throughout this period. Such emphasis on punishment after death was strange to Old Testament literature, but not to the

---

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 358.

apocalyptists of the intertestamental period. Although these punishments were often referred to as "forever" or "eternal," the question of endless duration is debatable.<sup>90</sup>

Opinions vary concerning how much value should be placed on Jewish literature written during the intertestamental period, but few would deny that it makes a considerable contribution to understanding the development of New Testament thought. We are disappointed if we expect to find in apocalyptic literature the systematic development of doctrine or a literalistic description of last things. On the other hand, we are more successful if we are prepared to understand these writings as an "unveiling" of revelation in terms of pictures, visions, and intuitive truths. When the latter approach is taken, we begin immediately to sense the kinship of apocalyptic thought with that of the New Testament and, as we shall see later, with that of Paul. Apocalyptic writers were confident that God would intervene in the human dilemma, bringing both crisis and catastrophe, but insuring the establishment of his kingdom; history, divinely guided, moves with purpose towards its consummation. The more we read, the more we are convinced of the debt Pauline eschatology owes to the literature of this period, which acts as a bridge between the two Testaments.

But if Paul owed a debt to his Jewish past, he was also indebted to the Greeks. He was a man of "two worlds."<sup>91</sup> To understand the full extent of this we shall now consider the influence of Hellenistic

---

<sup>90</sup>Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, pp. 75-77.

<sup>91</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, pp. 9ff.

thought upon the mind of Paul.

### Life to Come in Greek Thought

#### Poetic Development of Homer, Pindar and Other Pre-Platonic Writers

It is impossible to understand Pauline thought apart from its Greek background; indeed, the whole of Christianity is much indebted to Greek thought.<sup>92</sup> At an early age Paul came under the uniquely powerful cultural influence of the Greeks. He grew up in Tarsus, "in a great seat of Greek culture." By Paul's time, Greek was spoken in many cities, even in Palestine where the Rabbis spoke it in preference to the "unlearned" Aramaic.<sup>93</sup> Nothing in that part of the world was completely

<sup>92</sup>Many commentators have noted this indebtedness. Angus observes that Greek philosophy "has rendered one lasting service to the universality and validity of religion, not only in banishing fear and bringing criticism to bear, but in insisting that the religion of rational and intelligent beings must be at least rational and intelligible in its principle . . . so that religion is something embraced with reverence both by the intellect and the emotions" (S. Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World* [London: John Murray, 1929], p. 64). Edward Caird adds that, "If the Roman empire, by the peace which its organized rule secured, . . . provided the external conditions under which Christianity could advance to the conquest of civilized mankind, the philosophy of Greece provided the inward conditions whereby its ideas could be interpreted and brought into the systematic form which was necessary to secure their permanent influence upon the human mind" (*The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, 2 vols. [Glasgow: University Publishers, 1904], vol. I, p. 49).

Part of this indebtedness is reflected even in the intellectual form of Christianity (Lewis Campbell, *Religion in Greek Literature* [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898], p. 2). Caird summarizes that Greek thought "provided Christianity with the weapons of culture which enabled it to subdue the minds of its opponents. It gave its own form to the life and doctrine of the Church, at least down to the time when . . . the spirit of Christianity began to free itself from the tutelage that was necessary to its earlier development" (Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, vol. II, p. 369).

<sup>93</sup>Herbert Newell Bate, *A Guide to the Epistles of Saint Paul* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926), p. 21.

free from Hellenistic culture. To understand Paul's milieu, we must look at some of the most influential works of Greek literature. First, we will trace the eschatological thought and concepts of the afterlife in Homer, Pindar and other pre-Platonic poets. Next, we will examine the philosophic contributions of Plato, the Stoics, and the Epicureans. Finally, we will investigate the broad influence of the Mystery Religions in order to evaluate their eschatological contributions to our study.

### Homer

The Homeric Greek generally enjoyed life in an earthy, bodily fashion, reveling in all the familiar activities and joys that made life appealing. Yet in the midst of this haven of unmixed satisfaction there was a host of capricious gods who through assorted methods inflicted sorrow on men and mocked their grandest dreams. Earth was the theater where the drama of man unfolded, where one found all the joy and sadness, glory and suspense of real life. In the midst of this scene death came all too soon. It stood as a grim reminder of the fate which awaited every man.<sup>94</sup>

Odysseus' visit to the land of the dead<sup>95</sup> allows us a brief glimpse of the other life as it was understood in early Greek thought. This shadowy gray world with its ghost-like figures was not unlike the early Hebrew concept of Sheol. These strange figures of the netherland

---

<sup>94</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 119.

<sup>95</sup>F. M. Cornford, Greek Religious Thought (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923), pp. 16-18.

were said to "flit about as shadows."<sup>96</sup>

The Hebrew could not conceive of existence in the next life without a body any more than he could understand present existence apart from some bodily form. By Plato's time, the Greek concept of the soul as immaterial was foreign to Hebrew thought. When Jewish hope existed at all, it "concerned the whole man and not a disembodied wraith."<sup>97</sup> Paul was to develop this attitude to great length.

To the early Greek, death was not understood as annihilation, but the after-existence that he expected fell far short of real life. Odysseus' mother, Anticleia, explained that when mortals die "the sinews no longer hold the flesh and the bones together, but the strong might of blazing fire destroys these, as soon as the life leaves the white bones, and the spirit, like a dream, flits away, and hovers to and fro."<sup>98</sup>

Odysseus attempted to console Achilles by reminding him of his past honors upon earth and his favored position among the dead. Furthermore, he told him not to grieve because his life had ended. Achilles answered,

Nay, seek not to speak soothingly to me of death, glorious Odysseus. I should choose, so I might live on earth, to serve as the hireling of another, of some portionless man whose livelihood was but small, rather than to be lord over all the dead that have perished.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup>Homer Odyssey X. 494-495, trans. by A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Subsequent quotations from the Odyssey are from the Murray translation.)

<sup>97</sup>Fosdick, A Guide to Understanding the Bible, p. 273.

<sup>98</sup>Odyssey XI. 218-222.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., XI. 484-491.

Complete extinction was intolerable to the Greek mind, for above all he wanted to live. Death did not bring complete destruction, but neither did it offer the hope of continued life in any significant sense. Achilles reached for his departed friend to embrace him one last time, but his hands clasped only air and "the spirit like a vapour was gone beneath the earth, gibbering faintly."<sup>100</sup>

When a man died, his soul flew away, often through the open mouth. This life could not be regained. Nothing was of any avail to bring back the soul of man "once it has passed the barriers of his teeth."<sup>101</sup>

The psyche then went to the world of the unseen, providing that the body had been properly burned. Although the psyche was sometimes believed to depart for Hades immediately at death,<sup>102</sup> a more sophisticated concept envisioned the soul flying off toward Hades where it hovered in that region between the living and the dead until it was permitted full and complete entrance into Hades after the burning of the body. The Spirit of Patroclus appeared to Achilles and requested immediate burial (complete with fire) that it might pass through the gates of Hades.

Bury me with all speed, that I pass within the gates of Hades.  
Afar do the spirits keep me aloof, the phantoms of men that have  
done with toils, neither suffer they me to join myself to them  
beyond the River, but vainly I wander through the wide-gated  
house of Hades. And give me thy hand, I pitifully entreat thee,

---

<sup>100</sup>Homer *Iliad* XXIII, 99-101, trans. by A. T. Murray, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Subsequent quotations from the *Iliad* are from the Murray translation.)

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, IX, 406-409.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, XIII, 415; also *Ibid.*, XXII, 361-363.

for never more again shall I come back from out of Hades, when  
once ye have given me my due of fire.<sup>103</sup>

The souls of the dead were appeased only through fire: "for the dead  
corpses should no man grudge when once they are dead, the speedy consolation of fire."<sup>104</sup>

An Homeric funeral was naturally one of fire, for as the body  
was destroyed by cremation, the spirit was completely separated from  
the land of the living. Burning bodies of the dead benefited not only  
the deceased, who no longer had to wander seeking rest, but also the living, who could be assured of not being troubled by the ghosts who were  
now permanently confined to the underworld.<sup>105</sup> The dead were beyond the  
reach of either fear or love. Once the soul had gone to Hades, it no  
longer had any importance.<sup>106</sup> The mound of earth heaped over the grave  
of the dead and the gravestone itself only sought to preserve the memory  
of one who had gone and would never return.<sup>107</sup> Hector had this in mind  
when he said:

And some one shall some day say even of men that are yet to be,  
as he saileth in his many-benched ship over the wine-dark sea:  
"This is a barrow of a man that died in olden days, whom on a  
time in the midst of his prowess glorious Hector slew." So  
shall some man say, and my glory shall never die.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., XXIII. 70-77.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., VII. 409-410.

<sup>105</sup>Erwin Rohde, Psyche (London: Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.,  
Ltd., 1925), p. 21.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>108</sup>Iliad VII. 84-91.



When the soul passed into the next world it continued to exist and be apprehensible, but its being was shadowy and its existence colorless. The Homeric understanding of the soul has been described as more physical than mental, "material rather than immaterial, . . . something more than breath, but less than mind or spirit."<sup>109</sup> Although a degree of consciousness was found in the next life, especially in books X and XI of the Odyssey, the more prevalent view in Homer was that the shade in Hades had no real consciousness,<sup>110</sup> certainly not as we think of consciousness in this life.

Homer did not indicate the soul had any function in the living man, the living man being a combination of the visible body and the invisible soul. In fact, the soul was not mentioned until death was imminent or had already taken place. At that time it made its way to the regions below where it took on the general outlines of the once visible person. This psyche of Homeric thought is not what we commonly think of as "spirit" as it is contrasted to "body." Homer had many terms which referred to the wide range of faculties associated with the human "spirit," but these faculties were active only so long as a man lived. When death came, the complete personality ceased to exist. The body deteriorated, but the psyche, which was without feeling, mind, or will, would go to the regions of the dead in the underworld. In other words, man was a living,

---

<sup>109</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 121.

<sup>110</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 114. Jaeger agrees that for Homer the shades of the dead have no consciousness--as we know consciousness--once they have entered Hades (Werner Jaeger, Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 74).

conscious, intelligent creature as long as the psyche remained within him, even though these faculties were not given by the psyche itself. Such faculties would become operative by the union of psyche and body. Homer nowhere attributed any vital powers to the psyche in living man. This shadowy image of the body was mentioned only as it was about to separate itself from living man or when this separation had already taken place at death.<sup>111</sup>

Homer sometimes referred to the visible man (the body and all its faculties) and also to the indwelling psyche as man's "self." This helps explain what would otherwise be contradictory views, because sometimes the material body was contrasted as the "man himself" with the psyche, which had no physical connection with the living body.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, that which left the body at death (psyche) and made its way to Hades was also referred to at times by the proper name of the person himself.<sup>113</sup> According to Homeric thought, therefore, the person could be said to exist twice; first, as the outward and visible shape of life, and then as the invisible "image," or psyche, which would be released at death.<sup>114</sup> Since the "image-soul" had no part in the conscious

---

<sup>111</sup>Rohde, Psyche, pp. 4-6.

<sup>112</sup>Iliad X. 3-5. When Homer used the expression "the man himself" as contrasted with the shade, he was usually referring to the bodily remains even if life had gone from the body (Jaeger, Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers, p. 74). For instance, in the first part of the Iliad we read that the souls of the warriors were cast into Hades while "they themselves" became food for dogs and all manner of birds (I. 3-5).

<sup>113</sup>Iliad XI. 261-263.

<sup>114</sup>Rohde, Psyche, p. 6.

activities of man, it remained in a sleeping state as long as the body was active. This "second self" which lived within a man was thought to be active in dreaming; for this reason, Homer interpreted dream experiences as serious reality rather than empty fantasy.<sup>115</sup>

At times one can find a trace of ancient soul-worship in Homeric thought, though never to a significant degree.<sup>116</sup>

Although the Homeric age did not have an elaborate or consistent view of judgment in the next life, there was a concept of hell, or a lower Hades, in which punishment was actually given. This place was spoken of as a murky abyss "far, far away, where is the deepest gulf beneath the earth, the gates whereof are of iron and the threshold of bronze as far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth."<sup>117</sup> This domain, however,

---

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-19. Elpenor's psyche tells Odysseus to "burn me [my body] with my armour" (Odyssey XI. 74). After Achilles slew Eetion, he also "burnt him in his armour" (Iliad VI. 418). One wonders if this was not a survival of ancient belief that somehow the departed soul was able to make use of those objects which were burned with the discarded body. Rohde reminds us that the duty of offering to the dead all his movable possessions was an ancient and common tradition, and one which might have been generally observed, though not ordinarily in Homer (Psyche, pp. 17-18). There is also the "funeral feast" offered by the king to his people after the passing of chieftain (Iliad XXIV. 801-803; also XXIII. 29 ff.). We read that "many sleek bulls bellowed about the knife, as they were slaughtered, many sheep and bleating goats, and many white-tusked swine, rich with fat, were stretched to singe over the flame of Hephaestus; and everywhere about the corpse the blood ran so that one might dip cups therein" (Iliad XXIII. 29-34).

Here again, one wonders if such a feast is entirely divorced from the ancient belief that the soul of the honored person would have a share in the banquet itself. Yet such evidence hardly points to any clear-cut tradition of soul-worship.

<sup>117</sup>Iliad VIII. 13.

seemed to be restricted primarily to the rebellious and the defeated.<sup>118</sup>

Such judgment was not the fate of every man, but only of those guilty of the most heinous crimes. The mass of men went to Hades at death, the slave and master, the good and evil alike. Most men did not expect their degree of felicity in the afterlife to be determined by their behavior while alive.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 130.  
Endless suffering is also suggested in other places:

"And I saw Tityos, son of glorious Gaea, lying on the ground. Over nine roods he stretched, and two vultures sat, one on either side, and tore his liver, plunging their beaks into his bowels, nor could he beat them off with his hands. For he had offered violence to Leto, the glorious wife of Zeus. . . .

"Aye, and I saw Tantalus in violent torment, standing in a pool, and the water came nigh unto his chin. He seemed as one athirst, but could not take and drink; for as often as that old man stooped down, eager to drink, so often would the water be swallowed up and vanish away, and at his feet the black earth would appear, for some god made all dry. And trees, high and leafy, let stream their fruits above his head, pears, and pomegranates, and apple trees with their bright fruit, and sweet figs, and luxuriant olives. But as often as that old man would reach out toward these, to clutch them with his hands, the wind would toss them to the shadowy clouds.

"Aye, and I saw Sisyphus in violent torment, seeking to raise a monstrous stone with both his hands. Verily he would brace himself with hands and feet, and thrust the stone toward the crest of a hill, but as often as he was about to heave it over the top, the weight would turn it back, and then down again to the plain would come rolling the ruthless stone. But he would strain again and thrust it back, and the sweat flowed down from his limbs, and dust rose from his head" (Odyssey XI. 576-600).

<sup>119</sup>There was, however, the case of "Minos, the glorious son of Zeus, golden sceptre in hand, giving judgment to the dead from his seat" (Odyssey XI. 568-571), but Minos has been described as "a judge who pronounces blank decisions on blank disputes," and his judgments had to do not with the deeds of men as they lived on earth, but with differences arising among them after having come to Hades itself (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 126-127). In another instance, retribution seems to be in store for the person who swears a false oath (Iliad XIX. 258-261). Despite these exceptional cases, it would be too much to say that Homeric thought believed in a judgment of the departed. On the other hand, there did seem to be moments when men wondered if the consequences of their conduct would not be manifested to them in the next life (Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 128).

Occasionally an Homeric hero might so distinguish himself that a god might grant him immortality. Calypso's fondness for Odysseus led her to make such an offer: "Him I welcomed kindly and gave him food, and said that I would make him immortal and ageless all his days."<sup>120</sup>

Since it was impossible for a person to leave Hades, it became necessary for immortality to be granted to a living person if it was to be granted at all. Elysium was a place to which heroes went, and, as was the case of Menelaus, were translated there while still living. This was a land where life was easy for men. No snow was there, or heavy storms, or rain, and the Ocean sent up the shrill-blowing West Wind to cool the shades.<sup>121</sup> This concept of immortality, however, was so limited in scope that it had little effect upon the people as a whole and made no significant contribution to a doctrine of immortality which would be concerned with the individual.<sup>122</sup> In general, the Homeric age viewed existence in the afterlife as gloomy and impersonal.<sup>123</sup> One must look beyond Homer if he is to find any hopeful view of personal immortality in the future life. The development of Greek religious thought therefore is, in this respect, much like that of the early Jews.

---

<sup>120</sup>Odyssey V. 135-137.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., IV. 561-569.

<sup>122</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 144-145.

<sup>123</sup>On his trip to the land of the dead Odysseus was asked, "Why hast thou left the light of the sun and come hither to behold the dead and a region where is no joy?" (Odyssey XI. 94). It is little wonder that the Homeric view of man's future life was referred to as "one of totally unrelieved gloom" (James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908], p. 60).

Pindar (including other pre-Platonic writers)

As we pass on to Hesiod (approximately eighth century B.C.) we do not find his views concerning the after life differing greatly from those of Homer.<sup>124</sup>

The old Homeric view that the body was necessary for the soul to have eternal existence was long held by the Greeks. It was the Orphic teaching which rejected this view and claimed that the body was actually a hindrance and a distinct liability to the soul. The belief in transmigration was important: successive incarnations were viewed as spiritual punishment and discipline for the soul. In fact the soul never reached its full potential (to live eternally with God) until it was set free from this cycle of rebirths.<sup>125</sup> Hence Orphic doctrine outlined the origin, purpose, and final destiny of the soul.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>124</sup>To the men of "the golden race" Hesiod believed death came like a sleep, allowing them to dwell in peace and to experience many good things. They were also loved by the gods and given exceptional powers (Hesiod, Works and Days, trans. by H. G. Evelyn-White [London: William Heinemann, 1914], 110-125, p. 11). A second generation, called "the silver age," was inferior to their predecessors, was less loyal to the gods, and was made to live in the depths of the earth. The men of "the silver age" were called "blessed spirits of the underworld" (Hesiod, Works and Days, 127-142, pp. 11-13). Rohde reminds us that the underworld abode of these souls is not to be understood as the House of Hades filled with unconscious shadow-souls. The term "underworld" is used simply to differentiate from the "Upper World" (Rohde, Psyche, p. 74). The "bronze age" is of Hesiod's own time and seems to offer no hope for elevation to the life of the gods; the men of this age had a bleak future since at death they were taken to Hades where they became nameless and could no longer see the light of the sun (Hesiod, Works and Days, 143-155, p. 13). Thus, it was possible for certain classes of souls in the gold and silver ages to become immortal, but this option was closed to members of the bronze age.

<sup>125</sup>Rohde, Psyche, pp. 133-136.

<sup>126</sup>Charles, Eschatology, pp. 147-148; also Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 135, 150.

it made Hades an intermediate place where moral distinctions were realized and from which the soul hoped one day to ascend and live forever with God. The soul, whether pure or impure, was conceived as immortal and eternal. It had neither beginning nor end. The three main elements which characterized Orphic thought were the dismal view of earthly life, a firm belief in the justice of the gods' judgment, and an unshakable conviction of the soul's divine nature and origin.<sup>127</sup>

Speculative philosophy tended to identify the soul with the various elements of the body. As long as this concept prevailed it was meaningless to speak of real existence beyond the grave.<sup>128</sup>

The Pythagorean view of the after life included concepts of Hades, transmigration, and restoration. This interpretation was basically Orphic,<sup>129</sup> even though these two schools of thought most certainly had different origins and some beliefs were fused together at a later date.<sup>130</sup> Although Pythagoras (born 580-570 B.C.) himself wrote nothing,<sup>131</sup> the Pythagorean doctrine held that man's soul was immortal and that it was made to stay in the body as a means of punishment. Since the soul had no connection with the body in which it stayed, it was possible for any

---

<sup>127</sup>Theodore Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. I, trans. by Laurie Magnus (London: John Murray, 1901), p. 130.

<sup>128</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 148.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., pp. 148-149.

<sup>130</sup>Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. I, pp. 123-128.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.; also E. Zeller, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. I, trans. by S. F. Alleyne (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881), p. 313.

body to harbor any soul.<sup>132</sup> There is a story of Pythagoras, who, seeing a dog being beaten miserably, cried out, "Leave off beating the dog, for I recognize in his tones the voice of the soul of a friend."<sup>133</sup> Fundamental to this view was the notion that the soul, which was alien to the body, suffered this form of bodily imprisonment after being cast down from a heavenly existence and was then involved in a process of atonement and purification in order to return to this divine home. Purification and atonement were achieved through penalties in Hades and by cycles of births.<sup>134</sup> In fact, Pythagoras is said to have remembered the earlier incarnations through which his soul had passed and therefore took the opportunity to instruct and warn others.<sup>135</sup> The ethical dimension of this Pythagorean view of reincarnation was determined by the fact that each rebirth was a reward or punishment insofar as it moved the soul further toward, or away from, its goal of being eternally restored to the Godhead.<sup>136</sup>

Xenophanes (approximately 570-475 B.C.) was one of the Eleatic philosophers and perhaps the founder of the school itself,<sup>137</sup> but was

---

<sup>132</sup>Rohde, Psyche, p. 375.

<sup>133</sup>Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. I, p. 124; also G. E. Kirk and J.E. Raven, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), pp. 222-223.

<sup>134</sup>Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. I, p. 128; also Rohde, Psycho, p. 375.

<sup>135</sup>Rohde, Psyche, Appendix X.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., pp. 375-376; see also Zeller, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. I, pp. 490-491.

<sup>137</sup>Kirk and Raven, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, p. 165.



rather vague and often contradictory concerning his religious beliefs.<sup>138</sup> For him, the physical world, conceived as a whole, was a manifestation of one God who was divinely present in every part of that whole and who also had full powers of reason and perception. He held that "every scrap of matter was somehow linked up into a coherent system, which as a whole, though not otherwise, was instinct with the highest powers of perception and thought;"<sup>139</sup> this predominant position of pantheism left no room for any significant belief in the future existence of the individual soul.

Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.) offered no hope for personal immortality in his concept of the all-pervading mind. He made no distinction between the soul and the mind; indeed, the mind became a soul in man.<sup>140</sup> At times the mind became certain individualized identities, but eventually these returned to their original source,<sup>141</sup> removing, therefore, the possibility of any meaningful existence in the hereafter.

Empedocles (approximately 484-424 B.C.) accepted, with a few variations, the concept of transmigration as part of his system. For instance, he did not conceive of the soul going to Hades (as in the

---

<sup>138</sup>F. M. Stawell, "Ionic Philosophy," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VII, ed. by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 417; see also Paul Shorey, "Philosophy (Greek)," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. IX, ed. by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), pp. 859-860.

<sup>139</sup>Stawell, "Ionic Philosophy," Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VII, p. 417. Murray mentions that the entire concept of Xenophanes may be a reaction against the anthropomorphism of Homer (Gilbert Murray, Four Stages of Greek Religion [London: Oxford University Press, 1912], p. 89).

<sup>140</sup>Zeller, A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 364-365.

<sup>141</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 150.

Orphic and Pythagorean views) because the penalty for sin was paid in this life.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, the faculty of thought (or conscious soul) was thought to exist side by side with what was called the life-soul while man lived. The conscious soul, being mortal, perished with the body, whereas the life-soul survived. This dualism of the inner life is a recurring concept in Greek philosophy.<sup>143</sup>

The Greek world was a world of gods who were depicted in assorted ways. It was Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), a tragic poet, who may be said to have influenced the gradual ethical reformation of the gods.<sup>144</sup> He helped articulate the notion of the supreme God as a judge who either rewarded or punished. Since he maintained that divine justice would be realized here on earth, little thought was given to the next life. This was quite in contrast with Pindar who, under the influence of Orphism, delighted in speculating upon the world to come.<sup>145</sup>

Sophocles (495-406 B.C.) was generally nearer the Homeric position than his predecessor. Believing that man's fate was in the hands of the gods led him to accept philosophically the hardships and calamities

---

<sup>142</sup>Kirk and Raven, The Pre-Socratic Philosophers, p. 352.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>144</sup>Theodor Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. II, trans. by G. G. Berry (London: John Murray, 1905), pp. 6, 13.

<sup>145</sup>The instances of traditional Greek religious thought found in Aeschylus are believed to be moments when his inherited faith came to the fore even though this faith provided only a background to his concept of the universe (Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. II, pp. 6-7). Others feel that Aeschylus reflects the popular views of his day, such as the traditional Homeric concept of Hades and the soul; sometimes, however, he does seem to break with the past in speaking of a judgment beyond death in Hades (Charles, Eschatology, p. 151).

of life. This attitude of renouncement and resignation is summed up in, "Not to be born is the best fate of all." The uncertainty of earthly existence and the false hope of fortune and fame are themes touched upon with similar feeling by both Sophocles and Herodotus, his personal friend.<sup>146</sup>

If these views seem to stress the ills of life, Euripides (484-407 B.C.), the third of the great Greek tragedians, did so even more strongly. He recommended a childless life because children who turn out badly bring grief to the family, and those who are good create constant anxiety lest some evil befall them. Since there could be no joy in any possession because it was always connected with fear of loss, plays of Euripides were, for the most part, filled with melancholy and despair.<sup>147</sup> If it is true, however, that he offered little encouragement to man, it is also true that he assisted in the slow revision of the ethical dimension of the gods. He believed that if gods were plagued by human passions and weakness, then they were not gods worthy of adoration. This led him to question at times whether perfect gods existed at all.<sup>148</sup> Euripides probably believed in God, but did not hold to traditional beliefs concerning the gods; he felt that the real nature of God could not be fully known, although he did assume the oneness of the divine nature and thereby did not hold to pantheism.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup>Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, Vol. II, pp. 8-10.

<sup>147</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 10-14.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>149</sup>E. Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, trans. by Sir John Sandys (London: William Heinemann, 1937), pp. vii-xv.

In Pindar (518-438 B.C.) we find the old Homeric doctrine of soul and future life with also a belief that is essentially Orphic in character. At times he adopted a rather orthodox position in his description of the soul after death. Such a view reflected the popular thought of his day,<sup>150</sup> but if Pindar sometimes conformed to the old Homeric theology, he often rose above it. In fact, some feel that he differed from Homer in nothing quite so much as his views regarding the state of men after death.<sup>151</sup> Symond's translation of a portion of the second Olympian shows that Pindar reflected not only a definite belief in the future life, but also a system of rewards and punishments and rites of purification.<sup>152</sup> Among the dead, sinful souls at once paid penalty, and the crimes done in this realm of Zeus were judged beneath the earth by one who gave sentence under dire necessity. But the good, enjoying perpetual sunlight equally by night and day, received a life more free from woes than this of ours; they troubled not the earth with strength of hand, nor the water of the sea for scanty sustenance; but with the honored of the gods, all they who delighted in the keeping of their oaths passed a tearless age. The others suffered woe on which no eye could bear to look. Those who had thrice endured on either side of the grave to keep their spirits wholly free from crime, journeyed on the road of Zeus to the tower of Cronus: where round the islands blew breezes

---

<sup>150</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 150.

<sup>151</sup>Karl Otfried Muller, History of the Literature of Ancient Greece, trans. by G. C. Lewis (London: Baldwin, 1846), p. 229; also Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 138-139.

<sup>152</sup>John A. Symonds, Studies of the Greek Poets, Vol. I (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), pp. 340-341.

ocean-borne; and flowers of gold burned some on the land from radiant trees, and others the wave fed; with necklaces whereof they twined their hands and brows, in the just decrees of Rhandamanthus, whom father Cronus had for a perpetual colleague, he who was spouse of Rhea throned above all gods.<sup>153</sup>

The mythology of Homer, the Tragedians, and Pindar all reflect a general concept of life and destiny which was later developed more fully by Greek philosophers.<sup>154</sup>

Pindar's successor in this view was Plato. In this foremost Greek prophet is found lofty ideal of the soul's dignity, its divine origin, its longing to be free from its bodily shackles, the inevitable coming judgment, and its rewards or punishments in the next life. These

---

<sup>153</sup>This is a paraphrase of Pindar Olympian Ode II. 55-76, trans. by John Sandy, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1937), pp. 23-27.

<sup>154</sup>Caird, The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol. I, p. 41. One may be tempted, at this point, to underestimate the value of early Greek influence or to fail to appreciate its contribution to later Christian thinking. Yet in its infancy Greek thought had the distinction of bordering on monotheism even while being essentially polytheistic. The very fact that Zeus, the god supreme, was so far superior to the other gods in every respect was a distinct advantage in helping prepare the way for a real monotheistic belief (S. Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity (London: John Murray, 1925), pp. 10-12). Greek religion, of course, had obvious limitations which were especially apparent in the field of eschatology and in their view regarding the final destiny of man. Their religion proved defective largely because it appealed only to man's aesthetic nature. While beauty and joy met a significant need in man's life, it had little to say when faced with the ultimate problem of death. Before this darker side of life, which could not forever be kept in the background, it stood dumb and unable to give either comfort or direction. The Olympian gods were simply larger men who loved and quarreled and lived a life of careless ease. Even Zeus, the god supreme, could not alter the fixed course of fate. This overpowering Fate against which all seemed to be helpless was later understood as the will of God (Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 10-12).

ideas constantly appear in Pindar, but come to their finest expression in Plato where they are also most consistent in their ethical application.<sup>155</sup>

### Philosophic Backgrounds

#### Plato

In the writings of Plato (427?-347 B.C.) Greek religious thought attained its greatest sophistication. He was a uniquely potent force in Greek philosophy and has been called a "Christian out of due time."<sup>156</sup> Building on the enormous influence of Socrates, Plato elaborated certain key religious, aesthetic, ethical, and political ideas and--unlike his teacher--he chose to write them down. Plato's philosophical system, which has a distinct religious quality throughout, attempts to explain both man's own nature and the universe of which he is a part.<sup>157</sup> Caird refers to Plato as "the first systematic theologian," meaning that the philosopher was the first to grasp certain first principles of all religious thought.<sup>158</sup> Plato is the one philosopher to whom all Christian

<sup>155</sup>Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 140-141. We know nothing of the religious concepts of Socrates (469-399 B.C.) (Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, pp. 52-53), except that he was condemned to die for corrupting the youth and that he perhaps worshipped other than the traditional gods. He never attempts a scientific definition of the soul, although Zeller says that Socrates "considered the existence of the soul after death to be indeed probable without . . . pretending to any certain knowledge on the point" (*Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, pp. 178-179).

<sup>156</sup>R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), p. 195.

<sup>157</sup>Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, pp. 356-357.

<sup>158</sup>Caird, *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, Vol. I, p. 32.

theology may be traced.<sup>159</sup>

Although a doctrine of the soul's immortality may not have been a part of Plato's early thought,<sup>160</sup> he left no doubt in his later writings as to his belief in this matter. In the Phaedo he put forth a masterful and "reasoned affirmation of a future life."<sup>161</sup>

Consider the series of arguments Plato put forward in the Phaedo to prove the soul's immortality.<sup>162</sup> First, he argued from the

---

<sup>159</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>160</sup>R. H. Charles takes this position in Eschatology, p. 152, because The Republic shows "various stages through which his views passed before he arrived at his maturest convictions on the subject." Also, Rohde in Psyche, pp. 265-267, claims that no trace of this doctrine can be found in the oldest part of The Republic.

<sup>161</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 145. Indeed, this has been referred to as "intrinsically the greatest contribution drawn from philosophical speculation upon the question . . . the noblest single offering that human reason has yet laid upon the altar of human hope" (W. D. Gaddes, ed., The Phaedo of Plato with Introduction and Notes [London: Williams and Norgate, 1863], pp. xxvii-xxviii).

<sup>162</sup>Orphic and Pythagorean influence is generally recognizable throughout Plato, but in the Phaedo this influence is especially strong. (Gomperz, Greek Thinkers, Vol. III, p. 37). It may well be true that the "indebtedness of Plato's theory of the soul to Orphic teaching has been great, but his gratitude small" (L. R. Farnell, Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921], p. 380). Farnell points to two passages in the dialogues which he feels justify this statement. In the Cratylus the Orphic doctrine of the body as the prison-house of the soul is actually mentioned. The soul has become confined as a penalty for sin in some former life (Plato Cratylus 400). There is also the well-known passage in The Republic which describes those who knock on the doors of the rich, persuading them that they have god-given power to remove sins of both the individual and the sins of the forefathers by means of sacrifices and festive ritual (Plato, The Republic, 364C). When such rites are properly performed, deliverance from the effects of sins may be received both for the living soul and the departed as well (Farnell, Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality, p. 380). Although he acknowledged that this rite began with good intentions, Plato criticized the extent to which it had deteriorated into a cold formula that had lost sight of the original goal. The Orphic rites

belief that everything is generated from its opposite.

If . . . [anything] . . . becomes smaller, it must have been greater and then become smaller. . . . the weaker is generated from the stronger, and the stronger from the quicker. . . . and the worse from the better and the more just from the more unjust?<sup>163</sup>

If a person is asleep he must have been awake, and if he is awake he must have been asleep. Is there any state, then, that is the opposite of living just as being awake is the opposite of sleeping? Death is that state. But since life is continuing to pass into death, one would expect that soon all living things would be dead. Yet life continues, so therefore life must be generated out of death. Following such reasoning, Plato claimed that the soul would live again and that this endless process of life passing into death and death into life would continue. Such a process was the very essence of being.<sup>164</sup>

Secondly, Plato associated the belief in immortality with the theory of recollection. Here the argument was made that "our learning is nothing else than recollection"<sup>165</sup> and that "if anyone is to remember anything, he must know it at some previous time."<sup>166</sup> If a person says

---

combined the beliefs in immortality and personal holiness in such a way that one's future life could be secured only through personal goodness. Also, the idea of atonement was also important here, but, as soon as it ceased to be understood in a spiritual sense, the Orphic religion sank to the level of meaningless formalism that Plato so strongly criticized (Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature, pp. 253-254).

<sup>163</sup>Plato Phaedo 70E-71A, trans. by Harold N. Fowler, The Loeb Classical Library. (Subsequent quotations from the Phaedo are from the Fowler translation.)

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 70D ff.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 72E.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 73C.



that one piece of wood is equal to another, where does he get the idea of equality? This knowledge must have been present prior to the moment when he actually saw the pieces of wood for the first time. In other words, it was something already known which was suddenly remembered and applied. Such is one of Plato's arguments, that all knowledge (in the final analysis) comes from remembering rather than learning.<sup>167</sup> Plato's theory of recollection naturally led him to presuppose the existence of another previous state in which we learned various basic ideas. The preexistence of the soul before this life also implied its postexistence after this life.

Plato's third argument for the soul's immortality was based upon the principle that opposites exclude one another. A quality can never become its opposite, nor can opposites exist at the same time in the same thing or person.<sup>168</sup> A number cannot be odd and even at the same time and neither can heat and cold be together simultaneously. Furthermore, the attendant circumstances of these qualities also exclude one another, so that snow, which may accompany cold, cannot exist with heat. Similarly, the opposite of life is death and "the soul . . . will never admit the opposite of that which it brings with it."<sup>169</sup> That which does

---

<sup>167</sup>Ibid., 73C ff. Perhaps Plato's clearest demonstration of this view is in the dialogue called the Meno where an uneducated slave is brought in, and through a process of question and answer Socrates succeeds in making him give the correct answer to a mathematical problem. This demonstration is supposed to prove that the uneducated slave must have remembered the mathematical proof he had given and that the question and-answer process helped bring forth this from his mind.

<sup>168</sup>Phaedo 103B ff.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 105D.

not admit death is immortal (deathless) and therefore the soul is immortal. ". . . the immortal is also imperishable, it is impossible for the soul to perish when death comes against it."<sup>170</sup> Fourthly, Plato argued that the soul's desire for another state of being and to be free of the body was in itself an indication of immortality.<sup>171</sup> Finally, Plato's argument was moral, asserting that another life is needed if individual justice is to be rendered and if man is to reach his full potential. This, we recall, was the reasoning that helped move the Hebrew people toward the acceptance of a future life.<sup>172</sup>

These arguments in the Phaedo concerning immortality may not seem convincing to us, or perhaps even logical,<sup>173</sup> but few reading this dialogue would fail to see that Plato himself was firmly convinced that life would continue after death. Particularly convincing is Socrates'

---

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., 105E, 106A, B.

<sup>171</sup>" . . . so long as we have the body, and the soul is contaminated by such an evil, we shall never attain completely what we desire" (Phaedo 66B). "If we are ever to know anything absolutely, we must be free from the body and must behold the actual realities with the eye of the soul alone. And then . . . when we are dead we are likely to possess the wisdom which we desire and claim to be enamoured of, but not while we live" (Ibid., 66D, E). Elsewhere Plato suggests that we "ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like him, is to become holy and just and wise" (Plato Theaetetus 176 in The Dialogues of Plato, trans. by Benjamin Jowett, 5 vols. [3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892], Vol. IV, p. 235).

<sup>172</sup>"For if death were an escape from everything, it would be a boon to the wicked, for when they die they would be freed from the body and from their wickedness together with their souls. But now, since the soul is seen to be immortal, it cannot escape from evil or be saved in any other way than by becoming as good and wise as possible" (Phaedo 107C, D). In other words, justice is at work in the heart of the universe, and if justice is not accomplished in this life, then it will come in the next.

<sup>173</sup>Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature, p. 352.

reply to Crito's question about how his followers should bury him:

"However you please," he replied, "if you can catch me and I do not get away from you." And he laughed gently, and looking towards us, said, "I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that the Socrates who is now conversing and arranging the details of his argument is really I; he thinks I am the one whom he will presently see as a corpse, and he asks how to bury me."<sup>174</sup>

It is clear that Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul was closely connected with, if not based on, his belief in pre-existence.<sup>175</sup> He argued that the soul was both ungenerated (uncreated) and immortal (eternal):

Every soul is immortal. For that which is ever moving is immortal; but that which moves something else or is moved by something else, when it ceases to move, ceases to live. Only that which moves itself, since it does not leave itself, never ceases to move, and this is also the source and beginning of motion for all things which have motion. But the beginning is ungenerated. . . . And since it is ungenerated, it must also

---

<sup>174</sup>Phaedo 115C. Although Plato seems to be confident in this view, he is careful not to be dogmatic about the future life (D. G. Ritchie, Plato [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902], p. 150). One remembers these words he put into the mouth of Socrates: "For the state of death is one of two things: either it is virtually nothingness, so that the dead has no consciousness of anything, or it is, as people say, a change and migration of the soul from this to another place" (Plato The Apology 40C, trans. by H. N. Fowler, The Loeb Classical Library).

Even in the Phaedo Plato does not insist that his arguments for a future life are infallible. He and Socrates are willing to face the alternative. In fact, Socrates is supposed to have said: "If what I say is true, I am the gainer by believing it; and if there be nothing for me after death, at any rate I shall not be burdensome to my friends by my lamentations in these last moments" (Phaedo 91B).

In other words, it is best for one to face death courageously regardless of what the future may hold. Since this is a subject about which certain and complete knowledge is impossible, it is likewise a subject where dogmatic denials are inadmissible (Ritchie, Plato, p. 150). There remains, however, "the great hope" that death does not put an end to the soul (Phaedo 114C).

<sup>175</sup>E. Zeller, Plato and the Older Academy (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1876), p. 405; Ritchie Plato, p. 147.

be indestructible; for if the beginning were destroyed, it could never be generated from anything nor anything else from it, since all things must be generated from a beginning. . . . Then the soul would necessarily be unregenerated and immortal.<sup>176</sup>

Further support of this idea occurs in The Republic, where Plato concluded that this and other arguments "constrain us to admit" the immortality of the soul.<sup>177</sup> However, throughout the various ways in which Plato spoke of the soul<sup>178</sup> he always considered it a purely spiritual being, and it is precisely on this point that we see the wide gap between the Greek (Platonic) and Hebrew (Pauline) views of the afterlife. Although the Greek doctrine of the soul later was accepted by certain groups of Jews, Paul finally rejected the Hellenized concept of "spirit" in favor of "body," a concept more in keeping with his Hebraic heritage.

Nevertheless, in other areas Plato more than once anticipated principles later found in the Church. Although Greek thought generally

---

<sup>176</sup>Plato Phaedrus 245C-E, trans. by H. N. Fowler, The Loeb Classical Library. (Subsequent quotations from Phaedrus are from the Fowler translation.)

<sup>177</sup>Plato The Republic X. 611B, trans. by Paul Shorey, The Loeb Classical Library. (Subsequent quotations from The Republic are from the Shorey translation.)

<sup>178</sup>There was, for instance, the "symbolic image of the soul," which resembled a man, a lion, and a many-headed beast (The Republic IX. 588B-E). Elsewhere the soul was pictured as a charioteer driving two horses, one of a noble breed, the other quite opposite (Phaedrus 246). Plato also sees the soul as having a tripartite structure: reason, the noblest of the parts, resides in the head; courage is in the region of the heart; and desire is lodged between the midriff and the navel (Timaeus 69E-71A). We should remember, however, that these descriptions, including the tripartite scheme, are myths and symbols, not to be taken completely in the literal sense (Ritchie, Plato, p. 143). Plato referred to the soul as "most uniform and indissoluble and ever unchanging" (Phaedo 80B; see also 78C). In the tenth book of The Republic (611C-612A) we find Plato stressing the one true nature (not manifold) of the soul even though he argues in the fourth book for separate faculties (Ibid., 435C-441C; see also Ritchie, Plato, pp. 143-144).

considered human nature essentially good and believed that wrong could be eliminated through intelligent training, Plato argued that there was an evil element in man that could never be completely eliminated this side of death.<sup>179</sup> Paul, of course, agreed with this. Although he was a Christian, he continued to struggle with the "old man"--that part of him that remained vulnerable to the lure of evil. "I do not understand my own actions," he lamented. "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells with me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh . . ." (Rom. 7:15-18).

Although Plato shared the Greeks' great admiration for physical beauty, he taught that the body impedes the soul's spiritual progress and interferes with its higher desires. We should avoid undue attention to our physical selves and spend more time contemplating God and our personal salvation.<sup>180</sup> We have seen that, even though the popular religions of Plato's time expected little from the after life beyond a shadowy existence in Sheol, the philosopher encouraged thought about future things and spoke of a personal judgment that we all must face. Likewise, Paul advised that we should "look not to the things that are

---

<sup>179</sup>Plato distrusted human nature (Livingstone, The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us, pp. 195-196). In the Laws he observes: ". . . small is the class of men--rare by nature and trained, too, with a superlative training--who, when they fall into divers needs and lusts, are able to stand out firmly for moderation. . . ." He concludes, "The disposition of the mass of mankind is exactly the opposite of this. . . ." (Plato Laws XI. 918C-D, trans. by R. G. Burry, the Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols.).

<sup>180</sup>While Paul rejected outright the Greek dualistic view of the body as essentially evil, he maintained that "while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, . . . and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6,8).

seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (II Cor. 4: 18). Also, Paul emphasized that on the day of judgment each man would receive a fate "according to his works" (Rom. 2:5-6).

According to Plato, the soul<sup>181</sup> was judged immediately following death and then sent either to heaven or under earth where it received its reward or punishment for one thousand years. Following this period the soul must become incorporated again, and the nature of the new body was determined by the character of the soul in the former life. Such transmigration continued with the possibility of the soul's descending into a beast or incurable sinner's being thrown into Tartarus. The goal of the soul, however, was to be freed finally from the body and to enter into the realm of the divine and the pure.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup>Plato did not think of individual souls coming forth at a certain time from the world-soul and then returning to it after a designated period. In his view "particular Ideas stand side-by-side with the highest Idea, so particular souls stand beside the universal soul in self-dependent individuality. Both are of like nature: both must be equally imperishable" (Zeller, Plato and the Older Academy, p. 402). Plato maintains: "For surely nothing would escape destruction, if the immortal, which is everlasting, is perishable" (Phaedo 106D).

Plato seems never to have resolved certain ambiguities in the body-soul relationship. At one point, he pictures the soul as entirely distinct and independent from the body since it existed in an earlier state without a body and is destined to do so yet again. Furthermore, the soul will never realize the perfect life and its true nature until it is emancipated from bodily shackles (Phaedo 79A ff.). At another point, however, Plato mentions the body's woeful power of dragging down the soul and making it "confused and dizzy like a drunken man" (Phaedo 79C). Various diseases, including madness and stupidity are conditions connected with the body (Timaeus 86D). This bodily existence, therefore, has a vital and significant bearing upon the spirit. Plato, however, makes no attempt to reconcile this line of thought with his other theories (Zeller, Plato and the Older Academy, pp. 424-425).

<sup>182</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 154.

The following is Plato's detailed description of the afterlife. He provides here for heaven and hell (or their equivalents), rewards and punishments, plus an intermediate state which allows for discipline, penance, and purification. The Phaedo gives a lucid picture of what one may find beyond the grave. Notice certain similarities to the later Christian (Roman Catholic) purgatory.

Now when the dead have come to the place where each is led by his genius, first they are judged and sentenced, as they have lived well and piously, or not. And those who are found to have lived neither well nor ill, go to the Acheron and, embarking upon vessels provided for them, arrive in them at the lake; there they dwell and are purified, and if they have done any wrong they are absolved by paying the penalty for their wrong doings, and for their good deeds they receive rewards, each according to his merits. But those who appear to be incurable, on account of the greatness of their wrong-doings, because they have committed many deeds of sacrilege, or wicked and abominable murders, or any other such crimes, are cast by their fitting destiny into Tartarus, whence they never emerge. Those, however, who are curable, but are found to have committed great sins . . . these must needs be thrown into Tartarus, and when they have been brought by the current to the Acherusian lake, they shout and cry out, calling to those whom they have slain or outraged, begging and beseeching them to be gracious and to let them come out and cease from their ills, but if not, they are borne away again to Tartarus and thence back into the rivers, and this goes on until they prevail upon those whom they have wronged; for this is the penalty imposed upon them by the judges. But those who are found to have excelled in holy living are freed from these regions within the earth and are released as from prisons; they mount upward into their pure abode and dwell upon the earth. And of these, all who have duly purified themselves by philosophy live henceforth altogether without bodies, and pass to still more beautiful abodes which it is not easy to describe, nor have we now time enough.<sup>183</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> 113D-E, 114A-C. Four groups are mentioned here. Those of ordinary <sup>183</sup> Phaedo are not extremely unhappy, but still must undergo a period of purification. The next group, guilty of incurable wickedness, are punished forever. The third group are sinners, but who are still curable and require only remedial punishment. The final group are those remarkable souls who have attained such a state of earthly goodness that they enjoy immediate freedom from the body to travel to surroundings of unutterable beauty. Despite the detail of this account, however, Plato cautions us to remember its provisional nature (Phaedo 114D).

We have noticed that the Jewish writers of the intertestamental period were similarly fascinated by the next life. Although the Jews and the Greeks revealed great interest in the punishment of the wicked, Judeo-Christian thought emphasized the "last things" more strongly. But the greatest differences between the traditions is that, while the future life remained a significant part of Pauline thought, the apostle refrained from detailed and imaginative descriptions of that state. His restraint here is in sharp contrast to the graphic descriptions of many pre-Christian writers.

A brief summary of Plato's contribution to Greek religious thought is in order. He chose not to break completely with the traditional forms of religion even though his speculative theology revealed the inadequacy of earlier beliefs. His real quarrel was not so much with religious teachers as with poets and mythologists who insisted upon "anthropomorphic and immoral representations of things divine."<sup>184</sup> Indeed, he sometimes used traditional religious symbolism while trying to imbue it with a greater spirit and meaning. He refused to accept any fables which implied that God was anything less than goodness and truth. For Plato, the idea of Good was hardly separable from God himself. Plato moved beyond the religious thinking of the past and his own day, insisting that God was not only all-powerful, but perfectly righteous, unable to commit evil.<sup>185</sup> Plato confronted the problem of evil by suggesting

---

<sup>184</sup>Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature, p. 347.

<sup>185</sup>He considered man's supreme duty to "follow God" and to "become immortal." He asserted the unity of all life and denied that there was any permanent gap between the nature of the gods and the nature of man. Furthermore, Plato felt that the soul could retain its divine



that our misfortunes might be divine chastisement intended to make us more righteous.<sup>186</sup>

Plato's special contribution to the doctrines of the soul and its afterlife was his assurance that the soul had a mind; the blessedness of the soul, therefore, depended on its relation to truth and righteousness, both now and hereafter. This is why Plato was so opposed to the ceremonial rites which claimed to purify the soul from sin and appease the offended gods when actually such "cheap redemption" was an affront to the very moral nature of God.<sup>187</sup>

Despite Plato's many positive contributions to Christian theology, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are many elements of Platonism that are basically antagonistic to Christianity. One thinks immediately of the theory concerning the preexistence of the soul which was so central to Plato's arguments for the belief in immortality and which was interwoven with the theory of metempsychosis.<sup>188</sup> Commenting on this, Grote observed that Plato's argument was based on his concept of the Idea of Life which

embraces everything living, and is common to animals (if not to plants) as well as to men; and the metempsychosis--or transition of souls not merely from one human body to another,

---

nature despite its captivity in the prison-house of the body. This view of immortality was a far cry from the earlier Greek concept of mindless shades in an existence only vaguely resembling that on earth (Cornford, *Greek Religious Thought*, p. xxiv).

<sup>186</sup>Campbell, *Religion in Greek Literature*, pp. 347-348.

<sup>187</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 350-351.

<sup>188</sup>*Phaedo* 86 ff., etc.; also 81; *Timaeus* 42, 92 etc.

but also from the human to the animal body, and vice versa, is a portion of the Platonic creed.<sup>189</sup>

Others claim that Plato's salvation was too limited, acting at best only upon half of man, since the Platonic hope concerned immortality for only the intellectual, or philosophical, part of us. When compared to the Christian idea of personal immortality, Plato's view seems simplistic, but the nobility of the doctrine stands out in clear relief from the religious thought of earlier Greece and Aristotle's lack of desire to reassess traditional religion or to defend it against current skepticism.<sup>190</sup>

### The Stoics

Stoicism represents another significant influence upon the development of Christian theology, especially since Tarsus, Paul's home, was a well-known center for this philosophic school.<sup>191</sup> In order to recognize the dimensions of this influence on Paul's later teaching, we must first examine some of the basic tenets of the Stoic philosophy.

---

<sup>189</sup>George Grote, Plato, Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1865), p. 191. In the Phaedo we read that "those who have indulged in gluttony and violence and drunkenness, and have taken no pains to avoid them, are likely to pass into the bodies of asses and other beasts of that sort" (81E). Charles goes so far as to say that Plato's final teaching does not even deal with a human soul, but rather pure intelligence (Charles, Eschatology, p. 155).

<sup>190</sup>Zeller reminds us that Aristotle nowhere asserted belief in personal immortality and that he rejected the idea that the dead can be happy and compared their state to the loss of all sense (E. Zeller, Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), Vol. II, pp. 133-135). Aristotle's position seems to have been one of respectful recognition of religion as a fact and even a certain graciousness to the established cult, but his empirical nature rejected the Platonic religious view totally (Paul Shorey, "Philosophy Greek," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. IX, p. 862).

<sup>191</sup>Gilbert Murray, Stoic, Christian and Humanist (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950), p. 89.

After the death of Zeno (c. 333-c. 261 B.C.), who founded the Stoic school in Athens, his followers became known as Zenonians.<sup>192</sup> This philosophical movement, which eventually adopted the name Stoicism (from the Stoa, or porch, where Zeno delivered his lectures), emerged at a time when the very foundations of Greek life were being shaken.<sup>193</sup> Alexander's victorious armies had helped undermine the concept of the city-state so vital to the Greeks, while skepticism had succeeded in stripping man of any real certainty in life. Men felt abandoned in a world of shifting events and values. Being engaged in "the desperate search for something firm in an agonizing world,"<sup>194</sup> most thinking people were fertile soil for the seeds of Stoicism, as well as those of Epicureanism, which offered a solution of its own to man's dilemma.

Despite their ancient rivalry, the Stoics and the Epicureans did have some striking similarities. They have been called "twin shoots out of the same stem."<sup>195</sup> Both schools, in their separate ways, had the same goal and both emphasized practice over theory.<sup>196</sup> Each school preached peace of mind and complete freedom from all disturbances (both internal and external) as the supreme goal in life. The differences

---

<sup>192</sup>See Diogenes Laertius Lives of Eminent Philosophers VII, Chapter I.

<sup>193</sup>R. D. Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), pp. 3-4.

<sup>194</sup>William Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times, the Way of the Will of God, the Stoics," Expository Times, LXXII (1960-1961), p. 201.

<sup>195</sup>James B. Brown, Stoics and Saints (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1893), p. 29.

<sup>196</sup>Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, p. v.

between these positions derived from two quite opposite views of man: the Stoics tended to regard man as primarily a thinking being, while the Epicureans thought of him as a creature of feeling. The Stoics taught that happiness and virtue consisted in the suppression of all personal feelings and in the subordination of the individual to the laws of the whole. Epicureans, on the other hand, believed that the same goal could be achieved through a serene inner life and by avoiding external influences and disturbances.<sup>197</sup> Both groups sought happiness just as Socrates sought for truth.<sup>198</sup> Epicureans taught that one should improve his ability to enjoy his experiences because life was a garden of delight. This attitude tended to make men withdraw from other people into an enclosed egocentric world. Since Stoicism advocated that a man should be active in life as well as faithful in seeing that his inner self was well-disciplined, the Stoic often possessed a certain dignity that made him more impressive to others than the man determined to make pleasure his supreme goal.<sup>199</sup>

Standing with the Stoics in their opposition to Epicureanism was the older school of the Cynics. Although Stoicism was more humanitarian and less severe than Cynicism, both groups agreed on their longing for simplicity and their contempt for physical pleasures and comforts. Diogenes, "the most famous of all the Cynics," lived a crude and coarse existence, which he called a "dog's life," and rejected all rules,

---

<sup>197</sup>E. Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1880), pp. 21-26.

<sup>198</sup>Brown, Stoics and Saints, p. 29.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-34.

traditions, and customs.<sup>200</sup> Although Zeno chose another course, he sought simplicity and shunned external trappings and involvements as well.<sup>201</sup>

It is interesting that Zeno, who urged all to transcend the flux of their material existence, claimed God, the world, justice, virtue, the soul, and so forth, were all "real" in the sense of their being solid matter. Zeno's followers departed from such uncompromising materialism and claimed that justice was not actually solid matter, but that it had a kind of mutual relation with material objects. It was from Zeno's rigorous concept of materialism, however, that Stoicism began.<sup>202</sup>

Although there was a certain variety in Stoic beliefs, there were some principles that remained unquestioned.<sup>203</sup> For instance, all Stoic teachers seemed to agree that the substance of the soul was imperishable.

---

<sup>200</sup>Gilbert Murray, Five Stages of Greek Religion (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 117-121.

<sup>201</sup>Brown, Stoics and Saints, pp. 29-30. Stoic philosophy falls largely into three main divisions: logic, natural sciences (physics), and ethics (Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Stoics," p. 200). Logic was generally considered of less significance than the other two branches of Stoic thought. Attaching a priority to natural science and ethics is more difficult. At times, ethics appears to be the higher and more important division: philosophy was generally regarded as practical knowledge enabling the individual to lead a virtuous and happy life. At the same time, however, the very destiny of man depended on his being subordinate to the laws of nature, which it behooved all men to know since here the universal laws were set forth which ethics made applicable to man. Although there was never any strict arrangement of these three divisions of philosophy according to their value, both Zeno and Chrysippus began with logic, moved then to physics, and ended with ethics (E. Zeller, Greek Philosophy [London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1886], p. 234; also Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, pp. 66-67.)

<sup>202</sup>Murray, Stoic, Christian, and Humanist, p. 951.

<sup>203</sup>Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, p. 51.

Furthermore, they shared the belief that no individual soul would survive the great conflagration. Finally, they felt that the soul did not necessarily perish upon leaving the body. The soul was a fragment of the Divine clothed with a weak body that was the source of all pain, pleasure, and foolish desires.<sup>204</sup> Generally, the souls of the good were expected to survive until the conflagration, while the souls of the wicked were thought to experience a shorter separate existence.<sup>205</sup> The soul of the universe is what the Stoics call God. God dwelt in the world, not beyond it; he was immanent, not transcendent.<sup>206</sup>

The individual soul, being solid matter, was thought to compose a small part of the universal soul and to enjoy a special relationship to the Divine Being because it possessed reason. This meant, however, that the soul was bound by the Universal Law to move towards a certain inescapable destiny. The Stoics saw the individual as having only one significant choice in his life: whether to be ruled by one's own inner nature or by outside forces. The greatest value was attached to how one responded to this choice. Indeed, only because of this choice could one's actions really be considered his own. Even his judgments were dependent upon it. Still, the individual soul could not act independently of the universal soul nor could it escape its final destiny. Ultimately all would be received back into the divine Being, in whose providential wisdom one

---

<sup>204</sup>W. R. Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity (Liverpool: University Press, 1925), pp. 100-161.

<sup>205</sup>E. V. Arnold, Roman Stoicism (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), p. 263.

<sup>206</sup>Brown, Stoics and Saints, p. 30.

must have faith.<sup>207</sup>

The phrase "personal salvation" had no clear relevance to the Stoic world-view except insofar as it referred to man's ethical behavior while alive on earth. Let us examine the Stoics' idea of salvation first, and then their notion of an afterlife. Stoicism promised salvation through self-realization and self-reliance. The ideal life was one in which the individual's will was brought into harmony with the Supreme Will, thereby making him superior to any obstacles or untoward circumstances. Thus, the individual could gain his freedom by recognizing his place in the scheme of things and by manfully playing his part.<sup>208</sup> Of course, the human will played an important role in this drama, whereas the emotions, which were regarded suspiciously, needed to be strongly disciplined or perhaps, as far as possible, completely eliminated.<sup>209</sup>

The following passage from Cicero describes the Stoics' ideal Wise Man:

. . . how dignified, how lofty, how consistent is the character of the Wise Man. . . . Since reason has proved that moral worth is the sole good, it follows that he must always be happy, and that all those titles which the ignorant are so fond of deriding do in very truth belong to him. For he will have a better claim to the title of King than Tarquin, who could not

---

<sup>207</sup>Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, pp. 216-217. Edwyn Bevan points out that, "Every movement in the world was as much the expression of a Supreme Purpose as the voluntary movements of an animal were of its original purpose. Chance had no place in the close-knit process which might be called Fate or Destiny, but which was really Intelligent Law and all-pervading Providence. It was for the faith in Providence above all else that the Stoic stood in the ancient world" (Stoics and Skeptics [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913], p. 44).

<sup>208</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 28.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

rule either himself or his subjects; . . . a better claim to be called rich than Crassus . . . Rightly will he be said to own all things, who alone knows how to use all things; rightly also will he be styled beautiful, for the beauty of the soul is fairer than those of the body; rightly the one and only free man, as subject to no man's authority, and slave of no appetite; rightly unconquerable, for though his body be thrown into fetters, no bondage can enchain his soul.<sup>210</sup>

Stoicism, therefore, was a rather practical religion which advocated reformation of life and integrity of conduct.<sup>211</sup> The Stoic believed that he could enter into a special relationship with God if he trained and disciplined his will. The true Stoic felt that his heavenly spark, the Divine Element in him, was motive enough for any moral effort.<sup>212</sup> Epictetus reminded those who had forgotten that each man is

. . . a fragment of God; you have within you a part of Him. Why, then, are you ignorant of your own kinship? Why do you not know the source from which you have sprung? Will you not bear in mind, whenever you eat, who you are that eat, and whom you are nourishing? Whenever you indulge in intercourse with women, who you are that do this? Whenever you mix in society, whenever you take physical exercise, whenever you converse, do you not know that you are nourishing God, exercising God? You are bearing God about with you, you poor wretch, and know it not! Do you suppose I am speaking of some external God, made of silver and gold? (No) It is within yourself that you bear Him and do not perceive that you are defiling Him with impure thoughts and filthy actions.<sup>213</sup>

One is immediately struck by the similarity between these words of

---

<sup>210</sup>Cicero De Finibus III. xxii. 75, trans. by H. Rackham, The Loeb Classical Library. (All quotations from De Finibus are from the Rackham translation.)

<sup>211</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, pp. 28-32.

<sup>212</sup>Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, pp. 217, 218, 213.

<sup>213</sup>Epictetus Discourses II. vii. 11-14, trans. by W. A. Oldfather, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (All quotations from Discourses are from the Oldfather translation.)



Epictetus and those of Paul to the church at Corinth: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are."<sup>214</sup>

Since the Stoic saw each thing in the universe as driven by God to its proper destiny, he met the problem of evil by simply denying its existence. Apparent evil would disappear when it was evaluated as part of the total scheme of things. Examples of this reevaluation were the God-sent "evil" intended to spur us on toward better lives, or the physical pain that we overcame, thereby transcending our material existence. There is a story concerning Posidonius, the well-known Stoic during the days of Cicero, who was suffering from a painful disease when one day he received a visit from Pompey. As flashes of pain would rack his body during their conversation he would cry out, "It is no use, pain, for all the distress you cause I shall never admit that you are an evil."<sup>215</sup>

For the Stoic, the significant fact of life was that a person already possessed all that was worthwhile. It became his simply by willing it, an act that depended entirely upon himself. Pain might come as the result of other people or through physical illness, but there was nothing on earth (besides one's self) that could take away man's goodness. No power could make a person good or bad, except himself, and to be good or bad was the only thing that mattered.<sup>216</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup>I Cor. 3:16-17.

<sup>215</sup>Cicero Tusculan Disputations II. 61.

<sup>216</sup>Murray, Stoic, Christian, and Humanist, p. 98.

Those who claimed that pleasure was good were in error. It was conceivable that a king considered it good to feast and make merry in his harem rather than to spend his time at the difficult and trying task of governing his kingdom. He justified his behavior by claiming that pleasure was good, but what would be the judgment of history? Would posterity honor a man because he enjoyed good health or had a merry time while alive? These things would have no lasting value and would soon be forgotten. Since that which would live on after man was his goodness and his virtue, it must be that this, and not pleasure (of any kind), was the highest good.<sup>217</sup>

By "goodness" the Stoics meant that quality by which one performed his function well. When one spoke of a "good father," a "good hammer," or a "good dog," he was saying that each of these performed his function well. How did one know what "well" was? Here again one must look at the word "Nature" which the Stoics understood to be a process of growth which attempted to shape every living thing into a more perfect form. A seed was shaped into a tree, a sightless puppy into a hunting dog, a backward and degenerate people into a civilized and respected society. In every instance, this process was at work in shaping and determining each thing so that it might perform its function. Since this force, which permeated the entire world, made a continuing effort to move things toward ultimate perfection,<sup>218</sup> the chief aim of every life should have been to bring one's will into complete harmony with the law of the universe. Thus, personal desire served the highest good.

---

<sup>217</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-102.

The Stoic's failures to follow his moral regimen were attributed to bad examples, false instruction, and most importantly, and imperfectly disciplined reason that could not perceive the true value of each thing. Unfortunately, "things themselves tell us nothing of their true value."<sup>219</sup> This emphasis on instruction in Stoicism encouraged forgiveness rather than revenge when dealing with unbelievers or backsliders. Marcus Aurelius suggested that "the best way of avenging thyself is not to do likewise"<sup>220</sup>--a concept very much a part of the New Testament. Again he said, "By a rational attitude . . . in thyself evoke a rational attitude in him, enlighten him, admonish him. If he listens thou shalt cure him and have no need of anger."<sup>221</sup> "If a man makes a slip, enlighten him with loving kindness, and show him wherein he hath seen amiss. Failing that, blame thyself or not even thyself."<sup>222</sup> The basis of this emphasis on forgiveness was the Stoic vision of the ultimate unity of all mankind. Seneca stated that we are all of one great body because Nature has made us kin.<sup>223</sup>

The similarity between these teachings and many New Testament concepts is readily apparent. Stoics and Christians alike regarded the virtuous life as one of progress, but also as one of continual struggle

---

<sup>219</sup>Hicks, Stoics and Epicureans, p. 93.

<sup>220</sup>Marcus Aurelius Antonius To Himself VI. 6, trans. by C. R. Haines, The Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid., V. 28.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid., X. 4.

<sup>223</sup>Seneca Epistulae Morales XCV. 52, trans. by R. M. Gummere, The Loeb Classical Library, Vol. III. (Subsequent quotations from Epistulae Morales are from the Gummere translation.)

in which supreme effort and constant vigilance were needed. R. D.

Hicks has rightly observed that the war waged by both the Stoics and the Christians was "against the same enemies, the world of appearances without and the treacherous self within, and with hardly an exception the Apostle's 'works of the flesh' and 'fruits of the spirit' (Gal. 5:19, 22) can be identified with the vices and virtues of the Stoics."<sup>224</sup>

Now let us turn to the Stoics' concept of life after death. Although Stoicism taught immortality of the soul, it never embraced a doctrine of personal and individual immortality. The Stoics were pantheists who conceived of God as a fiery spirit who sends out sparks, or scintillas, from himself to be embodied in human beings. This spark was the life-principle in each man, and, at death, it returned to be reunified with God. This reunification was understood as a reabsorption into the cosmic forces, or perhaps the rational element of the universe. This reascension of the soul was a process that contained no love, nor was it ever compared to a personal identification between lover and beloved.<sup>225</sup> Such a view of the afterlife falls far short of personal immortality; at death, a man's personality dissolved into the Godhead.

At the end of each cosmic period the universal consumption by fire would cause all divine elements to return to the source of their origin. New cycles began as the world and the Deity moved constantly in an eternal circle between formation and destruction of the world. The endlessness of these cycles, as well as the impersonality of the soul's

---

<sup>224</sup>Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, p. 120.

<sup>225</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 32.

salvation, generated a certain pessimism among the Stoics concerning the afterlife.<sup>226</sup>

Nowhere was man's attitude toward death and the next life better reflected than in the epitaphs and inscriptions found on graves. From the tomb of a woman: "Here I lie dead and I am ashes; these ashes are earth. If the earth be a goddess, I too am a goddess and am not dead."<sup>227</sup> A man's tomb passes on this mute testimony of despair: "I was once composed of earth, water and airy breath, but I perished, and here I rest, having rendered all to the All. Such is each man's lot. What of it? There, whence my body came, did it return, when it was dissolved."<sup>228</sup> Even when there seemed to be hope for preservation of the spirit, there is no hope concerning the personality:

The holy spirit which thou didst bear has escaped from the body. That body remains here and is like the earth; the spirit pursues the revolving heavens; the spirit moves all; the spirit is nought else than God.<sup>229</sup>

Festugiere concludes dogmatically that, "Pure Stoic doctrine has no place for hope . . . since all things are settled in advance by immutable decree."<sup>230</sup> In fact this was essentially what distinguished the Christian

---

<sup>226</sup>Andre-Jean Festugiere, Personal Religion Among the Greeks (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), p. 110; also Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 30.

<sup>227</sup>Dessau, Inscr. sel., 8168; Bucheler, carm. epigr., 1532; cf. 974.

<sup>228</sup>Cf. Epictetus, L. C. (References 227 and 228 as quoted in Franz Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922], pp. 15-16).

<sup>229</sup>CIL, XIII, 8371, at Cologne, as quoted in Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, p. 16.

<sup>230</sup>Festugiere, Personal Religion Among the Greeks, p. 110.

from the Stoic. A further, less obvious, distinction between the two was the Stoic's inability to make any real personal contribution to the World Order since it had been predestined from eternity to be just as it was. Since no human effort could bring the slightest change, the Stoic was fundamentally contemplative.<sup>231</sup> This contrasted sharply with the New Testament concept of Christians becoming the very forces that reshape the world.

Chrysippus spoke of a restricted future existence, but it was limited to sages and amounted to a conditional and limited immortality. Panaetius denied that there was a possibility of personal survival.<sup>232</sup> Both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius spoke at times of the possibility of survival, but their favorite theme was the soul's disintegration and return to its original substance.<sup>233</sup> Epictetus, whose views on immortality have been described as "vague and . . . obscure,"<sup>234</sup> wrote:

"But it is now time to die." Why say "die"? Make no tragic parade of the matter, but speak of it as it is: "It is now time for the material of which you are constituted to be restored to those elements from which it came." And what is there terrible about that? What one of the things that make up the universe will be lost, what novel or unreasonable thing will have taken place?<sup>235</sup>

Marcus Aurelius contemplated death in similar terms:

---

<sup>231</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>232</sup>Cicero Tusculan Disputations I. 79.

<sup>233</sup>Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, pp. 13-14.

<sup>234</sup>Brown, Stoics and Saints, p. 44.

<sup>235</sup>Discourses IV. 7. 15-16.

Go out, if to another life, there also thou find gods, who are everywhere. If all life and sense shall cease, then shalt thou cease also to be subject to either pains or pleasures; and to serve and tend this vile cottage.<sup>236</sup>

Even though the purest of souls could expect only a limited span of life following death, yet occasionally one was stirred by this limited concept of immortality and moved to describe its blessings in grand terms.<sup>237</sup>

---

<sup>236</sup>The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius. III. 3, trans. by Meric Casaubon (London: J. M. Dent and Co., n.d.), pp. 19-20.

<sup>237</sup>Zeller, Greek Philosophy, p. 244.

"Our souls will not have reason to rejoice in their lot until, freed from this darkness in which they grope, they have not merely glimpsed the brightness with feeble vision, but have absorbed the full light of day and have been restored to their place in the sky--until, indeed, they have regained the place, which they held at the allotment of their birth. The soul is summoned upwards by its very origin. And it will reach that goal even before it is released from its prison below, as soon as it has cast off sin and, in purity and lightness, has leaped up into celestial realms of thought" (Seneca Epistulae Morales LXXIX. 12).

This "astral immortality" of Stoicism promised freedom from the body which constantly impeded the soul's progress on its journey upwards: "When the day comes to separate the heavenly from its earthly blend, I shall leave the body here where I found it, and shall of my own volition betake myself to the gods. I am not apart from them now, but am merely detained in a heavy and earthly prison. These days of mortal existence are a prelude to the longer and better life. As the womb itself, but for the existence into which we seem to be sent forth . . . just so, throughout the years extending between infancy and old age, we are making ourselves ready for another birth. . . . That day, which you fear as being the end of all things, is the birthday of your eternity . . . you weep and wail; and yet this very weeping happens at birth also; but then it was to be excused; for you came into the world wholly ignorant and inexperienced. . . . But now . . . Why be downcast? . . . when we are born, the afterbirth always perishes. Why love such a thing as if it were your own possession? It was merely your covering" (Ibid., CII. 22-27).

The soul's movement on the journey from the known to the unknown encouraged astrological speculations as to what this journey would be like.

"The soul's homeland is the whole space that encircles the height and breadth of the firmament, the whole rounded dome within which lie land and sea . . . and where all the sentinel stars are taking their turn on duty" (Ibid., CII. 21).

". . . Picture to yourself how great is the glow when all the

Although not all Stoics shared the same vision of the afterlife, at least there was agreement that the soul of the departed would not reside in the depths of the earth. Epictetus reminds us that "There is no Hades nor Acheron, nor Cocytus, nor Pyriphlegethon, but everything is filled with gods and divine powers."<sup>238</sup> (Though, as Cumont suggests, the gods--and perhaps demons--referred to are likely personifications of the forces of nature.) The Stoic emphasis on physics, or natural science, comes into play: if the soul was formed from the two elements of air and fire, then it must naturally rise when the body died rather than descend to the earth's depths. All the former ideas and concepts of Hades were in direct contradiction with this Stoic philosophy. Revising the traditional view of Hades so that it represented little more than departing from life, the Stoics held that the soul of the departed existed for an undetermined period of time in the atmosphere, after which it dissolved into the elements from which it came.<sup>239</sup> In order to be consistent with its physics, Stoicism found no alternative but to deny faith in personal immortality.<sup>240</sup>

Both Stoic and Christian admitted the reality of a divine Providence and realized that salvation involved going beyond one's self, forgetting personal troubles, and finding purpose and meaning in relation to the

---

stars mingle their fires; no shadows will disturb the clear sky. The whole expanse of heaven will shine evenly; for day and night are interchanged only in the lowest atmosphere" (Ibid., CII. 28).

<sup>238</sup>Epictetus Discourses III. xiii. 15-16.

<sup>239</sup>Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, pp. 14-15.

<sup>240</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 30.



Whole. Only when self was removed from the center of the universe, could things be seen and understood in their proper perspective.<sup>241</sup> Although Stoicism held up a lofty ideal to follow, it had the disadvantage of not being able to point to a physical embodiment of the perfection of this ideal.<sup>242</sup> Paul, as we shall see later, gloried in his being able to base his teachings upon the life, death, and resurrection of the historical Jesus. Despite this limitation and the lack of a vision of personal immortality, Stoicism did much to prepare the Graeco-Roman world for Christianity.<sup>243</sup> Certainly the Stoics were intent upon the moral improvement of mankind: they instilled in men a desire for social progress while never compromising the rigid demands of an ideal morality.<sup>244</sup> At this point their contribution was not insignificant.

### Epicureans

Epicurus and his followers preached a doctrine that stands in sharp contrast to the Christian concept of life everlasting.

Epicurus was born on the island of Samos in 341 B.C. and came to Athens at the age of eighteen.<sup>245</sup> It was there that he bought the

<sup>241</sup> Festugiere, Personal Religion among the Greeks, pp. 108-109.

<sup>242</sup> Angus, The Religious Quest of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 30.

<sup>243</sup> "Of all the ancient faiths none rose higher than Stoicism in its dream and practice, and of them all none was a greater preparation for Christianity than Stoicism" (Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought," p. 294).

<sup>244</sup> Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, pp. 68-89.

<sup>245</sup> Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 1. 14. His family, writes Wallace, "was not in a brilliant position" either socially or financially (William Wallace, Epicureanism [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1902], p. 24). As a boy he earned a small

house with the garden that was to become famous.<sup>246</sup> Here for the following thirty-six years he lived, "more as the father of a family than the head of a school."<sup>247</sup> Friends from all distances came to live with him in his garden.<sup>248</sup>

---

wage for helping his schoolteacher father and also is reported to have gone from house to house reading charms and assisting his mother who was something of a sorceress (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 4). His early formal education seems to have been scanty (Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, pp. 404-405), although some say that he actually began to study philosophy at twelve years of age (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 14). He himself tells of turning to philosophy in disgust because the schoolmasters could not tell him the meaning of "chaos" in Hesiod (Ibid., X. 2). These are the beginnings of one who was to later found his own school in Athens after having first lived, taught, and attracted disciples in Asia Minor (William Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times, the Way of Tranquillity, the Epicureans," Expository Times, LXXII [1960-1961], pp. 79-80; Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, pp. 406-407; Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 2).

<sup>246</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 10.

<sup>247</sup>Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 80.

<sup>248</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 10. It is not without significance that of all the ancient schools of philosophy only the Epicureans are known by the name of their founder. Wallace reminds us that the school of Plato was known as the Academic; the school of Aristotle known as the Peripatetic; the school of Zeno known as the Stoics, but the school of Epicurus was known as the Epicurean (Wallace, Epicureanism, p. 1). Many outside Epicurus's following recognized the deep friendship and unusual affection that held the group together. There was never a more united school (R. D. Hicks, "Epicureans," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p. 325). These appealing qualities were said to be the result, not so much of Epicurus's teachings, but of his exemplary life and conduct (Cicero De Finibus I. xx. 65).

Experiencing ill health all his life (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 7), Epicurus died in 270 B.C. at the age of seventy-two (Ibid., X. 15-16; also Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, p. 407). Neither pain nor death brought complaint from him and even in the last hours of his life his thoughts were for others. When the end was near he wrote the following letter to his friend, Idomeneus:

"On this blissful day, which is also the last of my life, I write this to you. My continual sufferings from strangury and dysentery are so great that nothing could augment them; but over against them all I set gladness of mind at the remembrance of our past conversations. But I would have you, as becomes your lifelong attitude to me and to

A well-known disciple of the Epicurean school was T. Lucretius Carus (99-55 B.C.), a Roman poet who accepted the philosophy of Epicurus and attempted to convert others to this philosophy largely through his "De Rerum Natura."<sup>249</sup> In advocating Epicurus' "austere hedonism," Lucretius assailed traditional religious beliefs with a zeal that in itself was religious.<sup>250</sup> Lucretius preached the negation of immortality with all the fervor with which the Christian teacher preaches the immortal hope. At times this disciple seemed to outdo Epicurus himself in heaping abuse upon religion and attempting to destroy belief in immortality. The teachings of Lucretius, together with those of his master, are the central documents in the Epicurean tradition.

Epicurus insisted that the chief aim of philosophy was to secure happiness. Anything which did not contribute to the attainment of this goal was not worthwhile.<sup>251</sup> In commenting on this philosophy Cicero stated: "You are pleased to think him [Epicurus] uneducated. The reason is that he refused to consider any education worth the name that did not help to school us in happiness."<sup>252</sup> This "onesided practical view of philosophy" was carried to its extreme by the Epicureans,<sup>253</sup> who taught

---

philosophy, watch over the children of Metrodorus" (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 22). In his will he gave his slaves their freedom (Ibid., X. 21).

<sup>249</sup>R. D. Hicks, "Lucretius," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VIII, p. 190.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>251</sup>Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, p. 163; Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 80.

<sup>252</sup>Cicero De Finibus I. xxi. 71.

<sup>253</sup>Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, pp. 423-424.

that all mathematics,<sup>254</sup> technical knowledge, logic, definitions,<sup>255</sup> and all that was called culture<sup>256</sup> were worthless because they contributed nothing to human happiness.<sup>257</sup> Necessary to attain happiness, however, was the study of nature because a knowledge of natural causes helped free the soul from superstition.<sup>258</sup>

. . . we must attend to present feelings and sense perceptions, whether those of mankind in general or those peculiar to the individual, and also attend to all the clear evidence available, as given by each of the standards of truth. For by studying them we shall rightly trace to its cause and banish the source of disturbance and dread, accounting for celestial phenomena and for all other things which from time to time befall us and cause the utmost alarm to the rest of mankind.<sup>259</sup>

Since Epicureans realized that "disturbance and dread" had to be banished to attain inner serenity, Epicurus set out upon the task of giving an account of the universe which would eliminate these "foes of tranquility." The result of this speculation and research was his

---

<sup>254</sup>Cicero De Finibus I. vi. 20.

<sup>255</sup>Ibid., I. vii. 22.

<sup>256</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 6.

<sup>257</sup>Because he questioned the value of traditional culture and learning (Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 81), Epicurus welcomed to his school those who "never read a word of Homer and did not know whether Hector was a Trojan or a Greek" (Fragment 24, quoted from Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, p. 163). Robin writes that the Epicurean society welcomed "anyone who wishes to find his salvation in the new faith, without distinction of culture, race, or condition" (Leon Robin, Greek Thought [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., 1928], p. 324). This was quite a different attitude from Plato who inscribed over the portals of his Academy, "Let no one enter here who is ignorant of geometry" (Hicks, Stoic and Epicurean, p. 161).

<sup>258</sup>Zeller, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics, p. 423.

<sup>259</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 82: also X. 88 ff.

well-known atomic theory, elaborated by Lucretius.

Epicurus taught that this world consisted of only two realities--bodies and space. Multiple divisions of these bodies would ultimately reveal atoms which would be solid, unchangeable, and incapable of being dissolved.<sup>260</sup> These atoms would have shape, weight, and size, but not the qualities of smell and color.<sup>261</sup> There were, however, many different shapes and sizes.<sup>262</sup> In the beginning, when these atoms were falling through space, some had swerved a little from their courses and collided into others.<sup>263</sup> These swerves were particularly important because they were the basis of free will in living beings.<sup>264</sup> As a result of these atoms colliding and rebounding (at various distances), oscillating masses were formed which entangled other atoms which eventually coalesced into all the various things of the universe.<sup>265</sup>

Believing that all things were made of atoms, the Epicureans found the soul to be no exception.<sup>266</sup> The soul consisted of very light-weight and easily-moved atoms, as was demonstrated by its instant dissolution at death. Furthermore, a dead, soulless body weighed the same as

---

<sup>260</sup>Ibid., X. 41.

<sup>261</sup>Ibid., X. 54.

<sup>262</sup>Ibid., X. 42.

<sup>263</sup>Lucretius De Rerum Natura II. 216-224.

<sup>264</sup>Ibid., II. 251ff.

<sup>265</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 43-44.

<sup>266</sup>Ibid., X. 63.

a living body.<sup>267</sup> The individual soul, which was formed by the intermingling of the soul-atoms of both parents, was composed of breath, heat, air, and a fourth substance which was nameless.<sup>268</sup> The character of each person was determined by the predominance of one of these four elements.<sup>269</sup> Although the soul was spread throughout the entire body,<sup>270</sup> the rational part (mental activity, sensation, and perception) resided in the breast.<sup>271</sup> The rest of the spirit, which obeyed the will, was dispersed throughout the entire body.<sup>272</sup>

This scheme served very well the Epicureans' goals of demonstrating the soul's mortality and liberating man from his fear of the gods and death. At death the indestructable soul-atoms were released from the body and dispersed into the air.<sup>273</sup> In a long, detailed discourse Lucretius attempted to establish beyond doubt that the soul was mortal.<sup>274</sup> Epicurus wrote:

---

<sup>267</sup>Lucretius De Rerum Natura III. 177.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid., III. 231.

<sup>269</sup>Ibid., III. 258 ff.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., III. 216.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., III. 136.

<sup>272</sup>Ibid., III. 145.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid., III. 417-445.

<sup>274</sup>Ibid., III. 417-829. Lucretius concludes by saying, "Therefore death is nothing to us, it matters not one jot, since the nature of the mind is understood to be mortal" (III. 830). Just as we felt nothing before birth we will feel nothing after death and "we may be sure that there is nothing to be feared after death, that he who is not cannot be miserable, that it makes not one jot of difference whether he has ever been born at any time before, when death the immortal has taken away his mortal life" (III. 866-869).

Accustom yourself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply sentience, and death is the privation of all sentience; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality. For life has no terrors for him who has thoroughly apprehended that there are no terrors for him in ceasing to live. . . . Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not.<sup>275</sup>

Death is nothing to us; for the body, when it has been resolved into its elements, has no feeling, and that which has no feeling is nothing to us.<sup>276</sup>

With this attitude toward death, Epicurus encouraged his followers to live and to die well.

I have anticipated thee, Fortune, and entrenched myself against all thy attacks. We will not give ourselves up as captives to thee or to any other circumstance; but when it is time for us to go, spitting contempt on life and on those who vainly cling to it, we will leave life crying aloud in a glorious triumph song that we have lived well.<sup>277</sup>

Here then was Epicurus's attempt to banish once and for all the fear of death, which, he showed, was completely ungrounded in reason and appealed only to the superstitious and the ill-advised. "The wise man

<sup>275</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 124-125.

<sup>276</sup>Ibid., X. 139. Even the Epicurean theory of perception reveals a root assumption that bodily reality is the only reality (Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 104). Epicurus believed that all knowledge can be traced back to actual sensations, and that every sensation has a real external object with which it is identified (A. E. Taylor, Epicurus [London: Constable and Company, 1911], p. 43). Lucretius goes to great length to explain how all bodies are continuously throwing off very fine particles or images which fly through the air at incredible speed lodging themselves in our eyes, thereby causing us to see. Other similar images acting in like manner explain how we hear and smell (Lucretius De Rerum Natura IV. 26ff.; see also Epicurus's virtually identical description in Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 46, 48).

<sup>277</sup>Epicurus Fragments XLVII, trans. by Cyril Bailey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 113; see also Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 103.

does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no offense to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil."<sup>278</sup> Since the world and soul alike were simply a conglomeration of atoms, death brought only disintegration and a return to nothingness.<sup>279</sup> From atoms one came and back to them one should return. There was no hope, but neither should there be fear.

Epicureans believed that man should not only be liberated from the fear of death, but from fear of the gods as well. Lucretius accused religion of causing the greatest evils and gave Epicurus credit for having destroyed religion.

When man's life lay for all to see foully grovelling upon the ground, crushed beneath the weight of Religion, which displayed her head in the regions of heaven, threatening mortals from on high with horrible aspect, a man from Greece was the first that dared to uplift mortal eyes against her, the first to make a stand against her . . . . Wherefore Religion is now in her turn cast down and trampled underfoot, whilst we by the victory are exalted high as heaven.<sup>280</sup>

It is not difficult to see why Epicurus and his followers were often denounced as atheists.<sup>281</sup> But was such an accusation entirely true?

. . . if it means that they denied the existence of gods from whom we have anything to hope or fear, gods who can be objects of our love or can help humanity in its hour of need. [Bat]

---

<sup>278</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 126.

<sup>279</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 358.

<sup>280</sup>Lucretius De Rerum Natura I. 62-77, trans. by W. H. D. Rouse, The Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>281</sup>Lucian Alexander, the False Prophet, trans. by A. M. Harmon, vol. 4; 8 volumes, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, MCMXXV), pp. 174-253.



they admit the existence of gods in the sense of superhuman beings who lead a life of unending blessed calm.<sup>282</sup>

Thus Epicurus did not deny the existence of the gods, but he did deny popular conceptions about them. In a letter to Menoeceus, he wrote:

For verily there are gods, and the knowledge of them is manifest; but they are not such as the multitude believe, seeing that man do not steadfastly maintain the notion they form respecting them. Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them is truly impious. For the utterances of the multitude about the gods are not true preconceptions, but false assumptions. . . .<sup>283</sup>

The Epicureans perceived of gods having human shape,<sup>284</sup> but a form only resembling bodily substance.<sup>285</sup> They supposedly lived beyond the visible universe and were both immortal and blessed;<sup>286</sup> they were completely untroubled themselves and brought no trouble to others;<sup>287</sup> and they were to be worshipped, but not feared.<sup>288</sup> Since these gods were uninterested in man's troubles and incapable of affecting his life, man was not likely to turn to them in time of need. Although the gods of Epicurus have been called the embodiment of the ideal "wise man,"<sup>289</sup> they were so far removed from affecting the human situation that it is

<sup>282</sup>Taylor, Epicurus, p. 76.

<sup>283</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 123-124.

<sup>284</sup>Cicero De Natura I. xviii. 46.

<sup>285</sup>Ibid., I. viii. 49.

<sup>286</sup>Lucretius De Rerum Natura V. 146-150; Cicero De Natura I. xvii. 45.

<sup>287</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 139.

<sup>288</sup>Cicero De Natura I. xvii. 45.

<sup>289</sup>Taylor, Epicurus, p. 79.

little wonder the Epicureans gained the reputation of atheism.

Finally we should take a closer look at what Epicurus meant by "pleasure," the key word in understanding the Epicurean concept of a blessed life. Epicurus boasted that others invited men to a laborious round of virtues, which might or might not profit them, but he invited them to continuous pleasure. Naturally such teaching incited criticism, but the doctrine remained steadfast.<sup>290</sup> The motto carved in Epicurus's garden read: "Stranger, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure."<sup>291</sup> He taught that

Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing.<sup>292</sup>

Furthermore bodily pleasure must be regarded as just as essential for complete happiness as mental pleasure.

Although it is not difficult to see why Epicurus was sometimes accused of being a hedonist, he did not think of pleasure in terms of merry-making and sensuality. He defended himself against his critics:

When we say . . . that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some through ignorance, prejudice, or willful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is not an unbroken succession of drinking bouts and of revelry, not sexual love, not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the

---

<sup>290</sup>Plutarch, "Against Colotes the Epicurean," in Morals, trans. by William Goodwin (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1870), p. 377.

<sup>291</sup>Seneca Epistulae Morales XXI. 10.

<sup>292</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 129.

greatest tumults take possession of the soul.<sup>293</sup>

One's aim in life therefore was to become completely independent of all outward circumstances. In this respect Epicureanism has much in common with Stoicism and Christianity. Epicurus counseled:

"If you wish . . . to make Pythocles rich, do not add to his store of money, but subtract from his desires. . . . If you wish to make Pythocles honorable, do not add to his honors, but subtract from his desires; if you wish Pythocles to have pleasure for ever, do not add to his pleasure, but subtract from his desires; . . . "<sup>294</sup>

Far from being sensual and hedonistic, then, Epicureanism encouraged sobriety. Even during Epicurus's lifetime his following was considerable

<sup>293</sup>Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 131-132. Taylor mentions three significant points which help clarify Epicurus's view of pleasure. First, the end result of individual action is not the pleasure of the moment, but a permanent lifelong condition of serene happiness. This is a "long range" view of happiness where thought is taken for the morrow. Secondly, pleasures do not have to be movements from one condition to another. This means that mere freedom from pain is not the highest attainable good (as some understand), for freedom from mental unrest and freedom from pain are both pleasures of repose and to be desired alike. Thirdly, Epicurus gives preference to pleasures of the mind over pleasures of the body (Taylor, Epicurus, pp. 85-86).

<sup>294</sup>Seneca Epistulae Morales XXI. 7-8. Consider some of the practical implications of this view. For instance, the wise man will not fall in love because he will likely be the worse for it (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 118). Wealth is not necessary, nor should it be sought after, because the simple life is best (Ibid., X. 11). Friendship is "prompted by our own needs" (Ibid., X. 120) and therefore only another product of our own selfishness; indeed, self-love is perceived as the "mother of all virtues" (Hicks, "Epicureans," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V, p. 330). Furthermore, Epicurus urges withdrawal from public life in an effort to eliminate every disturbance to the soul (Diogenes Lives of Eminent Philosophers X. 10). Although this approach to life is not entirely without merit, it obviously tends to make one self-centered. It seeks to impose rational law on the flesh in an attempt to become completely free from the "net of circumstances" which surrounds us on every side (Robin, Greek Thought, p. 339).

and after his death the Epicurean school lasted for centuries.<sup>295</sup> Eventually, however, it died out: ". . . it perished, for men would not buy happiness and peace at the price of the death of the soul, the banishment of God, and the erection of prudent selfishness into the mainspring of life."<sup>296</sup> Yet this school continued to exert influence during the time of Paul and contributed much to the widespread contemporary skepticism of that period regarding man's final destiny.

### The Mystery Religions

We turn now to the Mystery Religions, which were especially influential among those who had remained untouched by earlier philosophical arguments concerning man's final destiny. It was in this area--regarding man's belief in the after life--that the mystery cults were to make one of their most significant contributions. In seeking to evaluate the extent of this influence upon the Christian faith and especially upon Pauline Christianity we shall now consider the most important groups among those cults that came to be known as Mystery Religions. First, we will examine the general characteristics and purposes of these cults. Secondly, we will note some of their rituals and ceremonies, and then consider their influence on the pre-Christian world. Since the Mystery Religions were a familiar part of the ancient Mediterranean world for more than a thousand years, they left upon the Christian Church an indelible imprint which remains even to this day. Covering a wide range

---

<sup>295</sup>Robin, Greek Thought, p. 325; Wallace, Epicureanism, p. 245.

<sup>296</sup>Barclay, "Hellenistic Thought . . . the Epicureans," p. 149.

of the religious spectrum, most of the Mysteries were of Oriental origin and all were infused with the Oriental spirit.<sup>297</sup>

Syncretism was so characteristic of all Hellenistic religions that their origins and demises are frequently obscure. This sprawling group of related practices and beliefs led F. C. Grant to make the following observation concerning religions of the Hellenistic Age.<sup>298</sup> They resembled, he said,

a large lake with many tributaries, uniting their waters into one; or . . . like a chain of lakes with many tributaries, for the old cults, the ancient deities, the primitive hero gods, the traditional beliefs and aspirations still survived and, while making their contribution to the common religious life, retained much of their old identity and many of their ancient peculiarities.<sup>299</sup>

One sees immediately the problem this creates in trying to draw sharp lines of division between various groups. Religious beliefs, as well as the religious bodies themselves, were often so interrelated that they could never be disentangled again.

There are other reasons why it is difficult to reconstruct a clear picture of the Mystery Religions. The foremost barrier is the veil of secrecy that all of these cults threw over their inner workings.

---

<sup>297</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. vii.

<sup>298</sup>The Hellenistic Age is usually considered as the period beginning with Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire in 331 B.C. and extending to the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C. Grant, however, uses the term "Hellenistic" to include the Hellenistic-Roman period as well, for it was Hellenistic culture, science, and religion which made possible the claim that "captive Greece captivated her conqueror" (F. C. Grant, Hellenistic Religions [New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1953], pp. xii-xiii).

<sup>299</sup>Ibid., p. xiii.

Initiates were allowed to discuss certain religious teachings and views in an attempt to win converts, but disclosing the details of initiation, ritual, and symbolism was strictly forbidden. The penalty for even accidentally revealing such information was immediate death without mercy.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, only a few documents about these cults are extant. The credibility of some of the available material is questionable because authors were writing either as apologists or polemicists.<sup>301</sup>

A Mystery may be thought of as a rite which is kept secret from all except the initiated. Generally speaking, these rites may be divided into four stages: preliminary purification, the communication of mystical knowledge to the initiate, the revelation of holy things, and the crowning of the initiate as a privileged person.<sup>302</sup> For the sake of analysis, others divide Mystery Religions into three different parts: first, preparation and purification have to do with candidacy for membership; secondly, sacrifices and communion include the initiate's reception into the religious brotherhood; thirdly, blessedness and salvation refer to the newly acquired privileges and blessings.<sup>303</sup>

A Mystery Religion was basically a religion of redemption.<sup>304</sup>

---

<sup>300</sup>G. H. Pember, The Church, the Churches and the Mysteries (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 394; also Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 39-40.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>302</sup>Furthermore, most Mysteries included a form of dancing. Since it is believed that the most significant revelation of the ceremony was centered around something done rather than something spoken, it is often concluded that some kind of pagan drama was enacted.

<sup>303</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 76.

<sup>304</sup>Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, p. 188.

It attempted to bring man and God together by means of purification and forgiveness of sins. It furnished the media by which man could travel to a new life and find there confidence and victory.<sup>305</sup> Since the Mystery gods were basically savior-gods, it seemed only natural for them to offer to the initiated salvation and deliverance which included not only the promise of life beyond the grave, but freedom from misfortunes in the present life as well.<sup>306</sup> Nevertheless, redemption in the Mysteries lacked the ethical and moral quality that the Christian faith stressed as being a necessary part of the salvation act.<sup>307</sup>

Cheetham reminds us that the Greek word ~~μυστήριον~~ did not necessarily imply, as it might today, something obscure or difficult to understand. Instead, it referred to something which could not be apprehended by the ordinary processes of reason and experience; indeed, it was not obtainable at all without being specifically given by someone already in

---

<sup>305</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 50.

<sup>306</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-139.

<sup>307</sup>This seems to be true, although differences of opinion prevail; see William R. Inge, Christian Mysticism (London: Methuen and Company, 1899), p. 351. Some adopt a middle-of-the-road position in admitting that the Mysteries were a combination of both higher and lower elements, therefore recognizing that their positive contribution would vary considerably (Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 245). Although initiates may have been assured of a better life here and promised immortality beyond the grave, Gardner states that "we have no reason to think that those who claimed salvation through Isis or Mithra were much better than their neighbors" (Percy Gardner, The Religious Experience of St. Paul [London: Williams and Norgate, 1911], p. 87). Kennedy admits that there is some evidence of moral influence upon the initiate, but sees no necessary connection between the mystical experience of the Mystery Religions and a higher code of behavior (H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913], p. 219).

possession of it.<sup>308</sup> It might be thought of as a purification that enables one to participate in and to come into direct contact with holy things.<sup>309</sup>

These various groups attempted to satisfy man's need for religious emotion. They provided a sense of security and brotherhood, and helped expel the fear of death by providing hope for a better life in the world beyond.<sup>310</sup> Many factors contributed to the success of oriental religions in the Graeco-Roman world. Their message, for instance, dealt primarily with the individual's relation to God and was free from political, social and racial restrictions. Impressive rites and ceremonies gave a sense of dignity to the worshipper, and the religious pageantry, which was steeped in excitement, met a certain emotional need as well. In spite of obvious weaknesses these Mysteries did attempt to answer perplexing questions about man, his destiny, and the universe which held a certain appeal to the ordinary person. Promises of personal immortality by the oriental mysteries were in sharp contrast to the uncertainty and skepticism of many philosophers concerning man's destiny in the next life. Neither did the "atom theory" of Epicurus nor the Stoics' search for perfect virtue offer man any real hope in the world beyond.<sup>311</sup>

---

<sup>308</sup>S. Cheetham, The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian (London: Macmillan and Co., 1897), pp. 40-41.

<sup>309</sup>John Glasse, The Mysteries and Christianity (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1921), p. 18.

<sup>310</sup>Cheetham, The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian, p. 40.

<sup>311</sup>Cumont mentions that "in place of the shifting and contradictory opinions of philosophers concerning the fate of man after death, these religions offered a certainty based on a divine revelation and



The Mysteries soon became something of an international religion. Those who did not associate themselves with such a group were looked on with suspicion.<sup>312</sup> Men, women, and children (though not infants), and even slaves were admitted as initiates.<sup>313</sup> The Mysteries, therefore, became the first religion to remove all social and national barriers restricting their faith.<sup>314</sup> One thinks immediately of Paul's statement: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one . . ." (Gal. 3:28).

The Mysteries stressed the rites of initiation, rites of communion, and the nature of the afterlife, all of which had become prominent concerns of Christianity by the end of the first century. Initiates were promised happiness both in this life and in the life to come. Furthermore, these religions were active in proselytizing and competing with one another in offering man a better way of life.<sup>315</sup>

The Mysteries believed that each process of nature was endowed with its own particular deity. It was in the worship of these deities,

---

corroborated by the belief of countless generations which had clung to it. The despairing world eagerly welcomed these promises, and philosophy, undergoing a transformation, joined with the ancient beliefs of the East to give the Empire a new eschatology" (Franz Cumont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912], pp. 172-173).

<sup>312</sup>Pember, The Church, the Churches and the Mysteries, p. 394.

<sup>313</sup>Ibid., pp. 394-395; also E. Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church (London: Williams and Norgate, 1890), p. 285.

<sup>314</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 79.

<sup>315</sup>Percy Gardner, "Mysteries," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. IX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), p. 81; Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, p. 246.

who supposedly governed life through a process of growth and decay, that answers were sought concerning the destiny of one's soul. Man's life, similar to plant and animal life, went through particular stages. As the seasons of the year changed, so man's life was in a constant state of change. This natural cycle of nature was personified in the myth of goddesses, Demeter and Persephone, who had certain attributes of the "corn-spirits."<sup>316</sup> Although the terms "earth-mother" and "corn-mother" sum up most of the cult of Demeter, her function and influence included more than the cornfield.<sup>317</sup> The goodness of Demeter was contrasted with the awful character of Persephone, her constant companion. In earlier times they were both believed to be queens of the lower world ruling over the shades.<sup>318</sup>

We do not have to examine many of these Mystery ceremonies before we are struck by their resemblance to Pauline and other New Testament teachings regarding immortality and the after life. But the various beliefs of the Mystery cults were translated into rites that were barbarically crude as well as those more sophisticated, spiritualized, and intellectual. Often, a mixture of both was found in the same cult; for instance, since communion with a deity was thought to be gained by actually partaking of the deity himself, a bull, representing the mystic deity of Dionysus-Zagreus, would be mutilated and eaten so that his life

<sup>316</sup>Cheetham, *The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian*, p. 47.

<sup>317</sup>L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 30.

<sup>318</sup>Cheetham, *The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian*, pp. 45-47.

would pass into the initiates. Rohde spoke of them seizing the bleeding flesh and devouring it raw.<sup>319</sup> Votaries of Dionysus and the Great Mother, on the other hand, sought through wild ecstasy to release the soul from the body so that it might be united with the gods. The liturgy of Mithra offered similar union with the deities, but through a process slightly more "spiritual" and less frenzied than some others. Nevertheless, the initiate was still required to perform the ritual of repeating prescribed words to produce the desired effect.<sup>320</sup>

The myth of Attis gave rise to a dramatic ritual that was held each spring in connection with the Great Mother festival.<sup>321</sup> First, a pine tree was cut down to represent the tree under which the unfaithful Attis had killed himself. A period of mourning and abstinence began when the "sacred" pine tree was bound like a corpse, covered with flowers and religious symbols, and carried into the sanctuary. Then came the "Day of Blood" when the tree was buried while frenzied dancers cut themselves and threw blood upon the altar. Finally came the "Resurrection of Attis" as the grave was opened and the priest touched the lips of the worshippers with holy oil, saying, "Be of good cheer, initiates, the god has been saved: thus for you also shall there be salvation from your troubles." At this point everyone burst forth excitedly, producing something of a carnival atmosphere which lasted for some time.<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>319</sup>Rohde, Psyche, p. 257.

<sup>320</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, pp. 199-203.

<sup>321</sup>Grant, Hellenistic Religions, p. 146.

<sup>322</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, pp. 90-93; also Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 60; and Franz Cumont,

Putting holy oil on the lips of initiates in this rite may have symbolized the gift of immortality just like putting honey on the tongues of votaries in the mysteries of Mithra.<sup>323</sup> At any rate, similar ritual and symbolism is to be found in almost all of the Mysteries.<sup>324</sup> These symbolic acts grow out of man's universal longing for a better life here and his hope of one beyond the grave.

Sacrifices were an integral part of the Mystery cults, which seemed convinced that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." The prescribed manner of offering sacrifices varied with each Mystery, but general practice indicated that one sacrifice was made for the entire community of worshippers and another was offered on behalf of oneself.<sup>325</sup> The most impressive sacrament of the Mysteries, known as the taurobolium, or bath in bull's blood,<sup>326</sup> became a highly significant rite in the worship of the Great Mother.<sup>327</sup> A trench was dug and a wooden platform built overhead with space left between the planks. As the sacrificial bull was killed on the platform, the blood dripped and ran freely upon the initiate in the trench below. His head and garments became covered with blood. After this he turned to stand with face

---

The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (New York: Dover Publications, 1911), pp. 56-57.

<sup>323</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 92.

<sup>324</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 60-61.

<sup>325</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>326</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>327</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 94.

upwards letting the blood run onto his lips, ears, eyes, nose, and tongue. As a final act, he sacramentally took a drink of the blood and came forth, still dripping in blood, to those waiting to receive him. He was then believed to be cleansed from sin and born anew into eternity. Despite this crude, pagan ritual, it is not difficult to see here a concept of redemptive sacrifice much like that in Christ's crucifixion. Of this sacrament we see that "however crude (the) rite may have been in its inception, it was, in its later phases, used of God to give men peace in this life and hope beyond the grave."<sup>328</sup>

Apart from the purification rites and ceremonies, a period of three months had to elapse between one's initiation into the lesser Mysteries at Athens and the complete initiation at Eleusis.<sup>329</sup> It was here, perhaps to a more significant degree than anywhere else, that the doctrine of a future life was taught and men were promised hope in the world beyond.<sup>330</sup> The Eleusinian cult, which became associated with the worship of Dionysus, is said to have "outshone all those of Greece in importance and splendour."<sup>331</sup> It is possible that Egyptian thought dominated this mystery cult to a significant degree because both shared an emphasis on the afterlife and a similar ideology.<sup>332</sup> Everything

---

<sup>328</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 94-95.

<sup>329</sup>Campbell, Religion in Greek Literature, pp. 255-256; Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 83.

<sup>330</sup>Percy Gardner, New Chapters in Greek History (London: John Murray, 1892), p. 401.

<sup>331</sup>Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>332</sup>Glasse, The Mysteries and Christianity, p. 23; Campbell claims one cannot be sure of direct Egyptian influence, except perhaps to a small degree (Religion in Greek Literature, pp. 255-258).

possible was done to insure the safe passage of one from this life to the land of the blest.

As with other Mysteries, those at Eleusis seemed to be more interested in creating strong impressions upon the initiates than in teaching a particular dogma. The mystic play (or passion play) was the media through which these "strong impressions" were conveyed. Instead of teaching dogma, the members enacted a divine drama of human life,<sup>333</sup> which was supposed to move the emotions to create mystical sensations that would suggest the experience and excitement of a new life. This is further evidence that the Mysteries appealed to one's imagination and sensation rather than the intellect.<sup>334</sup> In Eleusis, for example, the initiates would stand outside the temple in darkness and silence. Suddenly the doors were flung open and the drama of Demeter and Kore was under way in a flood of light. The loss of the daughter, searchings of the mother, and the birth of a child were symbolic of nature as earth passed through the cycles of summer, winter, and spring. Winter brought death to plant life and only with the coming of spring was there new life. Each winter earth looked for her lost child and each spring her hopes were fulfilled. In other words, death would give way to life and for those who had been ceremonially cleansed and duly initiated there would then be new and divine life. Death no longer was to be feared, since this new life

---

<sup>333</sup>Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church, p. 289.

<sup>334</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 58-59.

continued beyond the grave.<sup>335</sup>

Plutarch commented upon the likeness of the initiation ceremony to the experience of death since both had similar effects upon the soul:

Death and initiation closely correspond, word to word, and thing to thing. At first there are wanderings and laborious circuits, and journeyings through the dark, full of misgivings, where there is no consummation; then, before the very end, come terrors of every kind, shivers and trembling, and sweat, and amazement. After this, a wonderful light meets the wanderer; he is admitted into pure meadow-lands, where are voices, and dances, and the majesty of holy sounds and sacred visions. Here the newly initiate, all rites completed, is at large;<sup>336</sup>

The worship of Dionysus<sup>337</sup> probably provided the initial momentum to the belief in the immortality of the soul.<sup>338</sup> Followers of Dionysus would drink consecrated wine at feasts to produce joyous effects similar

---

<sup>335</sup>Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church, pp. 288-289.

<sup>336</sup>Plutarchus Selected Essays of Plutarch 2, trans. by A. O. Prickard, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913-1918), pp. 215-216. This passage is a fragment from a "Dialogue on the Soul."

<sup>337</sup>Dionysus, the tree god, was actually the god of vegetation in general (Farnell, Cults of the Greek States, Vol. V, p. 240). He came to be thought of as a "high personal god . . . a personal creator who gives his life to things" (Ibid., p. 121). Guthrie states that the "greatest gift of Dionysus was the sense of utter freedom, and in Greece it was the women, with their normally confined and straitened lives, to whom the temptation of release made the strongest appeal" (W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greeks and Their Gods [London: Methuen and Company, 1950], p. 148).

<sup>338</sup>Rohde, Psyche, p. 255. Rohde mentions that the very object of this cult "was to exalt its worshippers to a state of 'ekstasis' in which their 'souls' should be forcibly delivered from the normal circle of their human and circumscribed being, and raised as pure spirits to communion with the god and his company of spirits" (Rohde, Psyche, p. 264). Similarly, Cheetham adds that the aim of these initiations was "to procure for the soul entrance into everlasting bliss, to prevent it from re-entering into the never-ending series of forms of earthly life to which it might otherwise be destined" (Cheetham, The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian, p. 49).

to what would be experienced upon entering the Elysian Fields.<sup>339</sup> Such an experience underscored the belief that there was a second self which was completely separate and distinct from the body. This spiritual and divine being, which lived invisibly within man, upon death would be released from the body to enjoy its eternity just as, for a few fleeting moments in ecstasy, it had enjoyed itself here.<sup>340</sup>

In spite of its "invisible appearance" the Mysteries did not think of the soul as being entirely immaterial. Although its nature was light, it could become weighted down and soiled by sin. It was for this reason that rites of purification and cleansing were especially important to the members of a Mystery cult.<sup>341</sup> Baptism usually meant the initiate had to bathe in the pure waters of the sea or perhaps undergo a baptism of sprinkling.<sup>342</sup> The exact manner of bathing and the number of immersions depended upon the seriousness of the initiate's confessed sins. The initiate might also sprinkle himself with the blood of a sacrifice--or perhaps drink it. Underlying these various baptisms and ceremonies was the belief that whoever submitted to the prescribed sacred rites would be free from the rule of the body and become a pure spirit capable of living an uncontaminated life here and enjoying immortality in the life to come; indeed, this was the way the soul actually became immortal.<sup>343</sup>

---

<sup>339</sup>Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, p. 120.

<sup>340</sup>Rohde, Psyche, pp. 264-265.

<sup>341</sup>Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, p. 118.

<sup>342</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 81-82.

<sup>343</sup>Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism, pp. 118-119.



Death and rebirth was a theme central to all the Mysteries. This idea of regeneration was invariably linked with the death and restoration of a Divine person. Through sympathetic identification with a particular god, the initiate obtained the promise of immortality for himself and entered into the "new Life."<sup>344</sup> One easily sees a similarity at this point in the Pauline concept: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). One remembers that for the mystic the final stage of his experience was not meeting God face to face, but actual union with God.<sup>345</sup> Such was the initiate's goal and the purpose of the esoteric rites and dramas.

The Mysteries generally believed a person could receive immortality in one of three ways. First, by personal identification with the deity, as in the myth of Attis, one could become related to the Divine in a special and unique way. Next, one might become deified, or transformed into immortal substance; for example, in Mithraism the initiate thought of himself as being taken into the world beyond and conversing with the gods on their own level. Through this process he became deathless.<sup>346</sup> Finally, one might become immortal by having the deity dwell

---

<sup>344</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, p. 206.

<sup>345</sup>Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, p. 263.

<sup>346</sup>One such mystic says, "I have transcended the boundaries of death, I have trodden the threshold of Proserpine, and having traversed all the elements I am returned to the earth. In the middle of the night I have seen the Sun scintillating with a pure light; I have approached the gods below and the gods above, and have worshipped them face to face" (Franz Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra [Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1903], p. 164).

within him.<sup>347</sup> Thus, Paul's language sometimes resembled that of the Mysteries when he used familiar phrases such as "in Christ," "in the Lord," and "in Him."

Each cult viewed the soul's state of blessedness in a slightly different fashion. The Mysteries of Isis and Serapis believed that a person would descend to the Netherland at death with his body as well as his soul. There, a man could rejoice in his fellowship with the gods as he himself put on the garb of divinity.<sup>348</sup> The Mysteries of Bacchus and Thracian Orphism, on the other hand, conceived of immortality as some kind of holy intoxication where the faithful could share forever in a great banquet with the gods, a celebration analogous in some ways to Christian holy communion.<sup>349</sup> The soul's progress toward this state is seen, with varying degrees of clarity, as an upward ascent by the cults of Dionysus and Orpheus, astral religion, and Mithraism.

Orphism, noted Cornford, focused "on the individual soul, its

---

<sup>347</sup> Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 109-111.

<sup>348</sup> Queen Isis promises to Apuleius during his initiation: "Though shalt live blessed in this world, thou shalt live glorious by my guide and protection, and when after thine allotted space of life thou descendest to hell, there thou shalt see me in that subterranean firmament shining in the darkness of Acheron, and reigning in the deep profundity of Styx, and thou shalt worship me as one that hath been favorable to thee. And if I perceive that thou art obedient to my commandment and addict to my religion, meriting by thy constant chastity my divine grace, know thou that I alone may prolong thy days above the time that the fates have appointed and ordained" (Apuleius, The Golden Ass, trans. by W. Adlington, The Loeb Classical Library [London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1947], Book XI. 6, pp. 549-551).

<sup>349</sup> Gardner, The Religious Experience of St. Paul, pp. 112-113; in St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, pp. 256-279, Kennedy recognizes the possibility of some similarity, but denies that any connection between the two can be proved.

heavenly origin and immutable nature, and its persistence, as an individual, throughout the round of incarnations." "Hence," he concluded, "the Orphic is preoccupied with salvation, by purifying rites, of his individual soul."<sup>350</sup> This purification process, which grew out of a belief that the body contaminated the soul, consisted of a series of rituals, fastings, and ceremonies.<sup>351</sup> As a purified soul entered the higher life at death, the cleansing process continued through a cycle of lives until the soul was finally fit to reside with God as a god itself. Since the soul was thought of as immaterial, there was no need for a resurrection of the body.<sup>352</sup> For Paul, of course, some bodily form was necessary in the afterlife in order to avoid "nakedness."

Astral religion, the most influential of all ancient beliefs affecting the Roman world, has been called the "purest and most elevated doctrine which can be put to the credit of ancient paganism."<sup>353</sup> In speaking of this type of eschatology, Cicero indicated that those souls deserving immortality would, at death, rise to the starry realms instead of descending to the depths of the earth.<sup>354</sup> In the Tusculan Disputations Cicero elaborated a concept similar to that of purgatory. Since

<sup>350</sup>F. M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), p. 179.

<sup>351</sup>Farnell, Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality, p. 378.

<sup>352</sup>Ibid., p. 381.

<sup>353</sup>Cumont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans, p. 173.

<sup>354</sup>F. E. Rockwood, ed., Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, Book I and the Dream of Scipio, College Series of Latin Authors (Boston: Ginn and Co., The Athenaeum Press, 1903), 5. 10, 8. 18-20.

the soul, he said, was a breath-like substance, it was the lightest substance in the universe and tended to rise through the earth's heavy atmosphere. During its ascent, however, it would pass through various levels in the sky and be confronted with clouds, fog, rain, etc. before it finally would reach the upper regions of warm air, where, with other elements of its own substance, it would find its home.<sup>355</sup> Thus, since the soul was in danger of being weighted down by the impurities of its earthly existence, the rites of purification were crucial to its elevation.

Mithraism has been called "the last and highest manifestation of ancient paganism."<sup>356</sup> Although the Greeks perhaps considered Mithra a foreign god, who may not even have enjoyed direct contact with Greece, this cult became a formidable rival of Christianity, with which it had much in common.<sup>357</sup> The spread of Mithraism was due partly to the fact that it was primarily a military religion, thus exerting a particular influence wherever the army was stationed. The worshipper of Mithra believed that the soul, which was immortal, descended from its heavenly home down through the seven planetary regions to earth. In each of these regions it became more heavily weighted down by impurities until it finally entered an earthly body for a period of trial. Life, therefore, was a struggle to regain the soul's lost purity, enabling it to return home.

---

<sup>355</sup>Cicero Tusculan Disputations I. 19. 42-43.

<sup>356</sup>Cumont, Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 99.

<sup>357</sup>See Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 33; Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 275, mentions that Mithra never won the Greeks' acceptance; see also Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, p. 286, and Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, pp. iv-v.

Ritualistic knowledge and the promise of protection from the guardian god assured the initiate of a safe ascent.<sup>358</sup> Hell, on the other hand, was a place populated with demons and located in the earth's lower regions.<sup>359</sup> Both Mithraism and Christianity competed for men's loyalty in the first century, and both stressed purification by baptism, a "Lord's Supper," observance of Sunday as sacred, and the world's ultimate destruction. Both religions had a strong ethical dimension.<sup>360</sup>

Similarities then between the Mystery cults and Christianity are easily recognizable, although many of them are rather superficial upon closer examination. For example, regeneration and communion with the Divine were closely related in both Paul and the Mystery Religions. It must be noted, however, that for Paul everything concerning salvation led to the Cross. To interpret Paul's concern for communion or reconciliation with Christ in any other terms is to misunderstand him.<sup>361</sup> For this reason alone there remains an irreconcilable difference between Paul's and the Mysteries' view of salvation. At any rate, it may be said that confession, baptism, fasting, sacrifice, communion, and membership vows were familiar practices long before the Christian Church came into existence. But the contribution of the Mysteries to the growth of Christianity goes beyond their use of these similar rituals. Angus sums up this contribution admirably:

---

<sup>358</sup>Halliday, The Pagan Background of Early Christianity, pp. 294-296.

<sup>359</sup>Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 191.

<sup>360</sup>Ibid., pp. 190-191.

<sup>361</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul and the Mystery Religions, pp. 220-221.

The Mysteries had brought men together in those religious associations which were the harbingers of the house-churches of primitive Christianity and had ready to hand for the new religion an organization and system of administration. The Mysteries, both Greek and Oriental, had created a favorable milieu for Christianity by making religion a matter of personal conviction; they had made familiar the consciousness of sin and the need of a redemption; and by their salvationist propaganda they disposed men to lend a ready ear to the Christian proclamation of Jesus as Saviour; they had denationalized gods and men in aiming at the brotherhood of mankind; they had stimulated cravings for immortality which they could only inadequately satisfy; they had made men zealous propagandists by laying upon them the duty of the diffusion of their faith; they had fostered monotheism by making their patron deity the representative of the Divine Unity, or by the syncretistic identification of their deity with the still living deities of polytheism, or by that solar monotheism which concentrated adoration on the one source of life and light.<sup>362</sup>

But the Mysteries ultimately failed and Christianity triumphed.

One of the contributing factors to this victory was the ethical and moral superiority of the Christian faith.<sup>363</sup> One is confronted with such obvious flaws in the Mysteries that they scarcely need our attention. Their crude naturalism--combined with primitive concepts of science, astrology, and religion--and their inevitable link with magic contributed to their eventual downfall. Also, the poverty of their intellectual and theological content made them quite unacceptable to those who demanded a responsible faith for the whole person. Men expected more from their religion than merely emotional involvement. Furthermore, Christianity was unrelenting in its intolerance toward paganism.<sup>364</sup> "And there is salvation

---

<sup>362</sup>Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, p. 276.

<sup>363</sup>Cumont, The Mysteries of Mithra, p. V; although opinions vary concerning the actual ethical contribution of the Mysteries, few would be unwilling to admit the intrinsic superiority of ethical value found in the Christian faith (see Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity, pp. 244-246).

<sup>364</sup>Machen adds that while "the oriental religions were tolerant

in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It was characteristic of early Christianity that it borrowed from paganism while remaining antagonistic to any compromise. Paramount, however, in the triumph of Christianity was the historic person of Jesus Christ and his teachings. Mithra, the Great Mother and Attis, Dionysus, Isis, and the astrological gods, regardless of how large they loomed before their sectaries, were, in the final analysis, only projections of man's imagination. On the other hand, the founder of the Christian faith was a historical person who had lived and been known in Palestine and whose character defied challenge.

---

of other faiths, the religion of Paul . . . demanded an absolutely exclusive devotion" (J. Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921], p. 9).

## CHAPTER II

### PAULINE CONCEPT OF LAST THINGS

Thus far we have dealt with the major influences that constitute Paul's cultural background. Prior to his confrontation on the Damascus Road, the two major influences upon Paul were his Jewish past and his Hellenistic context. By the beginning of his career, the philosophies of Greece and the religions of the Jews were pointing toward a new revelation.<sup>1</sup> People were tired of speculation, national religions had collapsed, and the Mystery cults had unsuccessfully attempted to fill the vacuum they left.<sup>2</sup> Philosophers and religious teachers had stimulated a hope which they were unable to fulfill. Even Judaism longed for a Savior who had yet to come. Out of this frustration and common longing there was a general movement in religion toward unity.<sup>3</sup>

It is from this background that we now turn to consider Paul himself. In examining his eschatological thought, we shall discover that he was never wholly free from his past. His dependence upon Jewish imagery and terminology is especially apparent in his concepts of the Parousia and final judgment. The influence of Greek thought is noted

---

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Angus, The Environment of Early Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 222.

<sup>2</sup>Of this period Angus refers to the "common yearning for saviour" (Ibid., p. 223); another writes of a "common yearning for redemption" (Duncan Armytage, Christianity in the Roman World [London: G. Bell and Sons, 1927]).

<sup>3</sup>Angus, The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World, p. 196.



when discussing the resurrection, although it is clear that in the end he came down firmly on the Hebrew side of "material" as opposed to "immaterial." Traces of both Greek and Jewish influences appear clearly in Paul's discussions of the possibility of an intermediate state. This shall all be seen more clearly as we look closely at the five major aspects of Pauline eschatology and the life to come: the Second Coming, Resurrection, Final Judgment, Intermediate State and Final Destiny.

### Second Coming

The Second Coming of Christ occupied a major portion of Paul's thought and teaching<sup>4</sup> and was the focal point of his eschatology.<sup>5</sup> His frequent references to this event<sup>6</sup> underscore its centrality for his understanding of the gospel. Indeed, the Parousia is stressed as an integral part of the Christian message throughout all of the Pauline material except in Galatians, Philemon, and possibly Ephesians.

Certainly the Second Coming was emphasized in early Christian preaching and teaching. Following the ascension, while the disciples stood gazing into heaven, two men in white robes appeared to them and said:

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

---

<sup>4</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, pp. 164 ff.

<sup>5</sup>Otto Pflleiderer, Paulinism, Vol. I (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), p. 259.

<sup>6</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 512.

And Peter preached on Solomon's porch:

Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. (Acts 3:19-21)

Today, unfortunately, the doctrine of the Second Coming is often characterized by two extreme positions. Some disregard it altogether and cast the whole concept aside as being eccentric, outdated, and irrelevant; others take the same doctrine and make it the foundation of their faith, the backdrop against which everything else is interpreted. These two extremes have added to the difficulty of getting a balanced view of this doctrine and seeing it in its proper perspective.

While the return of Christ has been (and is now) a widely accepted Christian belief, opinions vary as to how this "return" is to be understood and interpreted. Of the two main schools of thought concerning the Second Advent, one group regards the Second Coming as a literal return of Christ that can be expected at any moment<sup>7</sup>; until the consummation of this event the present world will continue to deteriorate until it is finally destroyed.<sup>8</sup> The second basic school of thought, rejecting this literal idea of the Messiah's return from heaven, regards the Second Advent as primarily a spiritual experience already realized by the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and repeated in the lives of Christians

<sup>7</sup>S. J. Jase, "Second Adventism," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XI (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920), pp. 282.

<sup>8</sup>Barclay, *The Plain Man Looks At the Apostles' Creed*, p. 187; also Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 512-513.

in each generation.<sup>9</sup>

With this in mind, let us now consider Paul's concept of the Second Coming relative to his doctrine of last things. In doing this we shall divide our work into three main parts: (1) a comparison of the Second Coming of the New Testament with the "day of the Lord" as revealed in Jewish literature (Old Testament and intertestamental writings); (2) different views of eschatology and the Second Advent as found in the teachings of Jesus; and (3) the concept of Parousia as revealed in the Pauline material itself.

#### Comparison of "Day of the Lord" and "Second Coming"

##### Differences

The Christian idea of the Second Coming differs from the Jewish "day of the Lord" in two major respects. Primarily, for Christians the Second Coming referred to Christ rather than God. Secondly, they looked for a "second" coming as opposed to the "first" coming of the Incarnation. Jewish belief traditionally viewed creation as the "first" coming of God.<sup>10</sup>

##### Similarities

New Testament doctrine of the Second Advent had much in common with the Jewish "day of the Lord" found in the Old Testament and intertestamental writings. Five specific similarities between Pauline concepts

<sup>9</sup>Case, "Second Adventism," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. XI, p. 282.

<sup>10</sup>James Moffatt, "Parousia," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. IX (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1917), p. 637.

of the Second Advent and Jewish concepts of the "day of the Lord" are:

1. Evil times preceding the Parousia:

In the last time . . . men shall be wholly evil.

(The Sibylline Oracles 5:74)

. . . inhabitants of the earth shall be seized with great panic,  
. . . and iniquity shall be increased. . . . (IV Ezra 5:1, 2)

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not  
come except there come a falling away first. (II Thess. 2:3 A.V.)

2. Exact time of Parousia unknown:

. . . [Thou] alone knowest the consummation of the times before  
they come; . . . (II Baruch 21:8)

For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come  
like a thief in the night. (I Thess. 5:2)

3. Universal acknowledgment of God:

All who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship before Him,  
and will praise and bless and celebrate with song the Lord of  
Spirits. . . . (I Enoch 48:5)

. . . "As I live, says the Lord, every knee  
shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to  
God." (Rom. 14:11)

4. Revelation of the Lord from the heavens:

The Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling, . . .  
And appear in the strength of His might from the heaven . . . .  
(I Enoch 1:3, 4 ff.)

. . . when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his  
mighty angels. . . . (II Thess. 1:7 ff.)

5. A time of judgment and destruction:

. . . the day of the Lord comes,  
cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,  
to make the earth a desolation  
and to destroy its sinners from it. (Is. 13:9;  
cf. II Baruch 25:1-4)

[Jesus will come] inflicting vengeance upon those who do not  
know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord  
Jesus. (II Thess. 1:8)

These few examples illustrate the extent to which Pauline thought and language was affected by traditional Jewish eschatology.<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that the New Testament doctrine had no origin of its own or that it was simply an outgrowth of Jewish thought,<sup>12</sup> for it is readily admitted that Jesus did speak of his coming again.<sup>13</sup> But it is important to remember that the Christian idea of Christ's return was often couched in terms and imagery that are essentially Jewish.<sup>14</sup>

Even the casual reader notices more than a slight similarity between the Jewish "day of the Lord" and the Christian "Second Coming." Viewing the present age with despair, both contended that society's wickedness and corruption had become so rampant that redemption was no longer a possibility: destruction was inevitable; that God's intervention in history would bring judgment upon the unrighteous and a close to the "old age" and usher in a new age of prosperity, peace, and happiness.

To appreciate fully this view, one must remember that from early times the Jews thought of themselves as the "chosen" people of God. Promises made to them through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob stirred their hopes of one day becoming a great and powerful nation: "I will make of you a

---

<sup>11</sup>For further study of Paul's thought relating to the Parousia and the influences contributing to its development, see H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things (2nd ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904), chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 156.

<sup>13</sup>John Pearson, Exposition of the Creed (London: William Tegg, 1862), p. 420; cf. G. R. Beasley-Murray, Jesus and the Future (London: Macmillan and Company, 1954); cf. Oscar Cullmann, "The Return of Christ," in The Early Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 141-162.

<sup>14</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 156.

great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). To Isaac God said:

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, . . . and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves: . . . (Gen. 26:3-4)

In a dream Jacob received this promise: ". . . the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; . . . and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves" (Gen. 28:13, 14).

As the years went by, the Jews neither forgot these promises nor abandoned the hope of rising up to the greatness which they felt was rightly theirs. History had made clear that since they did not equal the military might of their foes, their ultimate triumph and vindication would not likely come as the direct result of human effort. If their final state of blessedness were ever to be realized, then God himself must intervene on behalf of "His chosen people."<sup>15</sup> This view separated time into two distinct periods: the present age was corrupt, wicked, and past any hope of reform; the age to come, a time of fulfillment and blessing for all Israel. This new age would begin with God's intervention into history. Known as "the day of the Lord," this was to be a day of judgment and destruction (Is. 13:6; Amos 5:18-20). Signs of its coming disaster would be manifest everywhere.

And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. (Joel 2:30, 31)

---

<sup>15</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I (London: SCM Press, 1965), pp. 4-5.

And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten; and brothers one with another shall fall in death till the streams flow with their blood. (I Enoch 100:1)

And it shall come to pass in those days that all the inhabitants of the earth shall be moved one against another, because they know not that my judgement has drawn nigh. . . . And honor shall be turned into shame. And strength humiliated into contempt, . . . . And beauty shall become ugliness. (II Baruch 48:32, 35)

And many shall be stirred up in anger to injure many, And they shall rouse up armies in order to shed blood, And in the end they shall perish together with them.<sup>16</sup> (II Baruch 48:37)

Although the "day of the Lord" may have at one period been understood as a time when God would destroy the enemies of Israel,<sup>17</sup> this "day" came to reflect a note of universal judgment which included "all the inhabitants of the earth" (Zeph. 1:18). "And those slain by the Lord on that day shall extend from one end of the earth to the other" (Jer. 25:33).

It would be a day of not only judgment, wrath, and disaster but also blessings.

"In that day I will raise up  
the booth of David that is fallen  
and repair its breaches,  
and raise up its ruins,  
and rebuild it as in the days of old;"<sup>18</sup>  
(Amos 9:11)

On this day the righteous would be peaceful and secure:

And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, . . . ; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety. (Hos. 2:18)

---

<sup>16</sup>Further descriptions of signs which will precede the "end" are found in Sibylline Oracles 3:796-808 and the Assumption of Moses 10:5.

<sup>17</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 87.

<sup>18</sup>See also Is. 28:5 and Zech. 9:16.

And this would be a day of resurrection and rejoicing for the dead:

Thy dead shall live, their bodies  
shall rise.  
O dwellers in the dust, awake and  
sing for joy!

. . . . . (Is. 26:19)<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the Old Testament and intertestamental writings portray the "day of the Lord" as a time of judgment and destruction and also as a time of hope for the righteous. Since the "day of the Lord" has so much in common with the New Testament Second Coming, Paul's earlier concept of the Parousia has been described as "painted in colors from the crudest palette of Jewish eschatology."<sup>20</sup>

#### Eschatology and Second Coming in the Teaching of Jesus

Gospel message is eschatological  
(but scholars differ over its form)

New Testament eschatology has been, and is today, interpreted in almost as many different ways as there are writers.<sup>21</sup> It is important that we look briefly at some of the major contributions in this field since these thoughts on eschatology and the kingdom have direct bearing upon the doctrine of the Parousia.

Albert Schweitzer, for example, argued strongly in favor of

---

<sup>19</sup>See also Dan. 12:2.

<sup>20</sup>C. H. Dodd, New Testament Studies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), p. 121.

<sup>21</sup>See Norman Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).



futuristic eschatology.<sup>22</sup> He suggested that the parables in Mark 4 revealed that Jesus expected God's kingdom to be inaugurated in the immediate future. Nor did Schweitzer hesitate to add that Jesus was disappointed when his disciples returned from their mission (in Matthew 10) and the kingdom had still not come.<sup>23</sup>

C. H. Dodd's "realized eschatology" was based on the premise that the last days were fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and that the kingdom was realized in his own ministry. That being true, there was no need to anticipate anything further.<sup>24</sup> The "eschatological" kingdom of God was proclaimed as a present fact, which men must recognize, whether or not they accepted it by their actions.<sup>25</sup> "The Age to Come has come."<sup>26</sup> Aside from an impressive list of "proof texts,"<sup>27</sup> Dodd suggested that there were at least five reasons for this eschatological view of the present. These feelings emanated from beliefs in Christ's coming as a signal of the dawning of a new age foretold by the prophets; his supernatural ministry; his death upon the cross to deliver the world from sin; his death

---

<sup>22</sup>Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus (London: A. and C. Black, 1910).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 356-357.

<sup>24</sup>W. Herberg, "Eschatology," in The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. VIII (London: William Benton, 1966), p. 696. Herberg explains Dodd's view by saying the "eschatological act has already been realized with little or nothing left for the future."

<sup>25</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Company, 1935), pp. 44, 195 ff.

<sup>26</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 210.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 208-209.

as a judgment upon sin and the world; and his triumph over death to bring eternal life to each one who would believe in him.<sup>28</sup>

Rudolf Bultmann, who had no hesitation in saying that "Jesus was mistaken in thinking that the world was destined soon to come to an end,"<sup>29</sup> rejected the idea of the kingdom as present, but confessed that the day was imminent. Such imminence was reflected in Jesus' person, his deeds, and his message.<sup>30</sup>

Herberg described this as "an eschatology of existential decision in the present, opening the future."<sup>31</sup> This brings us to the unavoidable paradox of Christian eschatology: in one sense the age to come is already here and the kingdom of God has come upon us in its power and glory; but in another sense, we still live in the body, continue to sin, and have yet to die. We also look forward to a future consummation, final judgment, and an end which is yet to come. Thus remains the unresolved tension for the Christian.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps this tension between present and future in the teaching of Jesus<sup>33</sup> was the reason Oscar Cullmann took a position which reflects elements of futuristic, realized, and existentialistic eschatology. He

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 210-214.

<sup>29</sup>Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, p. 109.

<sup>30</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 6 ff.

<sup>31</sup>Herberg, "Eschatology," p. 696.

<sup>32</sup>J. S. Whale, Christian Doctrine (London: Collins Fontana Books, 1957), pp. 174-175.

<sup>33</sup>Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, p. 88.

used the analogy of D-Day to express the view that in the life and ministry of Jesus the "end had begun." The conflict might drag on for some time in the future, but the powers of evil had received a blow from which they never could recover. Satan's powers had been broken (Mt. 12:28) and he had fallen (Lk. 10:18). Although the campaign would continue on until V-Day, the final victory was no longer in doubt.<sup>34</sup>

T. W. Manson also saw the Christian kingdom in terms of a tension between present and future.<sup>35</sup> He stated that "the Kingdom of God is manifested on earth and in the present in the existence of human subjects who own God as their King, who look to him for protection, guidance, and a rule of life, who offer to him their absolute loyalty, complete trust, and willing obedience."<sup>36</sup> This "present" aspect of the kingdom had come into existence during the ministry of Christ; the kingdom in its completed form was to be realized only in the future (the "Coming of the Son of Man"; "the Day"; or "Parousia of the Son of Man"). This double view of the kingdom as present reality and future consummation is not considered contradictory in the context of God's external sovereignty.<sup>37</sup> Neither did Manson find it necessary, as did Schweitzer, to view Jesus as an apocalyptic.

Variations of these views are plentiful, but the one fact

---

<sup>34</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time (London: SCM Press, 1951), pp. 84 ff.

<sup>35</sup>T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus (Cambridge: University Press, 1931), chapter 5.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 234; cf. Mk. 1:5, Lk. 17:21, etc.

<sup>37</sup>Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, pp. 140-141.

stressed by leading scholars since the turn of this century is that the Gospel is radically eschatological.<sup>38</sup> Paul himself made little use of "kingdom" phraseology; he shared the conviction of other New Testament writers that new age had been inaugurated by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and by the manifestation of God's spirit at Pentecost. Satan's power had been broken and the Lordship of Jesus had become a fact (although this would not be fully recognized until "that Day"). Christians not only share in this triumph, but also become citizens of the new age in this life.<sup>39</sup>

### Jesus and the Parousia

Crucial to a discussion of the Parousia is the problem of whether Jesus himself taught and expected a second advent. Here again we find no unanimity of opinion among scholars.<sup>40</sup> In the first place, there is difficulty in establishing the passages which have a clear and specific reference to the Second Coming. In the apocalyptic parallels of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, for example, William Barclay saw at least five different strands of thought coming together.<sup>41</sup> Although

---

<sup>38</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 123.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 125-127.

<sup>40</sup>There is a considerable difference of opinion even among those believing that Jesus actually did teach and expect a Second Advent: e.g., Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, chapter II, especially p. 50; Gullmann, "The Return of Christ," pp. 141-162; Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, pp. 158-206, especially pp. 188 and 147; etc.

<sup>41</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks At the Apostles' Creed, pp. 189-190.

these all point toward an uncertain future, only one of them has specifically to do with the Second Coming.<sup>42</sup> This is complicated by the problem of harmonizing the Parousia passages with one another as well as with the entire Gospel message;<sup>43</sup> for example, if one thinks of the Parousia as a literal event to take place upon earth, then how must Matthew 10:23 be interpreted? ". . . you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes." Similarly in the apocalyptic chapter we read, "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place" (Mk. 13:30).<sup>44</sup>

An inflexible and literalistic interpretation of these sayings forces one to the conclusion that the words of Jesus were not fulfilled.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, Matthew 24 suggests that the "end" may be a considerable distance away: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come" (Mt. 24:14). Some say that there is no inconsistency here, since, even though Jesus did teach that his coming was near, "he did not mean to represent it as immediately at hand."<sup>46</sup> He further pointed out

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. (1) Foretelling destruction of Jeru in A.D. 70--Mt. 24:15-22; (2) Foretelling of Christian persecution--Mt. 24:9; (3) Foretelling of coming heresy--Mt. 24:4, 5, 11, 12, 23-26; (4) Foretelling signs of the "end" concerning the day of the Lord--Mt. 24:10, 14, 29, 31; (5) Foretelling of Second Coming--Mt. 24:13, 27-30, 32, 33, 36, 37-39, 40-51.

<sup>43</sup>Ieckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 57-58.

<sup>44</sup>See also Mt. 24:34; Lk. 21:32.

<sup>45</sup>Salmond ingeniously attempts to show that in these sayings Jesus spoke of a physical return at a particular place in time (The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 301-305).

<sup>46</sup>L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1939), p. 697.

that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8). Nevertheless, this seems to avoid rather than confront the problems raised in the previous verses of the apocalyptic chapters of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

At first sight Mark 14:62 brings to mind thoughts of the Parousia: ". . . you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." This is often understood as an expression from Daniel 7:13, which more properly refers to the "vindication that would follow the sufferings of Jesus" rather than to the Second Coming, an arrival in heaven and not a descent to earth.<sup>47</sup> The parallel versions of this passage are Luke 22:69 and Matthew 26:64. It is interesting that the Lucan version makes no reference to the Second Coming at all: "From now on the Son of man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (Lk. 22:69).

Equally significant is the question of how this "coming" is to be understood and interpreted. One of the most significant sayings of Jesus with regard to the Second Coming (or perhaps the coming of the Kingdom) is in Mark 9:1: "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."<sup>48</sup> Since only Matthew specifically referred to the Second Coming,<sup>49</sup> it has been strongly argued that the other passages referred to

---

<sup>47</sup>Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, p. 142. Perrin makes strong argument in support of Mark 14:62 being accepted as a legitimate reference to the Parousia as Jesus understood it (pp. 143-145).

<sup>48</sup>Parallel passages are Mt. 16:28 and Lk. 9:27.

<sup>49</sup>Mark refers to "the kingdom of God come with power." Luke

the coming of the kingdom. More precisely, the reference might be to the resurrection followed by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, which was the beginning of the Christian Church.<sup>50</sup> Manson made a convincing point, however, by suggesting that Paul and his fellow Christians "who lived through these great events did not make the identification"<sup>51</sup>--they still looked for something more. But, if the Matthew version of this passage referred to his literal return, then the promise of Jesus did not come true either in his lifetime or his generation's. On the other hand, if these passages referred to the coming of the kingdom rather than the Second Advent, then they were indeed borne out.

The Fourth Gospel in particular suggests various interpretations of Christ's coming. Passages in John, such as 14:3 and 16:16-23, referred to the Parousia as a rather literal and physical event. But the Second Coming was also pictured as a spiritual experience, first at Pentecost, then in the lives of Christians of every generation. In this respect it would no longer be a literal event which would take place somewhere in the future.<sup>52</sup> This "spiritualized" concept of the Second Coming is suggested

---

speaks of seeing "the kingdom of God." Only in the Matthew version do we read of "the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."

<sup>50</sup>T. Francis Glasson, The Second Advent (London: Epworth Press, 1945), p. 112.

<sup>51</sup>Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, p. 281. Manson concludes that "Jesus expected the consummation of the Kingdom to take place at some time in the immediate future, and that this expectation was not realized" (p. 282). Manson explains this unfulfilled prediction by stating that the date of the Parousia is separate from the more important questions of the nature of the Parousia. It is possible that Jesus could have been mistaken about the former without being wrong in the latter (p. 283).

<sup>52</sup>Moffatt notes that the Fourth Gospel, with its emphasis upon the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and in the heart of the believer,

in several passages: ". . . If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (Jn. 14:23).<sup>53</sup> This is a promise of the coming of Christ (and the Father) into the hearts of men who fulfill certain conditions. Furthermore, such a "coming" would bring eternal life to the believer, removing him from judgment altogether: ". . . he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (Jn. 5:24). Schweitzer admitted difficulty in interpreting the eschatology of John's Gospel but claims that the evangelist expected "a visible coming of the Son of Man."<sup>54</sup>

Several facts become apparent following examination of these sayings of Jesus. Initially we have seen that some of the traditional Parousia passages may actually have meanings other than those suggested at first sight, and some have no reference to the Parousia at all. Nevertheless, one is convinced that Jesus did speak of his coming again and that he taught a future consummation.<sup>55</sup> This future consummation, however, may well have referred to the ultimate triumph and glory of the kingdom rather than to a physical second coming. The "coming"

---

"laid stress upon the conception of the Parousia as the immanent presence of the divine being" ("Parousia," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. IX, p. 637).

<sup>53</sup>See also Jn. 14:21.

<sup>54</sup>Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle (London: A. and C. Black, 1931), p. 368.

<sup>55</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 50; cf. Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, p. 188; Perrin points to the following passages as proof that Jesus believed in a future consummation: Mt. 24:27par.; 24:37, 39par.; Lk. 17:30, 11:30; Mt. 24:44par.; Lk. 12:3 ff. par.



therefore is not necessarily assumed to be literal since it was only an image used in speaking of the consummation.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the teachings of Jesus tell us little about the exact nature of the Parousia except that it will include both judgment and hope and that it will be a vindication of Jesus.<sup>57</sup>

#### Concept of Parousia in Pauline Material

##### Parousia in Pauline epistles

Let us now examine the Pauline material beginning with the Thessalonian correspondence. In the earlier epistles a number of passages seem to indicate that Paul expected the Parousia during his own lifetime or shortly thereafter (I Thess. 4:15).<sup>58</sup> Yet Paul never claimed to know the day or the hour because it would come "like a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2). In fact, such excitement was manifest by the first letter that a second one attempted to dampen this excitement and curb irrational behavior. Paul spoke of the Thessalonian Christians as a joy and crown at the Lord's return: "For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy" (I Thess. 2:19, 20). He longed for their establishment: ". . . unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming

---

<sup>56</sup>Perrin says that the Second Coming "no more implies the literal descent of a figure from the other side of the stars than the image of the Messianic Banquet implies the setting up of . . . tables . . . over the slopes of Mount Zion" (The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, p. 188).

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 160; also A. B. Bruce, St. Paul's Conception of Christianity (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1894), p. 380.

of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" (Thess. 3:13; 5:23).

In these Thessalonian letters the Second Advent was at the very center of Paul's thought. So keen was the interest and expectation of this event that some began to worry about what would happen to those who died before Christ appeared. Paul assured them that those who had passed away would be raised to share in the glory of the Parousia.

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first;<sup>59</sup> then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; . . . (I Thess. 4:13-17)

Paul saw the end of the world coming by the direct intervention of God only after evil had reached its climax. The lawlessness which was already in the world (II Thess. 2:7) would reach its culmination in the Anti-christ:<sup>60</sup> "And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming" (II Thess. 2:8).

---

<sup>59</sup>Charles reminds us here that "first" is not meant to contrast this resurrection with a second resurrection, but to identify the top groups of righteous who will share in the resurrection. "The first are these who have died before the Parousia; the second are these who survive to meet it. Both are caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (Charles, Eschatology, p. 444).

<sup>60</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 439. Antichrist is the incarnation of evil and "the Satanic counterfeit of the true Messiah." As God's revelation reaches its summit in Christ so evil reaches its culmination in Antichrist. This manifestation of evil foretells its own destruction.

Thus, the Parousia would be a time of rejoicing for the righteous, but a time of judgment and destruction for the wicked:

. . . the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, . . . (II Thess. 1:7-10)

Paul's description of the Second Coming, specifically, and the entire eschatology of his Thessalonian correspondence, generally, have led some to accuse him of primitivism. "His eschatology," said C. T. Wood, was "almost the same . . . as before his conversion."<sup>61</sup> Similarly, he has been described as never having outgrown the narrowness of Jewish eschatology.<sup>62</sup> Paul's expectation of the Parousia in the near future seems surprising considering his universalist tendencies (I Cor. 15:28; Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:9-10).<sup>63</sup> The converted naturally long for this event, but what about those who have not yet heard the "Good News"? Surely a quick "return" would terminate the very missionary work which was destined to save them.<sup>64</sup> This may indicate why Paul sometimes referred to the Parousia in a spiritualized sense rather than a future and visible event, but it seems more likely that this simply represents an early Pauline concept which later matured.

---

<sup>61</sup>C. T. Wood, The Life, Letters, and Religion of St. Paul (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1925), p. 128.

<sup>62</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 443.

<sup>63</sup>Since one assumes that a sufficient amount of time is needed if God is to conquer the hearts of all men, a sudden and abrupt return of Christ would not be desirable.

<sup>64</sup>Bruce, St. Paul's Conception of Christianity, p. 381.

The Corinthians, much like the Thessalonians, were waiting for the sudden return of Christ (I Cor. 1:7). With this thought in mind Paul wrote: ". . . do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart . . ." (I Cor. 4:5). He reminded those partaking of the Lord's Supper that, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (I Cor. 11:26).

The whole point of I Corinthians 7, suggests Professor Barclay, was to warn the Christian against entering into any binding relationships in this life because very little time was left, and severe trials were at hand.<sup>65</sup> The time seemed short indeed, for the Apostle went on to say: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet" (I Cor. 15:51-52). The "end of the ages" had come (I Cor. 10:11).

The Second Advent, sometimes referred to as "the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 1:14), "the Day" (I Cor. 3:13), "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:8), continued to be thought of as a day of judgment. Christ would be the judge and no sin would go unnoticed (I Cor. 4:4, 5; II Cor. 5:10). At the "return" of Christ the last enemy would be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26). The Parousia, along with the final

---

<sup>65</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 181. It was best not to marry, for instance, because this would only increase one's troubles during the remaining time; however, a person could reject this marital advice and still not sin. ". . . in view of the impending distress it is well for a person to remain as he is. . . . But if you marry, you do not sin. . . . Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short . . ." (I Cor. 7:26, 28, 29).

judgment and resurrection, would terminate the present age and begin the new. Christ's kingdom would be inaugurated as the imperfect one passed away (I Cor. 13:10).<sup>66</sup>

In Romans the idea of the Second Coming was still central to Paul's message as he urged his readers to "be ready" for that day whenever it comes. Clearly, he had the Parousia in mind as he wrote the latter part of chapter thirteen:

Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; . . . (Rom. 13:11-12)

Although the Second Advent still appeared close at hand, other ideas entered into this epistle indicating a further development of Paul's thought. For instance, Paul suggested in Romans 11 that eventually all of mankind might be converted. He explained that the temporary rejection of Israel had as its real purpose the redemption of both Jew and Gentile: ". . . I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come

---

<sup>66</sup>Paul generally applied the term "kingdom of God" to the future (e.g., I Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50, etc.), although, there were times when he spoke of the kingdom being realized on earth (e.g., I Cor. 4:20; Rom. 14:17). In the closing part of I Corinthians there is a verse of particular interest in regard to the Parousia (16:22). The Apostle writes: "If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord come!" (Also "Our Lord is coming," or "O Lord, come"; Wood, The Life, Letters and Religion of St. Paul, p. 217). The original Aramaic phrase (Maranatha) has been retained in both the Authorized Version and the New English Bible, although the Revised Standard translates it, "Our Lord, come!" This phrase at the very climax of the letter may have special significance. Professor Barclay suggests that it was a slogan or watchword among the early Christians (The Mind of St. Paul, p. 167). Accordingly, constant expectation of the Second Coming was a distinctive feature of the early Church.

in, and so all Israel will be saved; . . ." (Rom. 11:25, 26).

Paul saw God's universally redemptive purpose at work in the process of history. "For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32).<sup>67</sup> But, if the conversion of all mankind were to take place, it would necessarily involve considerable time. It is precisely at this point that some see a change in Paul's view of the future.<sup>68</sup> Although he never for a moment abandoned the doctrine of the Second Coming and he continued to believe strongly in the event, nevertheless his later epistles show him becoming less concerned over its immediacy.

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul reminded his fellow Christians to keep themselves pure until Christ himself should appear. Although the Second Coming was not mentioned here directly, this seems to be the implication.<sup>69</sup>

At least five references to the Second Advent are in the four chapters of the Philippian letter. Paul opened with an expression of appreciation for his Christian friends and anticipated their glory at the coming of Christ: ". . . I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). He further hoped that they would be "pure and blameless for the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10) and that their faithfulness would make him proud in

---

<sup>67</sup>See also 14:11.

<sup>68</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 455; Bruce, St. Paul's Conception of Christianity, pp. 382-383.

<sup>69</sup>E. F. Scott, The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. 224.

"the day of Christ" (Phil. 2:16). This letter also carried a touch of the "immediacy which was seen more clearly in earlier epistles. The Apostle reminded his readers that their real home was in heaven, "and from it we await a Savior" (Phil. 3:20). Time and again Paul sought to inspire and encourage his fellow Christians by reminding them of and pointing them to the Second Coming of the Lord.

In Colossians the idea of Christ's return continued to be a significant part of Pauline thought, although with less emphasis than in the Philippian letter. Paul sought to give encouragement to those who found the present life difficult and trying by reminding them of Christ and his return: "Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. . . . When Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:2, 4).

In the Pastoral Epistles the Second Coming continued to be stressed. Timothy was charged to "keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Tim. 6:14). The author spoke of his assurance that Christ would guard what has been entrusted to him until "that Day" (II Tim. 1:12). He prayed that his friend Onesiphorus might find mercy from the Lord "on the Day" (II Tim. 1:18). He charged Timothy to preach the Word "in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1). He looked forward to the crown of righteousness which the Lord would award him "on that Day" (II Tim. 4:8). In Titus Christians were admonished to live "sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of

the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:12, 13).<sup>70</sup>

Did the idea of Christ's early return become less popular as Christianity gained in influence and power? To the early persecuted Christians, God's direct intervention seemed to be their only hope; but, as the Church grew stronger, the people tended to think in terms of a

<sup>70</sup>Some may argue that as time went on Paul began to regard the Parousia as less imminent (less important?). By the time John's Gospel was written, the whole idea of Christ's return had been spiritualized and the emphasis was upon Christ's continued return as the Holy Spirit (Wood, The Life, Letters, and Religion of St. Paul, p. 138); in referring to this "development" of Pauline thought Robinson notes strong similarities between the final stage of the Pauline tradition and the earliest of the Johannine. The same is also true of the earliest writings of Paul and the latest [apocalyptic] elements in the Synoptics (J. A. T. Robinson, Jesus and His Coming [London: SCM Press, 1957], pp. 108-111, 165). But even in the Fourth Gospel the final coming was not denied, and the "last day" continued to be underscored (Jn. 6:39, 11:24, 12:48, etc.). (Wood, The Life, Letters and Religion of St. Paul, p. 138). Others are not convinced that Paul ever expected this event to take place during his own lifetime. Farrar, in fact, contends that Paul has been greatly misunderstood at this point (F. W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, Vols. I and II [London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Company, 1879], Vol. I, pp. 600-605). Especially prone to misinterpretation are such sayings as I Thess. 4:15: "We who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep." When Paul says, "We who are alive and left," he is not necessarily referring to himself or to those standing nearby, but merely to those living at the time of the Parousia (Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, Vol. I, p. 601). He may have had some doubt in his early ministry that the return of Christ would take place during his lifetime. Although he knew that before the Parousia would come certain things must take place (for these five major signs, see Berkhof, Systematic Theology, pp. 696-703), he did believe that he would live to see it. In his later ministry Paul did not deny the possibility of his witnessing this event, but it did not concern him so much because he realized that death would bring him into the immediate presence of Christ anyway (Phil. 1:23). Paul never abandoned the idea of the Second Coming, but realized that the visible, future appearance of Christ was of less importance than the spiritual union which one could enjoy with Him right now. Such a view acknowledged that it was possible for Christ to come in more than one way (Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, Vol. I, p. 602), but Paul never claimed to know final details of this event since they were understood only by the Father.



gradual transformation being effected by the Church.<sup>71</sup> Yet the hope of a Second Advent was not abandoned.

The "kingdom of God" concept is also a significant part of Pauline eschatology, though to a lesser degree than in the Synoptics.<sup>72</sup> Unlike Jesus, Paul rarely used the specific phrase, "kingdom of God."<sup>73</sup> This idea was often referred to as "the kingdom" (I Cor. 15:24), "the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5), "His kingdom" (II Tim. 4:1) or "his heavenly kingdom" (II Tim. 4:18), and "the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). However, on eight occasions in Pauline literature there are specific references to "the kingdom of God."<sup>74</sup> Hunter stated that "what Paul calls 'life in Christ,' or life 'in the Spirit,' is simply the Apostle's expression for what the synoptic Jesus calls 'the kingdom of God,' and the Johannine Christ, 'Eternal Life.'"<sup>75</sup> Here again Paul tended to think of the kingdom in terms of both the present<sup>76</sup> and the future,<sup>77</sup> but for the most part Paul's kingdom was future, ethical, and

<sup>71</sup>Case, "Second Adventism," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XI, p. 284.

<sup>72</sup>Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 511.

<sup>73</sup>A. M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1940), p. 128.

<sup>74</sup>Rom. 14:17; I Cor. 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Col. 4:11; II Thess. 1:5.

<sup>75</sup>Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>76</sup>Col. 1:13: "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son"; II Cor. 5:17: "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creature"; also Rom. 14:17.

<sup>77</sup>Col. 3:24, 25; Eph. 6:8; I Thess. 1:10; etc.

eschatological.<sup>78</sup>

For Paul the "new age" had already begun, although it was not yet fully realized.<sup>79</sup> He saw himself standing "at the close of one Age and at the beginning of another."<sup>80</sup> Christ's life, death, and resurrection had initiated a new order of things, and in one real sense the future had become the present.<sup>81</sup> Christians had been set free "from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2) and were "united with him" (Rom. 6:5) so completely that no separation was possible within this life or the next (Rom. 8:38-39). Christ was yet to be unveiled in glory (I Cor. 1:7; II Thess. 1:7), when the "Old Aeon," with all its sin and wickedness, would be brought to a permanent end, accompanied by the general resurrection and last judgment. Here all men would stand before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10) even though "God's elect" would be already acquitted (Rom. 8:33). God's ultimate and final triumph would be proclaimed by Christ's return when he delivered the kingdom to God (I Cor. 15:24). All enemies of God would be subdued (I Cor. 15:25), death itself would be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26), and He would become "all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). At this time God's reign would be permanently established and acknowledged by all.<sup>82</sup> (Eph. 1:9, 10).

---

<sup>78</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 511-512; cf. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, pp. 124-129. Certainly this is true with regard to the "completed" kingdom.

<sup>79</sup>Schoeps, Paul, p. 99.

<sup>80</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 185.

<sup>81</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 51.

<sup>82</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, History and Eschatology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 41.

### Interpreting the Pauline Parousia

While reading of the coming Parousia and judgment, we must remember the Jewish imagery with which these events are depicted. Paul used this imagery to set forth the great truths of his eschatology (Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, and final triumph). He did not hesitate to speak "in the language of symbolism."<sup>83</sup> To properly understand this eschatology, therefore, we must recognize "that Paul's apocalyptic statements about the Last Things . . . take on the form of myth and symbol."<sup>84</sup> It is quite unsatisfactory to "interpret with a prosaic literalism . . . those bold poetic images, so dear to the Eastern mind, which readers of the Old Testament like Paul knew how to (properly) interpret."<sup>85</sup> Daniel and Revelation are books long known for their vivid imagery. Must we interpret Pauline passages (or any other New Testament scriptures, for that matter) with such strict literalism as to deny that they make any use of symbolism at all? Paul spoke (in the final chapter of Ephesians) of putting on the Christian armor in order to do warfare against the evil powers of the world. Surely the armor of which the Apostle spoke in this instance was metaphorical. By forcing upon the passage a rigid literalistic interpretation, we would not only destroy its beauty, but distort its meaning as well. A similar approach is

---

<sup>83</sup>Arthur C. Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity (London: John Murray, 1913), p. 35.

<sup>84</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 124. Hunter defines apocalyptic as "mythologized eschatology."

<sup>85</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 184.

needed to understand many Pauline passages.<sup>86</sup>

Yet the key to our understanding must, as Cullmann suggests,<sup>87</sup> be found in the tension which exists between the "already" and the "not yet." We who are living in the period between Christ's ascension and return know that what is yet to come will come because the crucial event has occurred.<sup>88</sup> Since the coming kingdom "already" exists in Christ we are confident of the future and realize that the whole saving process is moving toward its final and completed realization.

---

<sup>86</sup>For this reason some tend to think of the kingdom and Second Advent as "spiritual forms" which are visible only to the faithful (Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 66). One dare not become dogmatic in this regard; it would take a bold person to assume that he understands the exact nature of the Parousia. Leckie gives us good advice: "If we cherish the hope of a visible appearing of the Son of Man, no one can deny us our right to such an expectation. We believe that God intervened in the affairs of men once when Jesus came; and who shall say that He may not intervene again after another fashion? If, again, we cherish no such hope, but will believe simply that a time will surely come when the Lordship of Christ shall be universally owned in spirit and in truth, no one can say us nay" (Ibid.). Although J. A. T. Robinson argues for a spiritualized concept of the Second Advent in the sense that Jesus is "always coming" as over against a "future coming" (In the End, God [London: James Clarke and Company, 1950]; Jesus and His Coming; The Body [London: SCM Press, first published in 1952]), he realizes the limitations of man's knowledge in this area and attempts to stop short of dogmatism. Myth and history are not always easily distinguishable: "Of course the Christian cannot say that the 'events' of the End will not literally take place, any more than he can assert that an Adam and Eve did not live in a garden in Mesopotamia. He can only declare that, as a Christian, he has no interest in these matters" (In the End, God, p. 70).

<sup>87</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Salvation in History (English ed.; London: SCM Press, 1965), pp. 166 ff.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

## Resurrection

### Background

The resurrection of Jesus has traditionally been the center of Christian belief. Without the doctrine of the resurrection, "all that is vital and essential in Christianity goes; if this remains, all else remains."<sup>89</sup> The early disciples were aware of this,<sup>90</sup> but the centrality of the resurrection is probably seen nowhere in the New Testament more clearly than in Paul's teachings. Nothing about Christ was as significant for Paul as his death and resurrection.<sup>91</sup> To deny these articles of faith would be to deny the future life itself (I Cor. 15:12 ff.); indeed, Paul referred to the risen Christ in every epistle except II Thessalonians and Philemon. To appreciate the force of the Pauline doctrine of the resurrection, we should remember that there were conflicting views of this matter in the Old Testament and intertestamental periods, the Mystery Religions, the Synoptic Gospels and the Book of John.

We have seen that the early Hebrew belief in the shadowy realm of Sheol hardly differed from the Greeks' Hades. The Old Testament belief in resurrection grew out of an assurance that the nation of Israel, including its righteous dead, would be granted a new life; this confidence is especially reflected in the apocalyptic writings of Isaiah (e.g., 26:19) and Daniel (e.g., 12:2). During the intertestamental period, the

---

<sup>89</sup>J. M. Shaw, "Resurrection of Christ," in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, 2 vols., ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918), vol. II, p. 330.

<sup>90</sup>A. M. Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ (London: Centenary Press, 1945), p. 7.

<sup>91</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, pp. 292-294.

resurrection of the body became accepted as standard belief,<sup>92</sup> even though this doctrine contained many inconsistencies and at times embraced the earlier concept of Sheol.<sup>93</sup>

The Mystery Religions provided Paul with appropriate rituals and religious imagery, stemming mainly from their emphasis on dying and rebirth of the seasonal cycle, as seen for instance in the Demeter-Persephone myth. Of course, there were great differences between these cults and early Christianity, the greatest being that the apostolic teachings viewed the resurrection as historical fact rather than symbolic myth and that Paul saw the possibility of eternal life beginning in this life with the indwelling presence of the risen Christ within us.

The Synoptic Gospels do not furnish a great deal of information about the future resurrection, although it is implied in the synoptic concept of judgment; occasionally, however, this thought comes into clearer focus, such as when Jesus was questioned by the Sadducees about the future life (Mt. 22:23 ff.; Mk. 12:18-27; Lk. 20:27-38). Here, he indicated that those who were to be resurrected would be as "angels in

---

<sup>92</sup>See I Enoch 91:10 and 51:1-2; II Baruch 30:2 and chapter 50; II Maccabees 7:9-10, 14; Testament of Benjamin 10:7-8; IV Ezra 7:32; and The Psalms of Solomon 3:16.

<sup>93</sup>Usually only the righteous are said to be in line for resurrection (I Enoch 90:33; 91:3; The Psalms of Solomon 3:16; II Maccabees 7). Elsewhere, however, we read of a universal resurrection for Jew and Greek, for the righteous and unrighteous (I Enoch 51:1; IV Ezra 7:32 ff.; II Baruch 30:2-5; Testament of Benjamin 10:8). Also, will the resurrection come before the messianic period (I Enoch 51) or at the end of it (II Baruch 30:1-2)? Occasionally the immortality of the soul seems to take precedence over the resurrection of the body (Wisdom of Solomon; IV Maccabees). There are also times when the ancient concept of Sheol reveals again the old pessimism of early Hebrew thought (I Baruch 2:17; Sirach 17:28).

heaven," and, arguing further for resurrection, he cited the great Old Testament heroes of His faith. Jesus reminded the Sadducees that God said, "'I am the . . . God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'" (Ex. 3:6). The implication was that these great patriarchs were still alive and enjoying fellowship with God. Since these words were taken straight from the Law, which the Sadducees necessarily accepted, Jesus's logic was especially convincing. Pearson pointed to three examples of resurrection in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament to show that this doctrine was confirmed both under the Law and the gospel and that the Pharisees had good right in accepting such belief.<sup>94</sup> The Sadducees denied the possibility of resurrection, but Jesus told them that they knew "neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mt. 22:29).

In the Fourth Gospel the resurrection is often described as a present experience. H. A. Guy claimed that the author of John introduced "the conventional idea of a final resurrection in order to repudiate it."<sup>95</sup> Jesus offered comfort to Martha by saying, "Your brother will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (Jn. 11:23, 24). But Jesus added, "Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (Jn. 11:26). Earlier the author of John had said, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (Jn. 5:25). In other words, the resurrection was taking place during the lifetimes of those who heard and responded to Jesus

---

<sup>94</sup>Pearson, Exposition of the Creed, p. 539; I Kings 17:22, 23; II Kings 4:32-35; 13:31; Mk. 5:41-42; Lk. 8:55; Lk. 7:12, 14-15; Jn. 11:39, 43-44. Pearson obviously accepts the raising of Lazarus, as well as the other examples, as historical fact.

<sup>95</sup>Guy, The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things," p. 161.

Christ.<sup>96</sup>

But, significantly, the Fourth Gospel is not without a "futurist" emphasis regarding the resurrection, presumably a bodily one. Had John not wished to convey the idea of a bodily resurrection he surely would not have gone to such effort in showing that the risen Christ possessed a real body (Jn. 20:20; 20:27-29; 21:1-14). Leckie noted that, had the author adhered to a Hellenistic view of the body (vis., that it degrades the spirit), he would never have written "the Word became flesh" (Jn. 1:14).<sup>97</sup> The fact that these two views do exist in John has led some to claim that the author tried to combine two eschatologies.<sup>98</sup>

#### The Problem of Bodily Resurrection

The question of bodily resurrection was crucial in the development of early Christianity. The Jewish traditions, as we have seen, upheld this doctrine, whereas those religions and philosophies under Greek influence maintained that only the soul is immortal. Even among the Hebrews there were differences, as reflected in the contrary views of the Pharisees and Sadducees: "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all" (Acts 23:8). The Sadducees, accepting only the Mosaic laws of the Pentateuch, rejected all the accretions of tradition, including belief in the resurrection of the dead. Since the less austere Pharisaic teachings prevailed among the middle and lower classes, however, they tended to

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., pp. 161-162.

<sup>97</sup>Leckie, *The World to Come and Final Destiny*, p. 76.

<sup>98</sup>Guy, *The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things,"* p. 166.



become Jewish orthodoxy.<sup>99</sup>

Reflecting influence from both the Jewish and Greek worlds were the Essenes, a syncretistic sect that combined Old Testament beliefs with a dualistic view of the universe; their terminology was similar to that found in Johannine literature and Gnosticism.<sup>100</sup> True to their Greek influence, the Essenes saw the soul escaping at death from the prison-house of the body to enjoy its former freedom.<sup>101</sup> Thus, they denied bodily resurrection. This position was accepted by other Jews who were subject to Hellenistic influences, most notably the Alexandrian thinkers, such as Philo, whose Platonism made bodily resurrection totally unacceptable to him.<sup>102</sup>

Greek dualism is seen in the widespread Gnostic cults which were probably offshoots of oriental mysticism; indeed, the early church fathers refer to Gnosticism as "Greek wisdom." These cults saw world history as a supercosmic drama involving the only two Realities--Spirit, which was goodness, and Matter, which was essentially evil. Both were considered eternal and mutually exclusive. Thus, bodies were dark cages which imprisoned radiant souls; upon the dissolution of bodies, souls might rejoin their world of light above.<sup>103</sup> Despite the many varieties of resurrection doctrines, it is impossible to ignore the gulf between this

---

<sup>99</sup>Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 73-75.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 73ff.

<sup>101</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 134.

<sup>102</sup>We have noted already the Alexandrian influence in intertestamental literature concerning the doctrine of resurrection.

<sup>103</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, pp. 165 ff.

Greek and Gnostic view and the orthodox Jewish doctrine of the inter-testamental period which taught that

The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead,  
 (Which it now receives, in order to preserve them.)  
 It shall make no change in their form,  
 But as it has received, so shall it restore them,  
 And as I delivered them unto it, so also shall it raise them.  
 (II Baruch 50:2)<sup>104</sup>

The Pauline concept of bodily resurrection is not completely in either the Jewish or Hellenistic traditions. Simply stated, Paul's hope was placed on the resurrection of the body, while the Greek hope rested on the immortality of the soul.<sup>105</sup> The Greek felt no compulsion to speculate on the form the soul might have in the world beyond: it was enough to recognize the soul as divine and to acknowledge that at death it was liberated for its homeward journey to God. Paul expected some kind of bodily form in the next life to avoid our "nakedness" (II Cor. 5:3), but he held that our "body" or "frame" would not be identical in substance to our earthly body. At this point Paul departed from Hebraic teachings when he insisted that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). Thus, Paul opposed not only the Greek notion of the soul's liberation of the body but also the rather crude Jewish notion of a wholly physical (or "fleshly") resurrection.<sup>106</sup>

The very word, soma (body), as used by Paul, conveys the idea of total personality<sup>107</sup> or the "whole person." Therefore, it is correct to

<sup>104</sup>See also Enoch 51:1.

<sup>105</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 133.

<sup>106</sup>W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), p. 308.

<sup>107</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 133.

say that "man is soma," but not "man has a soma." Paul refrained from using soma to refer to a dead person.<sup>108</sup> Sarx (flesh), on the other hand, was a power or force that lay hold on and controlled the soma. Sarx was corrupt, hostile to goodness, could not please God (Rom. 8:3-9; 12, 13), and had no inheritance in the kingdom (I Cor. 15:50). Only Christ could set one free from this rule of flesh (Rom. 8:2, 3). Redemption, therefore, released the whole man (soma) from under the bondage of flesh. Belief in the immortality of the soul, therefore, was rejected not so much for being untrue as for being incomplete.<sup>109</sup> At best it promised redemption for only part of man. The great hope to which Paul held fast was "not deliverance from the body, but redemption of the body. The redemption of the body would be the last stage in the great process of adoption by which we are made 'Sons of God.'"<sup>110</sup> "Bodily resurrection," commented Bultmann, is "the transformation of the soma from under the power of flesh into a spiritual soma or a Spirit-ruled soma."<sup>111</sup> This is why Paul (and the other writers of the New Testament) never spoke of the "resurrection of the flesh" when referring to the resurrection. Flesh was helpless before sin, powerless to do good and was that which dominated life before Christ entered it.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 192, 194, 195.

<sup>109</sup>Ramsey, The Resurrection of Christ, p. 101.

<sup>110</sup>E. R. Bernard, "Resurrection," in A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1947), Vol. IV, p. 236.

<sup>111</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 201.

<sup>112</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 151.

The church has traditionally opposed any belief that sought to undermine the doctrine of bodily resurrection. Irenaeus is typical of many writers who sought to show why Christians should not despise the body, but hold it in high regard. We must remember, he said, that God has made us in his own image; therefore, if we were to reject our bodies as hopelessly evil, we would be showing contempt for God's own handiwork of creation.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper should remind us that in the very giving of his body and blood Jesus was bringing salvation to all men. How could then we spurn the body (or keep from holding it in high regard) if his body has contributed to our deliverance?<sup>114</sup> Such reasoning was valid for Paul, to whom the Church was "the body of Christ" (I Cor. 12:12-31).<sup>115</sup>

#### Pauline Concept of Resurrection

##### Resurrection in early Christian preaching

Early Christian preaching, as reflected in Acts, continually underscored the resurrection of Jesus as the basis for hope of man's resurrection. On the day of Pentecost Peter reminded his listeners of Christ's crucifixion by the hands of lawless men and then added, "But God

<sup>113</sup>The Writings of Irenaeus, trans. by A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut, "Against Heresies," Volumes I, II, V, IX (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1868 [Vols. I and V], 1869 [Vols. II and IX]), 1.221.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 5.2.2.

<sup>115</sup>When Christians confess belief in bodily resurrection, said Leckie, "we profess our conviction that all which enters into the being of a man here shall have something corresponding to it in the life hereafter: that nothing of our personality shall be lost, but that all of it shall be transmuted into something familiar yet new, finite but deathless" (The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 78).

raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24). He pointed out that even David had foreseen and spoken "of the resurrection of the Christ, . . . . This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:31-32). That same day, after having healed a lame man in the temple court, Peter took the opportunity to speak of Jesus, the "Author of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15).<sup>116</sup> Later questioned by the Sanhedrin, Peter claimed that the cripple had been healed by "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:10; cf. 5:30). Before the Sanhedrin he reminded the Pharisees of their "common" belief in the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6 f.; 24:25, 21). Speaking in his own defense, Paul stated before King Agrippa that his message was only that which Moses and the prophets had said would come to pass: "that the Christ must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23).

Early Christian preaching, therefore, almost inevitably linked Christ's death with his resurrection, two events that formed the basis of what Bultmann called the "salvation-occurrence."<sup>117</sup> Although these events clearly held the greatest possible significance for the apostles, their preaching in Acts included no details of Christ's resurrection, his empty tomb, or his physical appearance. The fact that God raised

---

<sup>116</sup>See also Acts 10:40.

<sup>117</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 292 ff.

up Jesus took precedence over all else.<sup>118</sup> (See Appendix I for Paul's use of "death.")

#### Basis for resurrection hope

It is impossible to consider fully the Pauline concept of resurrection without taking into account the Apostle's attitude toward his risen Lord. We have seen already that Paul's thought came under the influence of Judaism, Hellenism, and even the syncretistic contributions of the Mystery Religions. Just how much Pauline thought was actually determined by these "influences" is difficult to say, but certainly the most profound influence of all was Jesus Christ.<sup>119</sup> Paul himself declared that his teaching was "not man's gospel": ". . . I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12).<sup>120</sup>

<sup>118</sup>I Corinthians 15 is an exception since Paul is specifically arguing against some who denied this event. In I Corinthians 15:5-8 he recalls five appearances of the risen Lord who appeared to Cephas, to the Twelve, to more than five hundred brethren at one time, to James, to all the apostles, and finally to Paul himself. Paul seemingly refers to these appearances in order to convince members at Corinth who deny the possibility of any resurrection (I Cor. 15:12). It is not likely, however, that he intended this to be an exhaustive list, but rather a summary of accepted tradition. Resurrection appearances of Jesus listed in the Gospels are: Matthew 28:9-10 (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary); 28:16-20 (eleven disciples); Mark 16:5 (young man in white robe but no recorded appearances of Jesus); Luke 24:13-31 (Cleopas and other traveler on Emmaus Road); 24:34 (Peter); 24:36-50 (disciples); John 20:11-18 (Mary); 20:19-23 (ten disciples); 20:26-29 (eleven disciples); 21 (seven disciples). Many, as in Athens, had to be convinced concerning the resurrection (Acts 17:32). Before King Agrippa he asked, "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?" (Acts 26:8). By recalling the five post-resurrection appearances of Christ Paul was attempting to show that resurrection itself was a valid experience. If one man can be resurrected then there is a possibility for all men.

<sup>119</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, pp. 509-510.

<sup>120</sup>We are not certain how Paul came to know of the teachings

It is interesting that Paul included himself among those to whom Christ had appeared (I Cor. 9:1). This could refer to experiences mentioned in Acts 18:9, 22:17 and II Corinthians 12:2-4. More likely it was a reference to his confrontation with the risen Lord as he was traveling to Damascus.<sup>121</sup> Paul may have used the name Jesus to underscore the fact that it was the Jesus of history who appeared to him as opposed to a mythological figure.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, Paul's experience was so real and personal that he made no distinction between it and the Lord's appearances to the other disciples (I Cor. 15:4-8). On at least three occasions it was stated that Paul "saw" the Lord, who spoke to him on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:17, 27; 22:14).<sup>123</sup> Still, one cannot rule out the possibility that Paul actually saw Jesus during his earthly life, especially if there were only twelve to eighteen months between the

---

and life of Christ, although more than once he speaks of having received things from the Lord (I Cor. 11:23; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 12:2). We can only speculate about what happened during his stay in Arabia. Later he must have received much from Peter and other apostles. Perhaps he knew a great deal already from an earlier period of observation as he traveled in and out of Jerusalem during Jesus' ministry or shortly thereafter.

<sup>121</sup>Marcus Dods, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Expositor's Bible, 6 vols. (New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.), vol. V, p. 670.

<sup>122</sup>Clarence T. Craig, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Interpreter's Bible, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), vol. X, p. 98.

<sup>123</sup>A. Robertson and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1911), p. 177. It is difficult to see how Knox can refer to such passages as "vague or oblique allusions" (John Knox, Chapters in a Life of Paul [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954], note on p. 166).

crucifixion and the conversion of Saul. It is possible that Paul may have even seen Jesus crucified since the crucifixion occurred between the time that Saul was in Jerusalem going up to the school of Gamaliel and when he witnessed the death of Stephen.<sup>124</sup> It is not improbable that Saul, the Pharisee, had occasionally listened to and perhaps even debated with this "false prophet" who was causing so much excitement among the people.<sup>125</sup> It is possible that he could have been present with the Sanhedrin at the trial.<sup>126</sup> What is not conjecture, however, is that Paul had a personal and dynamic encounter with the risen Lord and, as a result, the personal influence of Christ on Paul became greater than any other figure or tradition. Thus, although we may agree that Paul did "retain his Hebrew accent, as it were, even in his new faith,"<sup>127</sup> nevertheless, it was the person of Jesus Christ who stood at the center of Pauline Christianity. This emphasis is significant: the first Christians did not come to believe in eternal life out of concern for their own souls, but because of their regard for Christ. Rather than arguing from a general resurrection to Christ's resurrection, the New Testament

---

<sup>124</sup>G. A. A. Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 11. Gardner accepts Luke's statement as historical that Saul was at the stoning of Stephen, but rejects the idea that he was in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion. He also rejects, therefore, the idea that Paul saw Jesus in his earthly life (The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p. 25).

<sup>125</sup>Johannes Weiss, Paul and Jesus (London: Harper Brothers, 1909), p. 54.

<sup>126</sup>Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul, pp. 12-13; Weiss, Paul and Jesus, pp. 54, 43 ff. This is one possible interpretation of II Cor. 5:16.

<sup>127</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 322.



reasoned in the opposite direction. Christ was always the starting point and the new life could not be properly understood aside from this fact and experience.<sup>128</sup>

Resurrection to Paul was the result of a life lived "in Christ."<sup>129</sup> The believer's resurrection had an organic relation to the resurrection of his Lord.<sup>130</sup> If Jesus had never risen from the dead, then the Christian would have no hope of rising. And "if Christ is preached as raised from the dead," said Paul to the Corinthians, "how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (I Cor. 15:12). With his background as a Pharisee, Paul needed no convincing about the reality of bodily resurrection.

The Christian's resurrection involves the whole process of deliverance from sin and death. Man, incapable of conquering these enemies, looks to Christ who has done it for him. The resurrection of Christ encouraged men to accept resurrection as a fact. It fostered hope in the resurrection belief which had hitherto been supported only by scripture and which was openly rejected by the Sadducees. Since Christians demanded acceptance of this historical event, the doctrine of resurrection continued to hold its place of central importance:<sup>131</sup> ". . . if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that

---

<sup>128</sup>John Baillie, And the Life Everlasting (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 108.

<sup>129</sup>Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, Vol. II, p. 85.

<sup>130</sup>Dale Moody, The Hope of Glory (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 83.

<sup>131</sup>E. R. Bernard, "Resurrection," in A Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1947), Vol. IV, p. 234.

God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

### Two concepts of resurrection

In Pauline writings the resurrection is spoken of both mystically and literally. On one hand, there can be little doubt that Paul believed in the resurrection of Christ as an historical fact.<sup>132</sup> His argument from prophecy (Acts 13:32-37) may or may not be convincing to the twentieth-century mind, but it would be difficult to read I Corinthians 15 without sensing Paul's passionate conviction about the reality of this event. If proof could be given that one man actually did rise from the dead (as Christ did), then no one could logically deny the possibility of resurrection on the grounds that it had never happened.<sup>133</sup> If Christ were not risen, Paul reasoned, both the living and the dead would be without hope.

In some instances Paul seems to have emphasized the literal meaning of the resurrection for the Christian. In Thessalonians, for instance, we read that "the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (I Thess. 4:16).

And, in a later writing: ". . . our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21).

Yet, in other instances Paul seems to have interpreted the

---

<sup>132</sup>S. H. Hooke, "Resurrection," in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918), Vol. II, p. 324.

<sup>133</sup>Pearson, Exposition of the Creed, p. 539.

resurrection as purely spiritual experience in the life of the person who accepts and confesses Christ as Saviour. A Christian was one who had been buried with Christ in baptism and "raised with him through faith" (Col. 2:12).<sup>134</sup> This interpretation may have led to the difficulty expressed in II Timothy where some were contending that "the resurrection is past already" (2:18).

Are the spiritual and the literal views of resurrection reconcilable, or do they represent doctrinal development? In fact, these alternatives are not mutually exclusive: although Bernard and Kennedy contend that Paul's spiritual and physical notions of resurrection were compatible and therefore unchanged,<sup>135</sup> it is possible, as we shall see, to maintain the compatibility of these views and yet still trace some development. These two views are not meant to conflict at all. Paul, never a systematic theologian, often used two such ideas side by side to underscore a basic truth. Paul was not speaking simply of a hope for the future. The Apostle desired full salvation for the whole man, and that meant the man "now." Man's hope for the future was supported by God's action in the past, which had been revealed in the resurrection of Christ and made available for the Christian in this life.<sup>136</sup> In other words, Paul's concept of resurrection was based both on historical fact

---

<sup>134</sup>See also Col. 3:1 and Eph. 2:1, 5, 6.

<sup>135</sup>Bernard, "Resurrection," in A Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. IV, p. 234; Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 271.

<sup>136</sup>James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p. 243.

and personal experience.<sup>137</sup>

The believer and the risen Christ are so united that Paul himself could say Christ "lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The same indwelling Spirit which had raised Jesus from the dead would dwell in the Christian "now" and assure the mortal body of life at death (Rom. 8:11). The quickening of the mortal body in the future would depend upon (or is the consequence of)<sup>138</sup> the present Spirit being made alive by Christ in the present. The hope of the final resurrection was of great significance to Paul. Yet resurrection from the death of sin to a new life of righteousness in Christ was even more miraculous than resurrection from physical death. Indeed, the latter miracle would be possible only after the former had taken place.

#### Nature of the resurrected body

In I Corinthians 15 Paul used analogies to express the true nature of the resurrected life. These passages are in keeping with Paul's Jewish heritage, although at times he broke with his past in speaking of a spiritualized risen body.<sup>139</sup>

But some one will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. (Cor. 15:35-38)

---

<sup>137</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 547.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., p. 551.

<sup>139</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 304-308; also Henry St. John Thackeray, The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought (London: Macmillan and Company, 1900), pp. 118-119.

The Christian must face death in the physical sense, but he, like the seed, would reappear in a new form.<sup>140</sup> One can see the distinction here between Paul's "spiritual" body and the gross, physical concept of Jewish writers.<sup>141</sup> The resurrection of believers and the resurrected body itself were both due to God's action. As in the analogy of the kernel of grain, it was neither the seed nor the sower who provided the new body, but God. And as surely as each seed had a body which was proper to its kind, so He would also provide for each person the proper resurrected body.<sup>142</sup>

In each of these passages Paul attempted to correct misunderstandings which had arisen over the nature of the resurrected body as opposed to the earthly body. He implied that the resurrected body would differ as much from the present body as the stars differ from one another (I Cor. 15:40, 41). The natural should be replaced by the spiritual and the mortal should put on immortality.

When Paul contemplated a "spiritual body" we remember that he was not thinking of an immaterial spirit<sup>143</sup> which flew to the upper regions at death. Nor was he setting forth a philosophical concept suggesting either reincarnation or absorption back into the Divine as found in Platonic and Stoic thought. Paul used "spiritual body" as a "semimeta-physical term," said Moffatt, showing the risen life to be "neither

---

<sup>140</sup>Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul, p. 241.

<sup>141</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 306.

<sup>142</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 370.

<sup>143</sup>For Paul even the spirit had a material quality, says Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 308.

pure spirit nor wrapped in a crudely material shape, neither disembodied nor yet embodied, as current rabbinic speculation imagined, in a replica of the present physical constitution."<sup>144</sup> It is noteworthy that Paul had no more to say specifically about the resurrection of the body than he did about the resurrection of the flesh. Instead he underscored the resurrection of the dead since "that which if raised receives a new body, imperishable, a body of glory that belongs to the Spirit."<sup>145</sup> This is a central concept in the Pauline view of life after death. He was convinced that personal immortality involved the whole man, preserving his uniqueness as a knowing and sensing person.<sup>146</sup> Surely followers of Christ would have greater capabilities for knowledge, love, understanding, and so forth, in the future life than those they enjoyed in the present. The limitations of the physical body were all too apparent for the Apostle, and he had no desire to be bound by the "flesh and blood" resurrection of contemporary Judaism. Of course, some kind of body was necessary if the spiritual personality was to have any real expression at all.<sup>147</sup> Thus Paul longed for the spiritual, but not the immaterial.

Paul made little attempt to describe the spiritual body of the next life,<sup>148</sup> but he did give some general characteristics by which it

---

<sup>144</sup>Moffatt, First Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 260.

<sup>145</sup>Craig, "First Corinthians," in The Interpreter's Bible, vol. X. pp. 246-247.

<sup>146</sup>John Short (Exposition), "First Corinthians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. X (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 245-246.

<sup>147</sup>Moffatt, First Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 260.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid.

might be distinguished from our present bodies. The resurrected body would be imperishable (I Cor. 15:42), raised in glory and power (15:43), a spiritual body (15:44), and immortal (15:53).<sup>149</sup>

Certain contrasts and similarities between the spiritual body and the physical body need our consideration. Notice the resurrection appearances of Christ. Certain bodily characteristics must have been present in the risen Lord since he was identified by his friends (Mark 16:12; John 20:14; 21:4). Thomas even examined the nail prints in his hands and feet and the spear wound in his side (Jn. 20:27). He cooked and then ate fish with some of his disciples (Jn. 21:9-14; Lk. 24:41-43). While the bodily form of the risen Christ did have many similarities with our earthly bodies, it is equally true that there were significant differences, thus being a departure from the Hebraic tradition of the fully physical resurrection. When Mary beheld him on that first Easter morn he commanded her not to touch him since at that time he was "not yet ascended to the Father: (Jn. 20:17). He seemed to have been free of our physical limitations: he could, and did, appear at will, comforting, counseling and directing his followers, and physical barriers posed no problem as he entered through closed doors to share a meal and break bread with his disciples. He had been transformed, yet was still recognizable and loved by those who knew him best. He in turn remembered his own and loved them no less than before.

#### The time of resurrection (at death or Parousia?)

Let us turn now to the question of when the resurrection will

<sup>149</sup>See also I Cor. 15:49.

take place. We have seen in Thessalonians (I Thess. 4:16, 17) that the resurrection followed immediately on the Parousia.<sup>150</sup> But must the believer remain in some intermediate state (asleep?), either "unclothed" or in his "old" body from the time of death until the Second Coming at some future date? This runs counter to the Pauline view that the righteous would receive their resurrected bodies at death. Such a position was clearly expressed in II Corinthians 5:1-4, 6, 8.<sup>151</sup>

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life . . . .

. . . we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, . . . and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Various attempts have been made to explain and interpret the discrepancies between I Corinthians 15:51, 52, and II Corinthians 5:1-8. Some, of course, say there is no conflict at all. Kennedy, for instance, claims these passages do not represent a change of thought for the Apostle since he made no reference to the "detail of time" in II Corinthians 5:1 ff., nor did he mention a specific period.<sup>152</sup> "We have" (ἔχουσιν) simply means that "there awaits us as a sure possession."<sup>153</sup> Therefore, Paul was just expressing a desire to escape physical death by

---

<sup>150</sup>See also I Cor. 15:51-52.

<sup>151</sup>Philippians 1:23 conveys a similar view.

<sup>152</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, pp. 262 ff.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid.



living until the Parousia.<sup>154</sup> And this represents no change of thought.<sup>155</sup>

Charles, on the other hand, noted considerable development of thought between the writing of I Corinthians and II Corinthians. In his earlier letter the Apostle placed the resurrection at the time of the Parousia (I Cor. 15:51, 52), which was consistent with traditional Jewish belief. Yet there were apparent inconsistencies of which he was unaware at that time. For instance, the analogy of the seed indicated, to a certain extent, that the resurrection of the righteous would come immediately at death instead of waiting for the Parousia. Also, if the deceased Christian had to wait for his new body until the Parousia this would fail "to establish an organic connection with the risen body."<sup>156</sup>

In I Corinthians Paul seemed to be unaware of this contradiction, but in II Corinthians, especially chapter five, the inconsistency was recognized and the earlier (and more traditional) doctrine was replaced by the belief that the righteous would receive their resurrected bodies at death.

In II Corinthians the Apostle still would have liked to live until the Parousia (5:4), but since the possibility of death could not be ignored he comforted himself and others with the thought that when we die, we have (ἔχουσιν), or come into possession of, at that time,

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>156</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 453.

an immortal body in heaven.<sup>157</sup> Thus, the righteous would be resurrected and receive their new bodies at death<sup>158</sup> instead of the Parousia.

It seems then that some development of thought took place between the writing of First and Second Corinthians.<sup>159</sup> Knox was so convinced of this that he believed Paul completely revised his earlier (and more Jewish) views in order to accommodate an eschatology which was largely Hellenistic.<sup>160</sup> This hardly seems likely, however, since the idea of bodily resurrection is found throughout the Pauline material (II Cor. 1:9; 4:14; Phil. 3:11). It is enough to recognize that II Corinthians bears the stamp of Hellenistic influence (at least in its terminology) without contending that it represents an entirely new eschatology.<sup>161</sup>

But one can more properly account for the difference between I Corinthians 15 and II Corinthians 5 by understanding Paul's concept of the "Age to Come."<sup>162</sup> This New Age, both "eternally existent in the heavens" and yet present on "this side of the grave," appeared first in the Resurrection of Jesus. Christians would become part of this New Age in

---

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., p. 458.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid., pp. 458-459.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid., pp. 453, 457-458.

<sup>160</sup>W. L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), p. 128 f.

<sup>161</sup>Thackeray holds that in this epistle Paul draws upon the language of Wisdom, especially as it concerns the state of the soul after death. At the same time, Paul rejects the doctrine of the soul's immortality as over against the belief in bodily resurrection (The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought, p. 133).

<sup>162</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 344.

the present when they "died" and were "raised with Christ."<sup>163</sup> The "old" body would decay at physical death, but the Christian would have a new body in the world beyond and experience final blessedness when the Age to Come reached its last stage.<sup>164</sup>

The overlapping of the Ages<sup>165</sup> (the two fold concept of the Age to Come as presently existing and yet not fully realized)<sup>166</sup> was held by Paul without any apparent feeling of ambiguity,<sup>167</sup> and it is precisely this fact that helps us understand the discrepancies between I Corinthians 15 and II Corinthians 5. Paul, thinking in terms of the coming advent (in I Corinthians 15), was concerned about the general resurrection and final consummation. Since the Parousia was so near, the Apostle did not (at this time) pause to consider the immediate fate of one who died before the return of Christ. But in II Corinthians 5 he was more concerned about what would happen at death than at the End.<sup>168</sup> His personal experience had led him to face death as a real possibility in the immediate future. He perhaps would not live to witness the Parousia after all. Likewise, others were facing this same problem. Quite naturally

---

<sup>163</sup>The Colossian Christians were said to have "died" (though still alive in the flesh) and "been raised with Christ." Now their "life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3; also 2:12).

<sup>164</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 317-318.

<sup>165</sup>Schoeps says that "this mingling of the two ages constitutes the distinctive eschatological standpoint of Pauline theology" (Paul, p. 99).

<sup>166</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 316-317.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>168</sup>Guy, The New Testament Doctrine of the "Last Things," p. 117.

this led him to consider what might lie immediately beyond the grave.<sup>169</sup> As a result he reminded the Christian that his transformation had already begun and would be fully revealed beyond the grave.

In I Corinthians 15 Paul was speaking to those who had rejected the resurrection on the basis of the old body being brought back to life. In answer to these criticisms he was showing that the resurrected body would not in fact be the same as the earthly body. The material body would perish at the grave. The new would be both glorious and imperishable. In II Corinthians the Apostle attempted to show that the believer would not be separated from his Lord whether he lived until the Parousia or died before; indeed, the person who died before the Parousia would be nearer Christ than he was in life.<sup>170</sup>

Most important was the fact that the believer would neither exist in some disembodied state nor wait unclothed in some temporary lodging (see section on the Intermediate State) until the final consummation. He would receive, at death, his resurrected body and go immediately into the presence of Christ. Charles was correct in saying that this idea was "implied" in I Corinthians 15:35-49 and "stated categorically" in II Corinthians 5:1-8.<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 317.

<sup>170</sup>Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1915), pp. 161-162.

<sup>171</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 59; also Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 127. Some remain unconvinced that II Corinthians 5:1 ff. implies a resurrected body at death and conclude that Paul "expects to be with the Lord before the Parousia in a disembodied state" (Bernard, "Resurrection," p. 235). Such a view, however, seems quite improbable for Paul, the Jew, the "Pharisee," and the author of I Corinthians 15.

What happens then at the second advent to those who have already received their resurrected bodies? The answer is suggested in Paul's later epistles when he spoke not of the resurrection of the righteous, but of their "revelation" or manifestation (i.e., revealing the glory which they had been given already).<sup>172</sup> "The final consummation," said Davies, is merely "the manifestation of that which is already existent but 'hidden' in the eternal order."<sup>173</sup>

#### Universal resurrection? (How many resurrections?)

Are only the righteous raised because of their unique relationship with the risen Christ or is this an experience for all men? This question is often raised concerning Paul and the teaching of a general resurrection. In answering this, let us first consider the evidence of those who argue for the resurrection of the righteous only. We have seen already that Isaiah 26:19, Psalms 16:9-11, and so forth, suggest the godly will be resurrected and brought to new life. Likewise, in II Maccabees (7:14, 15) we read: "'Tis meet for those who perish at men's hands to cherish hope divine that they shall be raised up by God again; but thou--thou shalt have no resurrection to life.'" In II Baruch (30:2) the same point is stressed by adding that "all who have fallen asleep in hope of Him shall rise again."<sup>174</sup> In the Synoptics Jesus spoke of "those

---

<sup>172</sup>Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 127. This is similar to the revelation of Christ which will be revealed at his second coming (I Cor. 1:7 and II Thess. 1:7). Even though his glory is yet to be revealed (or manifest), he is in possession of it already (Charles, Eschatology, p. 460).

<sup>173</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 318. See Rom. 8:19 and Col. 3:4.

<sup>174</sup>The premature death of the righteous is followed by immortality

who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead. . . . they . . . are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Lk. 20:35, 36; note also verse 37 f.). People would be repaid for their goodness at "the resurrection of the just" (Lk. 14:14).

For Paul the very relationship which the believer enjoyed (now) with his risen Lord assured for him a final resurrection (Rom. 8:11). The resurrection of Christians had "its beginning in faith-union with Christ."<sup>175</sup> The believer was to "be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom. 6:5). The implication here is that only the righteous would experience a resurrection (I Cor. 15:51-57; II Cor. 5:1-5).

On the other hand Daniel (12:2) spoke of some awaking to "everlasting life and some to . . . everlasting contempt."<sup>176</sup> The Synoptic writers did not speak of a resurrection for the unrighteous,<sup>177</sup> although the implication may be found in many of the parables and certainly in the concept of judgment; and in John, Jesus was reported to have spoken of a future time, "when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment" (Jn. 5:28-29). Paul, in Acts, referred to "a resurrection of both the just and the unjust"

---

but the very memory of the ungodly shall perish," Samuel Holmes, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, note on p. 540, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. I.

<sup>175</sup>Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, p. 239.

<sup>176</sup>I Enoch also acknowledges that ". . . shall the earth give back that which has been entrusted to it, . . . Sheol . . . shall give back that which it has received, and hell shall give back that which it owes . . . the Elect One shall . . . choose the righteous . . . from among them" (I Enoch 51:1, 2).

<sup>177</sup>Moody, *The Hope of Glory*, p. 94.

(24:15).<sup>178</sup> Weiss said that Paul, like the author of the Book of Revelation, taught a second resurrection (i.e., the general resurrection following the resurrection of Christians). In fact, some believe that I Corinthians 15:23 ff. suggests three resurrections: Christ; those "who belong to Christ"; and the rest of the dead.<sup>179</sup>

More convincing, however, is Paul's concept of universal judgment which implied a universal resurrection.<sup>180</sup> Jesus spoke of a judgment for all men (Mk. 4:22; Mt. 25:32 ff.). Clearly, the Apostle envisioned a day when all would appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10). It does not seem reasonable to expect such a gathering to consist partly of immaterial spirits and partly of those who had already received their resurrected bodies. It appears, therefore, that Paul did believe in a universal resurrection. At the same time, he did

---

<sup>178</sup>It does not seem necessary to deny with Charles that this passage is Pauline simply on the basis that Paul nowhere else speaks of a resurrection of the wicked (Charles, Eschatology, note on p. 444).

<sup>179</sup>C. S. C. Williams is content to speak of a resurrection in "stages." Christ is first and then his followers are resurrected at the second coming ("I and II Corinthians," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Matthew Black [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962], p. 964). Also, Johannes Weiss, The History of Primitive Christianity (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Company, 1937), Vol. II, p. 532. Some would say that the universal resurrection is referred to in I Corinthians 15:22: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Since \_\_\_\_\_ has a universal application in the first clause, it should have no less meaning in the second clause (Thackeray, The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought, p. 120). Opponents of this view would, however, limit the scope of the second clause to those who are Christ's (e.g., Moffatt, First Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 245).

<sup>180</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 77.

not elaborate on this,<sup>181</sup> nor did the event receive any further attention (than Acts 24:15) in his treatment of last things.

### Judgment

The "certainty of judgment" is a strong and recurring theme found throughout Pauline thought.<sup>182</sup> Schweitzer contended that the Pauline ethic was "dominated by the idea of judgment and reward."<sup>183</sup> One would hardly expect this to be otherwise since judgment played such a large role in his native Judaism. Being an ethical religion, the Christian faith makes certain moral demands upon men. Stubborn refusal to recognize and obey the laws of life can only lead to disaster, whereas obedience brings with it certain rewards, even if one must wait until the afterlife for a just distribution of these rewards.<sup>184</sup> We shall examine four aspects of Paul's concept of judgment: its similarity to Hebraic notions of judgment; the influence of Jesus upon it; its relationship with other eschatological events; and finally its full exposition by Paul.

---

<sup>181</sup>J. A. T. Robinson mentions that Paul never relates (or brings into harmony) the two concepts of a believer's resurrection and a general resurrection which will include both the just and the unjust ("Resurrection in the New Testament," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 4 vols. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962], Vol. IV, p. 52).

<sup>182</sup>T. R. Glover, Paul of Tarsus (London: SCM Press, 1925), p. 234.

<sup>183</sup>Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, p. 310.

<sup>184</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, pp. 199-200.



## Comparison of Jewish and Pauline Views of Judgment

During the Old Testament period, Israel's concept of judgment broadened as her view of God expanded and matured. In earlier days the "day of the Lord" was that time when God's wrath would be directed against the national enemies of Israel: just as "the day of Midian" (Is. 9:4) was a day of victory over Midian, so the day of Yahweh would be a time of victory for Israel over her enemies. Later, the prophets revealed that the day of the Lord would bring judgment upon Israel herself because of her wickedness (Amon 5:18-24; Hos. 4:1-6); indeed, on that "day" God would vindicate himself and his righteous purposes, instead of Israel.<sup>185</sup> This concept of judgment was expanded to include all of mankind (Is. 66:16, 18; Ps. 96:13).<sup>186</sup>

We must remember that the idea of reward and punishment in the world beyond death held little meaning for the ancient Hebrew since Sheol was no respecter of moral distinctions and since during this time the Hebraic faith had no real concept of immortality.<sup>187</sup> Thus, the notion of judgment began as a process that became operative in this life but expanded and enlarged until another life became necessary. Eventually all judgments--favorable and unfavorable--became associated with the afterlife. The intertestamental books picture divine judgment vividly:

And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of [his] holy ones  
To execute judgment upon all, and to destroy all the ungodly;  
And to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness

<sup>185</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 89.

<sup>186</sup>Often the coming judgment was graphically portrayed; see Zeph. 1:18; Ps. 98:8-9; Is. 66:15; Hag. 2:22-23; Joel 3:16; Mal. 4:5.

<sup>187</sup>Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, p. 53.

which they have ungodly committed, [And of all the hard things which] ungodly sinners [have spoken against Him.] (I Enoch 1:9)<sup>188</sup>

These were concepts with which Paul was most familiar before becoming a Christian. Knowing that the average Jewish listener would also be familiar with them, Paul did not hesitate in using this pictorial framework of traditional Jewish thought to convey Christian truth regarding judgment or any other aspect of his eschatology.<sup>189</sup> Some of the more obvious similarities and parallels between Pauline and earlier Jewish thought concerning the coming Judgment were:

1. The judgment of secret things:

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Eccles. 12:14)

. . . he shall judge the secret things, And none shall be able to utter a lying word before him; . . . (I Enoch 49:4)

. . . on that day . . . God judges the secrets of men. . . .  
(Rom. 2:16)

2. Universal judgment:

. . . . .  
for he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
. . . . . (Ps. 96:13)

<sup>188</sup>Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. II, p. 189.

Other books reveal similar descriptions: "And then shall the pit of torment appear, and over against it the place of refreshment; The furnace of Gehenna shall be made manifest, and over against it the Paradise of delight" (IV Ezra 7:36). "And sinners shall perish for ever in the day of the Lord's judgment, When God visited the earth with His judgement. But they that fear the Lord shall find mercy therein, . . . But sinners shall perish for ever" (Psalms of Solomon 15:12, 13). "For the Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone, And He will appear to punish the Gentiles, And He will destroy all their idols" (The Assumption of Moses 10:7).

<sup>189</sup>Schoeps, *Paul*, p. 43.

At judgment ". . . the odour of brimstone pervades all mankind . . . (The Sibylline books, Book 3:60, 61; cf. The Book of Jubilees 5:14)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, . . . (II Cor. 5:10; cf. Rom. 14:10)

3. Each man receiving according to his deserts:

Is this the oath that thou didst swear to thy father and again to thy mother before they died? Thou hast broken the oath and on the moment that thou didst swear to thy father wast thou condemned. (The Book of Jubilees 37:17)

. . . whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (Gal. 6:7 cf. Col. 3:24, 25)

4. Testing by fire:

. . . who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, . . . (Mal. 3:2, 3)

. . . each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. (I Cor. 3:13)

5. Punishment and destruction:

For behold, the Lord is coming  
forth out of his place  
to punish the inhabitants of the  
earth for their iniquity,  
. . . . . (Is. 26:21)

. . . know ye that ye are prepared for the day of destruction  
. . . for ye are prepared for the day of the great judgment,  
for the day of tribulation and great shame for your spirits.  
(I Enoch 98:10)

They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. (II Thess. 1:9)

6. Resurrection of the dead:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan. 12:2)

And the earth shall restore those that sleep in her, and the dust those that are at rest therein. (IV Ezra 7:32)

. . . For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (I Cor. 15:52, cf.; I Thess. 4:16)

#### 7. Coming of the end:

And the Most High shall be revealed upon the throne judgment: (and then cometh the End.) . . . (IV Ezra 7:33)

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father . . . " (I Cor. 15:24)

Though many more such parallels can be listed,<sup>190</sup> these are sufficient to reveal the obvious similarities between Pauline and Jewish eschatological thought. Our problem is to resist being tempted by these similarities into seeing Pauline thought as merely another version of Judaism. For example, there is a marked contrast between the way the Jewish apocalyptic writers and Paul spoke of judgment. The occasions when Paul spoke of God's coming judgment in vivid terms (II Thess. 1:7-9; Rom. 2:8, 9; 2:5; etc.) appear mild when put along side the emotion-charged statements of I Enoch, II Baruch, and IV Ezra.<sup>191</sup>

. . . they were cast into an abyss, full of fire and flaming, and full of pillars of fire . . . those blinded sheep were . . . judged and found guilty and cast into this fiery abyss,

---

<sup>190</sup>Charles, "The Testament of the XII Patriarchs," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 292.

<sup>191</sup>Such a difference is understandable when one remembers that Paul thought of the Christian as one coming under God's judgment in the act of justification. According to Paul, when the believer accepts and submits himself to God's judgment upon his sin and commits himself to God's love, he becomes both judged and forgiven at the same time (Leslie Newbigin, Sin and Salvation [London: SCM Press, 1956], pp. 104-105). The final judgment (Rom. 14:10), therefore, holds neither fear (Rom. 8:33, 34) nor condemnation (Rom. 8:1) because "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col. 1:13).

and they burned . . . and I saw those sheep burning and their bones burning. (I Enoch 90:24-27)

Therefore a fire shall consume their thoughts, And in flame shall the meditations of their reins be tried. . . . (II Baruch 48:32)

. . . they shall . . . depart to be tormented. (II Baruch 51:6)

Also in IV Ezra we read of "the pit of torment" and "the furnace of Gehenna" (7:36). In contrast to this preoccupation with judgment and punishment,<sup>192</sup> the Apostle's language tended to be restrained, and he refused to speculate about or to dwell upon the morbid details of this event. The idea of divine retribution, though never abandoned, was not the focal point of his teaching.<sup>193</sup> Of greater importance were the spiritual and ethical demands of God's kingdom in the present and the thought of future glory which Christians were to share at Christ's return.

The greatest departure from Hebrew tradition in the Pauline concept of judgment was its emphasis on the present life rather than some distant age as the time of judgment. This same difference is reflected in Paul's view of adoption. Already (in the present) believers were "sons" (Rom. 8:14), "children" (Rom. 8:16), and "heirs" (Rom. 8:17) for they had received the "spirit of sonship" (Rom. 8:15) for God the Father. Likewise, the unrighteous man was living under God's wrath in the present (Rom. 1:18), but this wrath would be revealed in full on the final day of judgment (Rom. 2:5). The reason then for Paul's lack of

---

<sup>192</sup>Oliver C. Quick, for example, says that in II Esdras of the Apocrypha that the last day appears "more as an hour of doom" for sinners than of real victory for God" (Doctrines of the Creed [London: Collins Fontana Library, 1963], p. 245).

<sup>193</sup>Salmond, Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 513.

scenery concerning the judgment is to be found in this tension between present and future,<sup>194</sup> something that made his eschatology more than "Jewish Messianism."<sup>195</sup>

#### Influence of the Teachings of Jesus upon Pauline Thought Regarding Judgment

There is, of course, a strong similarity between some of the eschatological sayings of Jesus and certain Pauline passages.<sup>196</sup> Headlam suggested that while Christ taught in language of apocalyptic tradition, he "always [transformed] the ideas while using the language."<sup>197</sup> There are unmistakable similarities in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, the Pauline material, and even Revelation,<sup>198</sup> indicating a common source or influence. Some of Paul's ideas of judgment were based directly on the teachings of Jesus. For instance, in Matthew 24:6<sup>199</sup> we read, "And you

---

<sup>194</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, pp. 196-198.

<sup>195</sup>Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 130.

<sup>196</sup>E.g., Matthew 19:28 and I Corinthians 6:2 both refer to the followers of Christ or "saints" passing judgment upon the world. Also, Matthew 25:31, 32 and II Corinthians 5:10 speak of Christ's final judgment upon all men.

<sup>197</sup>Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p. 32.

<sup>198</sup>For instance: tribulation and increase of evil preceding Parousia; the "coming" to be sudden; the end is near, but "not yet"; etc. Naturally, there are also certain differences such as the Millennium in Revelation 20.

<sup>199</sup>It is not the purpose of this paper to investigate the various contributions of those who argue for (or against) the authenticity of Mark 13 (and the parallels in Matthew and Mark). However, it seems that Beasley-Murray in Jesus and the Future has amassed a considerable amount of support in favor of this work as the authoritative teaching of Jesus. The fact that Mark 13 is particularly interested in revealing specific details and signs of the last times is often cited as grounds for its lack of authenticity, since Jesus elsewhere seems to

will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." Compare this with Paul's admonition: ". . . we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come" (II Thess. 2:1-2). Paul's further warning, "let no one deceive you in any way" (II Thess. 2:3), is similar to Jesus' "Take heed that no one leads you astray" (Mt. 24:4 and Mk. 13:5).

---

reject signs and speaks of the kingdom coming suddenly. Some reasons for rejecting the authenticity of this discourse are that (1) Jesus refused to give the Pharisees a sign when they sought one; (2) Jesus referred to the coming end as being sudden and quite unexpected; and (3) Jesus spoke of the kingdom as coming "without observation." Beasley-Murray suggests that three other facts be considered in the face of this criticism: (1) Jesus denounced his contemporaries for not taking notice of the signs already before their eyes (Lk. 12:54-56); (2) on at least one occasion he called attention to the signs which referred to the coming future kingdom (Mk. 13:28-29); (3) Jesus spoke of the perfected kingdom as coming with observation (Mk. 14:62). Neither is it contradictory to say that Jesus will come suddenly and yet announced by certain signs (Jesus and the Future, pp. 172-173). Furthermore, the author quite convincingly shows that the comparison which is often made between Mark 13 and the Apocalypse of Peter is largely superficial. The absence in Mark of any grotesque imagery of hell (as found in the Petrine apocalypse) is given as one point in fact (Ibid., pp. 178-179). These are but two examples of the force and persuasion with which Beasley-Murray confronts those questions raised against the authority of Mark 13 and how powerfully he argues for the acceptance of this discourse. On the other hand, there is no lack of support for the position of those in favor of this apocalyptic discourse (Mk. 13:5-27) being accepted as secondary material. Norman Perrin argues against the acceptance of Mark 13 largely on the basis of its language (especially the vocabulary) and its use of the LXX (The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, pp. 131-134). Leading scholars readily confess that Mark 13 (and the parallel passages of Matthew 24 and Luke 21) poses one of the largest problems of the New Testament. For example, "Mark 13 is the biggest problem in the Gospel," says A. M. Hunter, The Gospel According to St. Mark (London: SCM Press, 1948), p. 122; "This is one of the most perplexing problems of interpretation which the New Testament presents," adds H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 168.

Other parallels may be found among Jesus' and Paul's parables concerning the last judgment.<sup>200</sup> In the Gospels we are asked to "watch," for no one knows the day of the Lord's coming (Mt. 24:42; Mk. 13:35-36; cf. Lk. 12:37-40). Paul's emphasis was the same when he reminded the Thessalonians to "keep awake and be sober," for the Lord will come as "a thief in the night" (I Thess. 5:2, 6). On that final day each man must give an account of that which had been entrusted to him (Mt. 24:45-51; Lk. 12:41-48, 16:1-8) and "it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. . . . Then every man will receive his commendation from God" (I Cor. 4:2, 5). Common to the Gospels and the Pauline epistles is a vision of Christ as the central figure in the last judgment.<sup>201</sup> The Synoptic writers pictured Jesus as the one who would on that day separate the sheep from the goats (Mt. 25:31-46) and the wheat from the tares (Mt. 13:24-30). He would determine the final destinies of mankind.<sup>202</sup> Early Christians preached that Christ was "ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; cf. 17:31). This proclamation of Christ as judge could well be a distinct break with Jewish eschatology and the first real beginning of a Christian vision of the end.

#### Future Judgment as Related to Other Final Events

##### Jewish literature

In the first chapter we noted that the idea of Israel's

<sup>200</sup> Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (Rev. ed.; London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 51-53, 166-180, 187-189, 206-214.

<sup>201</sup> Pearson, Exposition of the Creed, p. 429.

<sup>202</sup> Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, p. 265.



"chosenness," her covenant with God, was a unique feature of early Hebrew religion. Early prophets often spoke as though God's "chosen people" would find fulfillment and blessedness, in the not-too-distant future, when Israel would be granted a glorious and powerful empire. As history began to make such expectations seem less and less plausible, emphasis was placed upon rewards and punishments in this life. That is, the righteous would prosper and the wicked would be punished on this side of the grave. But, since this idea all too obviously ran contrary to human experience, the apocalyptic writers in particular began thinking in terms of two aeons. The present age was considered so corrupt, wicked, and chaotic that God would bring it to an end by direct intervention. From that point forward there would be a "new age" of peace and prosperity when the righteous dead would be resurrected to share unending happiness in heaven with the faithful who remained alive during the last days. The wicked dead would be resurrected, but only to face endless torment along with the unfaithful of the final generation.<sup>203</sup>

Although judgment occupied a place of major importance in Jewish literature, this concept was never developed systematically. There was, in addition, a lack of agreement concerning the exact nature of this event and the time that it would take place.<sup>204</sup> Soon Jewish eschatology became a "bewildering maze."<sup>205</sup> Because of this confusion and the sometimes equivocal symbolic language used by the prophets, the best way to

---

<sup>203</sup>Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, pp. 241-242.

<sup>204</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, pp. 196-197.

<sup>205</sup>Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, p. 246.

understand the future judgment is to view it in relation to other eschatological events.<sup>206</sup> In doing this, we are forced again to examine Jewish eschatology, specifically the apocalyptic writings.

The sequence of final events in Daniel is much like that found in the teachings of Jesus.<sup>207</sup> Troubled times would precede the end, but the faithful would be delivered.

"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of our people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time you people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book." (Dan. 12:1)

The "Son of man" would come, followed by a general resurrection when the dead would be awakened, some to everlasting life and others to everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2). The last events would appear in this order: severe tribulation, appearance of the "Son of man," the general resurrection, and the judgment and final destiny. In the seventh chapter of Daniel we have a very dramatic picture of the coming judgment:<sup>208</sup> God, the "ancient of days," would take his seat on a throne surrounded by thousands who serve him. Then books containing accounts of men's lives (Dan. 7:10) would be opened and judgment would begin.

In later Jewish apocalyptic writings that show Greek influences (Book of Wisdom, IV Maccabees), the idea of a judgment day was given less significance as a final event since reward and punishment were believed

---

<sup>206</sup>Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 133.

<sup>207</sup>Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul, pp. 82-83, 88.

<sup>208</sup>Bultmann claims this is the earliest description of the judgment we have (Primitive Christianity, p. 99).

to come at death.<sup>209</sup> Such a belief did not necessarily rule out the possibility of a final judgment: this could be a culmination or permanent verification of the sentence which one had already begun to serve. In I Enoch 22, for example, we read that judgment would begin at death for the ungodly and continue until the final judgment where the sentence would be made permanent.

And this has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed upon them in their lifetime. Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain, till the great day of judgment . . . There He shall bind them for ever. (I Enoch 22:10)

At other times the judgment was spoken of as coming at the beginning of the kingdom. In I Enoch the Lord's judgment upon the unrighteous seemed to inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom; after this judgment the righteous will be installed as "lights of heaven."<sup>210</sup> It is suggested in II Baruch and IV Ezra that a temporary messianic period would last four hundred years (IV Ezra 7:290).<sup>211</sup> After the temporary

---

<sup>209</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, pp. 196-197. For this reason Charles sees the discourse on judgment in Wisdom 5:1-13 as symbolic rather than literal (Charles, Eschatology, pp. 312 ff.).

<sup>210</sup>I Enoch 38:1, 104:1-6.

<sup>211</sup>This temporary kingdom will be preceded by tribulation and destruction in which people "shall hate one another" (II Baruch 70:3), and the wise shall be silent, but the foolish shall speak (II Baruch 70:5). There shall be wars, earthquakes, famine, and general confusion among men (II Baruch 70:6-8). The living righteous during these last days must suffer tribulations upon all mankind, yet the Lord will preserve his faithful in this hour so "that those who survive [to that time] are more blessed than those that have died" (IV Ezra 13:14-24).

Professor Barclay suggests that this period of four hundred years was arrived at as the result of interpretations given to two Old Testament passages. The first was in Genesis 15:13 when God told Abraham that Israel would be opposed for a period of four hundred years. Then in Psalms 90:15 the writer says, "Make us glad as many days as thou hast afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil." The conclusion

Messianic Kingdom, all would perish, including the Messiah, and the world would return to complete silence for seven days, like the first beginning (IV Ezra 7:29, 30). A general resurrection would ensue and the final judgment.

Such an eschatology allows for a preliminary judgment at the beginning of the messianic period followed by a final judgment upon the whole of humanity, thus establishing two periods of blessedness: the temporary bliss of the Messianic Kingdom for those alive during the last generation and final blessedness for all entering the permanent kingdom of God.<sup>212</sup> In I Enoch the author even went so far as to outline this entire scheme in "the Apocalypse of Weeks," in which he divided history into ten "weeks" of varying lengths.<sup>213</sup>

---

drawn from these two passages was that there would be a four-hundred-year period of happiness corresponding to the similar period of affliction. Thus does IV Ezra represent the messianic age as being for a duration of four hundred years (William Barclay, The Revelation of John [Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1959], Vol. II, p. 241).

<sup>212</sup>Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle, pp. 87-88. The concept of judgment coming at the close of the Messianic Kingdom is rather common in Jewish apocalyptic writings; see IV Ezra 7:113; Jubilees 23:30.

<sup>213</sup>The first seven weeks deal with history until the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom (I Enoch 93:1-10). The eighth week is the week when sinners are delivered for punishment into the hands of the righteous (I Enoch 91:12). At the close of this period the righteous shall acquire houses of their own and build a house for God (I Enoch 91:13). Then all the people shall "look to the path of uprightness" (I Enoch 91:14). In the ninth week the whole world will come under righteous judgment and the works of the godless shall be destroyed (I Enoch 91:14). Following the "great eternal judgment" (I Enoch 91:15) in the tenth week, the first heaven shall depart and a new heaven appear (I Enoch 91:16). Then ". . . there will be many weeks without number for ever, And all shall be in goodness and righteousness, And sin shall no more be mentioned for ever" (I Enoch 91:17).

The book of Revelation has its own version of a temporary (or interim) Messianic Kingdom. John spoke of a great battle in the last days when Satan would be defeated (Rev. 19:17-21), bound with a chain by an angel, and cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3), whereupon the righteous (only martyrs?) of past generations would be resurrected to reign with Christ upon earth during this "millennium" (Rev. 20:4). Following this period, Satan would be "loosed from his prison" (Rev. 20:7) and a great battle would ensue (Rev. 20:8-9) before he and his angels would be finally defeated and "thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). Subsequently, both "great and small" would be resurrected to stand before the throne to receive sentence. Those whose names were not to be found in the book of life would be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15) and the righteous would enter into the eternal bliss and joy of heaven (Rev. 21). A clear expression of this doctrine is not to be found anywhere else in the New Testament.<sup>214</sup> Indeed, the only commonly accepted beliefs were that the Messiah would intervene in history to inaugurate a new age, with the details of this revolution being, as we have seen, widely disputed.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup>Some claim that I Corinthians 15:22-24 refers to a millennium, but for the most part this interpretation is rejected. See Charles, Eschatology, p. 448.

<sup>215</sup>Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 101-102. The Psalmist wrote that "a thousand years in thy sight / are but as yesterday . . . " (Ps. 90:4). Likewise, Peter said, ". . . with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8). Some have turned these scriptures into a mathematical formula to "prove" that the life-span of creation is six thousand years. Since the seventh thousand of the years corresponds to the day God rested in the creation story, this would be the reign of the Messiah, i.e., the messianic age would be for one thousand years (Barclay, The Revelation of John, Vol. II, p. 241).

## Pauline literature

Let us now turn briefly to Pauline thought with the hope of finding a more consistent order of the last things. We have seen that Paul was not interested in giving an exact description of the end,<sup>216</sup> even though he did not hesitate to point out some of the events which would take place during the closing days.<sup>217</sup>

Schweitzer<sup>218</sup> interpreted Paul's eschatological events in the following order: the sudden return of Christ (I Thess. 5:1-4); the dead in Christ rising; the living transformed; all being caught up into

---

<sup>216</sup>Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 123; Schoeps claims, however, that in I Corinthians Paul outlines the last events in a specific order. The sequence will be as follows: the last trumpet will sound and immediately the dead will rise and the living will be transformed (I Cor. 15:52); after death (the last enemy) is destroyed (Ibid., 15:26) the Son will then commit the kingdom to the Father (Ibid., 15:24) (Schoeps, Paul, p. 105).

<sup>217</sup>Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul, p. 68. Troubled times will be a sign that the Parousia is getting near (II Thess. 2:3-10). Then the "man of sin" (human Satan, or Antichrist) will appear and openly oppose God, even claiming to be God himself (II Thess. 2:3, 4). This use of the "man of sin" shows that Christians "not only used prophecies of the Day of the Lord, but also the Jewish legend of an evil being who should appear in the last days," says Francis Glasson, The Second Advent, pp. 180 ff. Compare "man of sin," as used here, with the concept found in later chapters of Daniel. Also compare with Antichrist in Revelation. See also Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, p. 614, and Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p. 31. Compare Daniel 11:31, 36 and II Thessalonians 2. These trials will soon pass, however, when Christ destroys Antichrist by his coming (II Thess. 2:8). At the sound of a trumpet, the dead will be resurrected and the righteous living transformed. The Lord will appear, followed immediately by the final judgment where God (and Christ) will sit as judge (Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 133). Here will be settled the eternal destinies of men. It seems very improbable that Paul expected a temporary Messianic Kingdom or millenium between the Parousia and final judgment as is sometimes suggested from I Corinthians 15:22-24.

<sup>218</sup>Schweitzer, The Mysticism of St. Paul, pp. 65-68.

the air to meet the Lord and being with him forever (I Thess. 4:16, 17); and the messianic judgment including all people.<sup>219</sup> The Messianic Kingdom would follow (I Cor. 15:23-28),<sup>220</sup> ending with victory over death (I Cor. 15:24-26). The sequence, then, would be the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the consummation, with God becoming "everything to every one" (I Cor. 15:28).<sup>221</sup>

Those who are convinced that Paul was a slave to traditional apocalyptic concepts often try to impose preconceived ideas on this thought. Schweitzer was especially guilty of this.<sup>222</sup> It is not as though Paul were at the mercy of contemporary apocalyptic thought or that he had no Christian eschatology of his own. Actually no allowance was made for a Messianic Kingdom in Pauline thought. The Messianic Kingdom in the apocalyptic writings (called the millennium in Revelation) was seen as a time of peace and bliss, whereas Paul envisioned the messianic reign in I Corinthians as a period of constant struggle.<sup>223</sup> But did

<sup>219</sup>God as judge, Romans 14:10; Christ as judge, II Corinthians 5:10; and sometimes God as judge through Christ, Romans 2:16.

<sup>220</sup>Though Paul does not mention the millennial reign at all, Morgan contends that the parallel between it and the reign Paul describes as the kingdom "is close enough to justify identifying the two" (W. Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1917), p. 235; also Thackeray, The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought, pp. 120-121).

<sup>221</sup>Thackeray says that Paul seems to "hint" of a second and later resurrection for unbelievers. He reasons that if the resurrection is going to include all (I Cor. 15:22) and only the righteous are raised at Christ's return, then there must be a later time when the unrighteous dead are brought forth (The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought, p. 122). See also Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 290.

<sup>222</sup>Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 290.

<sup>223</sup>Prleiderer, Paulinism, Vol. I, p. 269.

Paul in fact speak of a Messianic Kingdom here at all? After considerable examination of these passages this writer finds himself in complete agreement with A. M. Hunter, who stated that he was unable to find in I Corinthians 15:22-27 any justification for belief in a temporary messianic reign.<sup>224</sup> This viewpoint was supported by Charles, who said that "the Apostle did not expect the intervention of a temporary Messianic . . . period between the Parousia and the final judgment."<sup>225</sup> The second coming would be immediately connected with the final judgment; indeed, the Parousia and judgment would occur simultaneously, with no intervening period.<sup>226</sup> Therefore, the Parousia, final judgment, and resurrection would bring the present age to a close and mark the beginning of the new.

#### Concept of Judgment Found in Pauline Material

As we have just seen, Paul believed the final judgment would follow immediately upon the Parousia; in fact, one of the main reasons for Christ's return was to judge "the living and the dead" (II Tim. 4:1). Paul saw this judgment as a bridge between the old and new aeons and as a final preparation for the perfected kingdom of God.<sup>227</sup> The coming judgment was to be a universal judgment, a concept also accepted by the Jews.<sup>228</sup> Paul saw each man that day receiving "according to his works"

---

<sup>224</sup>Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors, p. 126.

<sup>225</sup>Charles, Eschatology, p. 447.

<sup>226</sup>Ibid.

<sup>227</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 195.

<sup>228</sup>Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, pp. 25-26. See II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12.



(Rom. 2:6).<sup>229</sup> Although he spoke of God's judgment as both present and future, he tended to stress the future (II Thess. 1:9-10).<sup>230</sup>

On the other hand, God's judgment was already operative in their time (Rom. 1:18). It was at work in the pagan world, as reflected in the impurity of pagan hearts (Rom. 1:24), unnatural sexual relations (Rom. 1:27), and generally disgraceful conduct (Rom. 1:28-32).<sup>231</sup> In this latter sense the Pauline concept of judgment has much in common with the Fourth Gospel. John viewed the unbeliever as coming under God's condemnation in the present: "He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (Jn. 3:18). Furthermore, the believer in Christ would pass directly into new life without facing judgment (Jn. 5:24).

It is true that Paul's doctrine of justification was substantially the same as John's.<sup>232</sup> Through faith in Christ the believer was justified and freed from guilt in his present situation (I Cor. 1:8; Rom. 3:23-26). Having been insured of acquittal at the day of judgment

---

<sup>229</sup>See also I Cor. 3:13; Eph. 6:8.

<sup>230</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 288-289; also Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, p. 170. We read of "God's righteous judgment" being revealed (Rom. 2:5) on the day of wrath and Timothy is reminded that judgment will come upon the living and the dead when Jesus appears (II Tim. 4:1).

<sup>231</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 288-289. In Romans 13:4 is reflected a similar thought, although in this case it is the government acting with God's authority who administers the punishment.

<sup>232</sup>G. E. Ladd, "Eschatology: Judgment," in The New Bible Dictionary (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962), p. 389.

(Rom. 5:9, 8:33) and having all fears of condemnation removed (Rom. 8:1, 33-34), the Christian, nevertheless, must not think of God's wrath as nonexistent or his judgment as irrelevant to him. Indeed, this very wrath revealed the "justice" and "truthfulness" of God (Rom. 3:5-8).<sup>233</sup> The hope of the believer lay in the fact that he had been rescued from God's wrath and acquitted, or justified (Phil. 3:9, Rom. 3:24).<sup>234</sup> In describing this process, Paul named both God and Jesus as judges (Rom. 2:5, 3:5-6; II Tim. 4:1, 8); he made little attempt to eliminate this ambiguity except perhaps to indicate that both would participate in the act of judging.<sup>235</sup> Like all of his fellow Christians, Paul looked forward to receiving "a crown of righteousness" from the Lord on that day (II Tim. 4:8). On other occasions he spoke of striving for an incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25) and pressing "on toward the goal for the prize" of God's high calling (Phil. 3:14). The long awaited bodily redemption would become a reality: the imperishable would replace the perishable and the mortal put on the cloak of immortality (I Cor. 15:53). The work of judgment and redemption would be complete since there would be nothing remaining in the universe to oppose God. The wicked would have been sentenced; the great company of the redeemed would be transformed into the image of

---

<sup>233</sup>Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16.

<sup>234</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 288. According to Paul, God's judgment upon the believer has already been pronounced in the act of justification.

<sup>235</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 78; see also Salmon, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 513. This same dual concept is found throughout the entire New Testament and the inter-testamental writings (Morgan, The Religion and Theology of Paul, p. 236).

their redeemer.

### Intermediate State

Although Protestantism has formally rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, it has not always been free from the belief of an intermediate state.<sup>236</sup> Biblical evidence, particularly the Pauline material, is ambiguous on this point. The Protestant idea of an intermediate state is not to be confused with the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The Roman Catholic teaching stresses that a person's future destiny is permanently decided at death: a few of the very righteous ones may enter immediately into heaven, but the great majority of souls undergo a period of punishment and discipline in purgatory before ascending into the full presence and glory of God.<sup>237</sup> Purgatory is a place of purification and of preparation for the souls of believers who are sure of an ultimate entrance into heaven, but are not yet fit to enter upon the bliss of beatific vision.<sup>238</sup>

Protestant theology has, of course, rejected this idea of purgatory as being inconsistent with the New Testament doctrine of salvation.<sup>239</sup> Also unacceptable is the idea of the blessed having to suffer further retribution. In spite of this, however, many Protestants feel that some form of intermediate existence is needed in order to give all men an

---

<sup>236</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 94-95.

<sup>237</sup>F. W. Farrar, Eternal Hope (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878), pp. xvii-xx.

<sup>238</sup>Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 686.

<sup>239</sup>Farrar, Eternal Hope, pp. xvii-xx.

equal opportunity of accepting Christ. It is obvious that this life denies that opportunity to a large number of people and limits it for countless others. Considering this inequality, it has been suggested that an intermediate state is needed to provide all with the same opportunity for decision. This would also allow for a period of trial and discipline for further development.<sup>240</sup>

#### Support for Belief in an Intermediate State

Since the Parousia was expected any day, one should not be surprised to find scant material in the New Testament concerning man's intermediate existence.<sup>241</sup> Those New Testamental passages which do support this belief can generally be divided into three main categories. First are those passages which described death as "sleep." Some take this to be a rather literal description of man's state after death, that from this sleep all shall one day be awakened. A second group of passages referred to Christ's "descent" into the underworld, including references which suggested the purpose of his descent (e.g., to declare his universal lordship, to offer hope and salvation to the departed, etc.). Finally, there were those ministeries to the dead performed by

---

<sup>240</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 93-98.

<sup>241</sup>Quick observes that the actual course of history was a disappointment to those early Christians who longed for the immediate return of their Lord (Doctrines of the Creed, p. 244). Certainly many appeared confident that they would be able to witness the Parousia, according to I Th. ssalonians 4:15, I Corinthians 15:51, Philippians 4:5. See also William Neil, St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians, Torch Bible Commentary (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1957), pp. 98-99 and Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880), Vol. II, p. 102.

the early Church and its Fathers. After considering the evidence supporting the early existence of a doctrine of an intermediate state, we shall then examine the material that appears to indicate the contrary. But let us now turn to those passages which, to many, suggest some form of intermediate existence.

### Death as "sleep"

There are early precedents for the New Testament usage of "sleep" for "death." Epitaphs indicate that it was a common euphemism ages before the Christian era.

Consider and answer me, O Lord  
my God;  
lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the  
sleep of death. (Ps. 13:3)

Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. (I Kings 2:10)

And the earth shall restore those that sleep in her, and the dust those that are at rest therein . . . (IV Ezra 7:32)<sup>242</sup>

And the righteous shall arise from their sleep, And wisdom shall arise and be given unto them. (I Enoch 91:10)<sup>243</sup>

And, in the New Testament:

" . . . Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." (Jn. 11:11)

Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. (I Cor. 15:6)

Even though in later Jewish literature the doctrine of

---

<sup>242</sup>Box, "Fourth Ezra," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 583.

<sup>243</sup>Charles, "Book of Enoch," in Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. II, p. 262.

resurrection became prominent, the term "sleep" did not necessarily convey the idea of awakening at a resurrection. Certainly this is true regarding the common Old Testament usage of the word. Paul, like earlier writers, had no hesitation in using the term "sleep" to describe the experience of death. He did, however, tend to use the term only to refer to fellow Christians and to those who have previously died "in Christ." Perhaps he was deliberately using ideas and pictures with which he was familiar as a Jew and which his listeners would readily understand. The concept of death as "sleep" allowed for what has been called a "pause between this world and the next."<sup>244</sup> Some contend that after death a person enters into a state of sleep which lasts until Christ returns in glory at the Parousia. This is followed immediately by the general resurrection and the final judgment. Important to note in this view, however, is Paul's insistence that even in the interim state the Christians were "in Christ." He never allowed the idea of "sleep" to become separated from the concept of final resurrection and fellowship with the Lord.<sup>245</sup>

". . . neither death, nor life . . . nor anything . . . in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God . . ." (Rom. 8:38-39). Even in death the Christian slept as safely and securely as a little child under the constant care of living parents. To those who object that such a belief postpones the blessedness of the departed, it is pointed out that to the person asleep there seems but a moment between falling into slumber and awaking again. Similarly the one who passes at death

---

<sup>244</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks At the Apostles' Creed, p. 215.

<sup>245</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 267.

into unconsciousness and awakes again at the resurrection would experience no sense of loss though he may have slept for centuries.<sup>246</sup>

Yet it is hardly necessary to interpret "sleep" so literally. Paul was not arguing that man would remain in a state of unconsciousness (like normal sleep) between death and the resurrection. The word "sleep" was chosen simply because it conveyed a picture of rest and harmonizes with the Christian idea of being awakened or raised to meet the Lord.<sup>247</sup> Others agree that sleep, in a literal sense, does not adequately convey the Pauline concept of death.<sup>248</sup> It seems more likely that this is only a poetic way of expressing rest and peace. It is a very natural expression as one looks at the sleeping appearance of the body which is calm and, for the first time, free from all tension. In view of this, it becomes evident that the use of such a term provides little real basis in itself for theorizing about an intermediate state. Nor does it offer convincing evidence that those using the term see the soul entering into a state of unconsciousness at death.

#### Christ's descent into Hades

Passages referring to Christ's descent into Hades traditionally raised speculation concerning the possibility of an intermediate state. Although no one seems to know exactly when and how the belief in Christ's descent originated, it is almost certain that three factors contributed

---

<sup>246</sup>Teekie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 20.

<sup>247</sup>Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, p. 267.

<sup>248</sup>J. Paterson Smyth, The Gospel of the Hereafter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), pp. 78-79.

much to its formation. First, Christians from earliest times have speculated on what happened during those mysterious three days between Christ's death and his resurrection.<sup>249</sup> Next, this belief was probably influenced by concern for those who had lived and died before the time of Christ. What about all those people who had no chance of hearing the "Good News"? Were they doomed, through no fault of their own, to miss the Christian hope of a new life? Many found an answer to these questions in the belief that Christ descended to Hades for the purpose of offering his gospel to the dead.<sup>250</sup> Furthermore, Christ's descent to the underworld may have been intended to show that Jesus was actually dead, thereby refuting the claims of those who believed Christ's divinity would not allow him to actually experience pain and death.<sup>251</sup> In other words, promulgating the story of Christ's descent was an attempt of the early Church to show that his humanity made it possible and necessary that he share man's experience in death as well as life.<sup>252</sup> Although much about this concept remains obscure, there does seem to be evidence that in the New Testament and early Church Christ's descent was widely

---

<sup>249</sup>What, for instance, did Jesus mean when he told Mary, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father"? (Jn. 20:17). Where had he been? Did his experience at death include going to the underworld of the dead? Did he actually continue the redemptive work he began on earth?

<sup>250</sup>Scott, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians, The Moffat New Testament Commentary, pp. 208-209.

<sup>251</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 127.

<sup>252</sup>E. F. Harrison, "Descent into Hell," in Baker's Dictionary of Theology, ed. by E. F. Harrison (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1960), p. 164.



accepted.<sup>253</sup>

The writer of Ephesians, therefore, was probably referring to traditional New Testament belief when he stated that Christ "descended into the lower parts of the earth."<sup>254</sup>

In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. (Eph. 4:9-10)

This passage raises various questions<sup>255</sup> to which "neither grammar nor textual criticism gives a decisive answer."<sup>256</sup> Should one take Christ's

<sup>253</sup>Some of the oft-quoted passages in support of Christ's descent into Hades include: Mt. 12:40; Jn. 5:25; Acts 2:27, 31 (a reference from Ps. 16:10); Rom. 10:6-7; Phil. 2:9-11; especially I Pet. 3:18-20 and I Pet. 4:6; and Rev. 5:13. Barclay admits that John 5:25 "may be a reference to the preaching to the dead, but in the Fourth Gospel it is more likely to be a reference to the preaching to those who are spiritually dead, those who are dead in their sins and trespasses, and who are raised to newness of life by the preaching of Jesus Christ" (Barclay, The Plain Man Looks At the Apostles' Creed, p. 124).

Leckie points out that Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen all "refer with more or less emphasis to the Mission of Christ to departed souls" (The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 91).

Barrett does not deny this, but points out that it is also possible to quote the Fathers as teaching priestly absolution, baptismal regeneration, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, or many of the other distinctive doctrines of the Roman Church. He concludes that the writing of the Fathers should be regarded as historical rather than doctrinal (G. S. Barrett, The Intermediate State and Last Things [London: Elliot Stock, 1896], pp. 107-109).

<sup>254</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 90.

<sup>255</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), pp. 114-115; also Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to Philemon, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1880), pp. 211-214.

<sup>256</sup>S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, 5 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), Vol. III, p. 326.

descent into the "lower parts of the earth" to mean our own world, which is lower than heaven, or some subterranean region of the underworld? In other words, does this refer to Christ's incarnation or does it actually point to his descent to Hades? Both interpretations find considerable support.<sup>257</sup> Murray concludes that Εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς refers to Sheol.<sup>258</sup> (comparable to Ps. 139:15). This same phrase, "the lower parts of the earth," has been called the earliest reference in Christian literature to the descent of Christ into Hades.<sup>259</sup> Scott contends that the writer may have nothing more in mind here than to contrast "this lower earth" with the heavenly home which Christ had left. "But," he adds, "in view of the context" a more definite reference is justified and therefore we may have here "the earliest hint of the belief that in the interval between his death and resurrection Christ had descended into the underworld and proclaimed his message to the dead."<sup>260</sup>

Those who contend that Hades is the proper meaning of this passage argue that if earth was intended then why did Paul not use a more simple and direct form such as κατέβη εἰς τὴν γῆν or κατέβη εἰς τὴν γῆν κάτω? (Acts 2:19).<sup>261</sup> The use of τὰ κατώτερα

<sup>257</sup>Ibid.; also Abbott, Ephesians and Colossians, The International Critical Commentary, pp. 114-115.

<sup>258</sup>J. O. F. Murray, The Epistle to the Ephesians, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), p. 66.

<sup>259</sup>Francis W. Beare, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. X, p. 689.

<sup>260</sup>Scott, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 208.

<sup>261</sup>Meyer, Ephesians and Philemon, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, p. 214.

is one of the Old Testament expressions for the underworld and would naturally suggest something other than our present earth. Also the very context in which κατωτέρα is found suggests a wide and inclusive context in which κατωτέρα is found suggests a wide and inclusive<sup>must</sup> extend to heaven above, earth below, and even to the remote regions of the underworld. But the contrary position is more reasonable when one recalls that τὰ κατώτατα and not τὰ κατωτέρα is used in referring to the "depths of the earth" (as in Ps. 63:9, Is. 44:23). If Hades had been the intended meaning, then why did not the writer use a phrase such as εἰς ἄδην (Acts 2:27) or εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον (Rom. 10:7), which would have made the meaning clear? Since ἀνέβη refers to the ascension and not just Christ's resurrection, it becomes clear that it was from earth he ascended and not Hades.<sup>262</sup>

In all of this one must remember that the present popular concept of "hell" is quite different from the New Testament rendering of "Hades." Unfortunately, the Authorized Version has not always made this

---

<sup>262</sup>Salmond, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III, p. 327. In words perhaps more poetic than exegetical, Findlay offers his own rendering of Ephesians 4:9, which may be as true to Paul's original intent as some of the more critical and complex interpretations. "If he went up, why then He had been down!--down to the Virgin's womb and the manger cradle, wrapping his Godhead within the frame and the brain of a little child; down to the home and the bench of the village carpenter; down to the contradiction of sinners and the level of their scorn; down to the death of the cross,--to the nether abyss, to that dim populous underworld into which we look shuddering over the grave's edge! And from that lower gulf He mounted up again to the solid earth and light of day and the world of breathing men; and up, and up again, through the rent clouds and the ranks of shouting angels, and under the lifted heads of the everlasting doors, until He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens" (G. G. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, pp. 59-60).

distinction clear and therefore has sometimes added to the confusion. There seems to be a reason for this ambiguity. During the translation of the Authorized Version the old English word "hell" simply meant the "unseen place," hole, or covered place.<sup>263</sup> "Hell," however, in modern English has taken on quite a different meaning, and as a result has made it more difficult to understand what the New Testament writers had in mind when they used the term, Hades, in speaking of the world beyond. An example of this confusion in the Authorized Version occurs in Acts 2:27 (which is a quotation of Ps. 16:10): We read, ". . . thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." The Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible both come nearer the original meaning by rendering this passage to read, ". . . thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades." Moffatt translates the same verse to read simply "the grave."

Sheol is the Hebrew word used to describe the land of the dead. We have seen that its shadowy regions imply no concept of immortality as we find later in the New Testament and it suggests neither blessedness nor punishment in the world beyond. One, therefore, cannot correctly use the terms Sheol and hell interchangeably, just as it is wrong to equate Hades and hell. Most closely synonymous are Hades and Sheol. The only term properly translated as "Hell" is Gehenna, the "lake of fire" into which Hades (or Sheol) would ultimately be cast (Rev. 20:14).

---

<sup>263</sup>Even in modern times a thatcher in the southern part of England may be called a "hellier" because he "covers in" a house. In the old English game of forfeits, played on the village green, the "hell" was a hidden place where the girls ran to keep from being kissed. This concept of the "covered" or "unseen" was conveyed by the Greek term, Hades (Smyth, The Gospel of the Hereafter, pp. 39-40).

This means that at judgment the occupants of Hades would go either to heaven or hell.<sup>264</sup> The whole teaching about the intermediate life may have been obscured in our day by the fact that most people read the Authorized Version of the Bible, where the word Hades has been unfortunately translated "Hell," just the same as the darker word, Gehenna.<sup>265</sup>

A further source of confusion in this matter stems from the Church's changing concept of Christ's motive in harrowing Hades. An early view held that Christ preached and then led to heaven the patriarchs, prophets, and all the faithful of the Old Testament.<sup>266</sup> This idea basically limited the work of Christ to the Old Testament saints who believed in the Messiah. Although this belief was later expanded to include not only the Jewish faithful but also the Gentiles who were obedient to the highest truth they knew, this was never accepted by the Church as orthodox belief.<sup>267</sup> A later period stressed that the preaching of Christ in Hades affirmed his universal lordship and opened up

---

<sup>264</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 89.

<sup>265</sup>Smyth, The Gospel of the Hereafter, p. 39. Some who contend for belief in an intermediate state claim that both heaven and hell are always spoken of in the New Testament as belonging to that period following the final judgment which is to come at the end of the world. In other words all those who have passed away from the beginning of time are now living in the intermediate life that they entered into just beyond the grave. No man has yet experienced the bliss of heaven or the torments of hell. This step will be taken only after the close of this age and following the judgment (Barrett, The Intermediate State and Last Things, p. 34).

<sup>266</sup>Henry B. Swete, The Apostles' Creed (London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1894), p. 57; cf. E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle to Saint Peter (London: Macmillan and Company, 1946), p. 341.

<sup>267</sup>Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 129.

the possibility of salvation after death for those who had no opportunity to hear the message in this life. Later this hope was held out to all the departed.<sup>268</sup>

Universal salvation was the most significant of all beliefs arising from Christ's descent into the underworld. Perhaps more than anything else these "descent passages" encourage one to believe that ultimately God is going to have his way in every life and that just as no part of the universe is free from this sovereignty, likewise no life will forever be alienated from his love.<sup>269</sup>

#### Rites for the dead in the early church

The third group of evidence that indicates an early belief in an intermediate state are the ministries for the dead practiced by the primitive Church and the Church Fathers. Evidence that such practices

<sup>268</sup>One of the most direct references to Christ's ministry in the underworld is found in I Peter. Leckie says that this reference is not only the earliest such statement, but also reveals that primitive Christian thought was in agreement with apocalyptic Judaism since distinction was made between Hades and Gehenna and the possibility of future deliverance was left open even for those who had departed to the land of the dead (The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 92-93).

<sup>269</sup>Philippians 2:10-11 has been called one of the most important verses in the New Testament because it reveals the ultimate aim and purpose of God (William Barclay, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957 (Philippians and Colossians), 1954 (Thessalonians)], p. 49). It says that no part of the universe is so remote that it will not one day acknowledge the glory and dominion of God. Perhaps it even suggests that God's work of redemption knows no limit either in this world or the world to come. Professor Barclay is probably correct in concluding that the entire reference to Christ's "descent into Hades" should be interpreted symbolically to indicate that (1) either in this life or the life beyond death all men will be offered the gospel of God's love; (2) God's grace knows no limits either in space or time; and (3) the triumph of Jesus Christ is destined to be complete (Barclay, The Plain Man Looks at the Apostles' Creed, p. 132).

actually did exist can be found by examining the life of the early Jewish Church, the primitive Christian Church, and the teachings of the Church Fathers. Holy Scripture, however, is almost completely silent on this subject.<sup>270</sup>

Jewish practice.--II Maccabees reveals that praying for the dead was a rather common practice for the pious Jew. Judas, we are told, took up a sin offering on behalf of the families of the slain and encouraged prayers for the dead.<sup>271</sup> Luckock points to early (second or third century B. C.) Jewish tombstones, inscribed with formulas of prayers for the dead, as further indication that praying for the departed was commonplace among Jews.<sup>272</sup> Many, however, may question whether such inscriptions as "May His Rest Be Glory" and "May His Memory For A Blessing" actually compose a prayer for the dead at all. C. H. H. Wright states that II Maccabees is the only proof available in support of this practice in pre-Christian times.<sup>273</sup> Others generally agree that before the time of Maccabees there

---

<sup>270</sup>Barrett, The Intermediate State and Last Things, pp. 98-119.

<sup>271</sup>"He then collected from them, man by man, the sum of two thousand drachmas of silver, which he forwarded to Jerusalem for a sin offering. In this he acted quite rightly and properly, bearing in mind the resurrection--for if he had not expected the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and silly to pray for the dead--and having regard to the splendour of the gracious reward which is reserved for those who have fallen asleep in godliness--a holy and pious consideration! Hence he made propitiation for the dead, that they might be released from their win" (II Maccabees 12:43-45); Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Vol. I, pp. 149-150.

<sup>272</sup>Herbert M. Luckock, After Death (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896), pp. 61-64.

<sup>273</sup>Charles H. H. Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead (London: James Nisbet and Company, 1900), p. vi.

is no conclusive evidence of prayers for the dead being offered by the Jews.<sup>274</sup>

Primitive Christian Church.--- The early Church, taking a relatively hopeful view of Hades, saw the region as something of a mission field since Christ himself had preached the gospel there.<sup>275</sup> Also, tradition claimed that this same redemptive work begun by the Lord was carried on by the Apostles following their martyrdom. Hermes maintained that even baptisms were performed in Hades.<sup>276</sup>

Paul's reference to baptism for the dead (1 Cor. 15:29) may suggest that the departed can yet find deliverance from Hades. This is taken by some as an indication that inhabitants of the underworld may profit from intercession of the living. The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) continues this practice today. Yet this is hardly convincing. Wright is correct in saying that I Corinthians 15:29 is "too obscure . . . in the absence of all contemporaneous history" to even be considered as evidence on either side.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>274</sup>Barrett, The Intermediate State and Last Things, p. 99.

<sup>275</sup>Charles Harris, "State of the Dead (Christian)," in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920), Vol. XI, p. 838.

<sup>276</sup>"These apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after falling asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached it not only to those who were asleep, but themselves also gave them the seal of the preaching. Accordingly they descended with them into the water and again ascended. (But these descended alive and rose up again alive, whereas they who had previously fallen asleep descended dead, but rose up again alive.)" The Pastor of Hermes, Book III, Similitudes, IX. 16.

<sup>277</sup>Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, pp. 186-187. It has been stated that Christianity not only took over the Jewish doctrine of Hades, but also the Jewish practice of offering



Matthew 12:31, 32, may seem to suggest the possibility of forgiveness beyond the grave. It should be noted, however, that this reference is found only in Matthew and occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.<sup>278</sup> Those who claim that praying for the dead was a common practice in the primitive Church point to the catacombs of ancient Rome as evidence of this rite. Luckock has made an interesting study of these

prayers and oblations for the dead. There can be no doubt that the practice of supplication for the departed prevailed widely in the early Christian community, says Leckie (The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 99). Exponents of this view hold that the departed should not be excluded from the petition, "Thy Kingdom Come," in the Lord's Prayer if the kingdom of God preached by Christ is viewed as eschatological. Furthermore, II Timothy 1:18 ("The Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day") is sometimes regarded as a prayer for the dead. This has been concluded from the salutation at the end of the Epistle ("Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus," II Tim. 4:19), which suggests to some that Onesiphorus was dead when Paul wrote this to Timothy (Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, p. 187). As E. F. Scott (The Pastoral Epistles, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936], p. 99) and others (Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, pp. 188-191) have pointed out, however, this interpretation is generally discredited today. Even if it were possible to prove that Paul did offer a prayer for his departed friend, he nowhere encouraged a ministry to the dead nor did he suggest the possibility of moral change in the next life (E. C. Dewick, "Eschatology," Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by James Hastings [Edinburgh: T. and C. Clark, 1915], Vol. I, p. 363).

<sup>278</sup>Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, p. 175. Others contend that the Bible is "wholly silent" concerning ministries for the departed and that such practices can claim no authority from either Holy Scripture or the Apostolic Church. What support can be found from later Church Fathers is regarded as less than "inspired" (Macintyre, The Other Side of Death, pp. 350-351). Macintyre mentions that even the Anglican Church, which favors prayers for the departed, confines intercessions to the "blessed dead" (Ibid., p. 351). Likewise, G. S. Barrett concludes that individuals and churches who practice prayer for the dead always restrict their intercessions to those who have not died in willful unbelief (The Intermediate State and Last Things, pp. 98-99). We have no ground for praying and requesting salvation for those departed who had their day of grace and misused it, says L. N. Dahle (Life After Death [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1896], p. 219).

early Christian monuments,<sup>279</sup> and as a result offers a list of inscriptions (presumably Christian) as proof that praying for the dead was an accepted practice in the early Church: "Hilaris, may you live happily with your friends, may you be refreshed in the peace of God";<sup>280</sup> "Marius Vitellianus to his most faithful wife Primitiva. Hail, innocent soul, dear wife, mayest thou live in Christ";<sup>281</sup> "Mayest thou live among the saints in peace."<sup>282</sup>

Many who will find it easy to accept this testimony of the catacombs as being representative of faith among early Christians will not find it so easy to see in these inscriptions anything convincing about prayers for the dead. To some this "evidence" will be dismissed as nothing more than a wish for eternal well-being. Furthermore, certain elements of Christianity, as reflected in the catacombs (lasting up to perhaps the fifth century A.D.), were outside the tradition of worship that later proved to be dominant in the development of Christianity.<sup>283</sup>

Concerning the origin and practice of praying for the dead perhaps Dahle's simple explanation may be nearest the point after all. He suggests that we have been so accustomed to saying prayers for our loved ones when they are alive that it is difficult to get over the

---

<sup>279</sup>Luckock, *After Death*, pp. 81-97.

<sup>280</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>281</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>282</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>283</sup>Barrett, *The Intermediate State and Last Things*, p. 105.

habit all at once when they die.<sup>284</sup> It is natural that we should wish to commend those whom we love to God's mercy and care after they are dead since, after all, charity is the motive of this kind of prayer.<sup>285</sup>

Church Fathers.—That many of the Church Fathers believed in and practiced ministries on behalf of the dead is a well-known fact. Tertullian speaks of a widow who prayed for her departed husband: "She prays for his soul, and requests refreshment for him."<sup>286</sup> Under Diocletian's reign the Holy Scriptures were ordered to be burned and persecution was mounting everywhere. This led Arnobius to plead:

Why have our writings deserved to be given to the flames? Our meetings to be cruelly broken up, in which prayer is made to the Supreme God, peace and pardon are asked for all in authority, for . . . kings, friends, enemies, for those still in life, and those freed from the bondage of the flesh?<sup>287</sup>

This list of names could be expanded, but more importantly one must decide how much authority he is willing to place on the Fathers' teachings. More than one has pointed out the errors and inconsistencies in their teachings.<sup>288</sup> Others claim that they were inferior expositors of

---

<sup>284</sup>Dahle, Life After Death, p. 215.

<sup>285</sup>Ulrich Simon, The End Is Not Yet (Welwyn: James Nisbet & Co., 1964), p. 61.

<sup>286</sup>Tertullian, On Monogamy, X, trans. by S. Thewall, The Writing of Tertullian, vol. III, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), vol. XVIII, p. 41.

<sup>287</sup>Arnobius, The Writings of Arnobius, trans. by A. H. Bryce and Hugh Campbell, Book 4. 36 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), p. 218.

<sup>288</sup>Luckock mentions that Justin Martyr was a Millenarian who believed Jerusalem would be rebuilt and certain Christians live there for 1,000 years before the final resurrection and judgment. Origen was accused of trying to blend Platonism with Christianity (Luckock, After Death, pp. 18-19; see also Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, pp. 228-232).

Scripture and "perpetually making additions to the teaching of the Word of God."<sup>289</sup>

This is not to minimize the contributions of the Fathers, but simply to remind one of their fallibility. They gave invaluable witness and testimony to the faith of their time, but the weight of their authority must be judged on the merit of each case. Therefore, while it may be permissible to say that the Fathers, by both consent and practice, encouraged prayers for the dead, it would not be permissible to assume because of this that such practice had any scriptural base or authority.

Holy Scripture.--It is generally agreed that there is little direct scriptural evidence which would encourage ministries to the dead.<sup>290</sup> I Corinthians 15:29 and II Timothy 1:16 are frequently mentioned as having some bearing on the subject, but neither seriously suggests Pauline support. Since these passages have been dealt with elsewhere in this work, and in this section, it will suffice to make only reference to them here. Because there is considerable overlapping among the "descent" passages and those which suggest particular ministries to the departed it may be well to refer to those listed in the footnote on page 253.

#### Objections to Belief in an Intermediate State

Ironically, the references to Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and Jesus' promise of paradise to the thief on the cross have been used as

---

<sup>289</sup>Wright, The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead, p. 229.

<sup>290</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-172; also Luckock, After Death, pp. 67-80, etc.

"proof texts" both for and against the intermediate state. It has been suggested that "Abraham's bosom" (Lk. 16:22) and "Paradise" (Lk. 23:43) were simply terms, other than Hades, which referred to the abode of the righteous.<sup>291</sup> Plumptre said that "Paradise," or "Abraham's bosom," was understood by every Israelite of that age to be a part of Sheol or Hades. The other one-half of Hades included Gehenna.<sup>292</sup> Although Sheol and Hades were originally without ethical or other distinctions, they later came to include distinct places for both the righteous and the wicked.<sup>293</sup>

Strawson, Manson, and Jeremias rightly conclude that the story

---

<sup>291</sup>Selwyn, The First Epistle to Saint Peter, p. 322.

<sup>292</sup>E. H. Plumptre, The Spirits in Prison and Other Studies on the Life after Death (London: William Isbister, Ltd., 1884), p. 105.

Luke 23:43 is sometimes quoted as evidence of an intermediate state since Jesus did not say, "This day you shall be with me in heaven," but chose instead to use a word found only three times in the New Testament. "Paradise" comes from the Persian and means literally a garden or park, thereby suggesting a temporary resort rather than a permanent abode (Barrett, The Intermediate State and Last Things, pp. 18-19).

<sup>293</sup>We find this concept reflected in Jewish thought of the intertestamental period: "Then I asked regarding all the hollow places: Why is one separated from the other? And he answered me saying: 'These three have been made that the spirits of the dead might be separated. And this division has been made for the spirits of the righteous, in which there is the bright spring of water. And this has been made for sinners when they die and are buried in the earth and judgment has not been executed upon them in their lifetime. Here their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain till the great day of judgment . . .'" (1 Enoch 22:8-11). The Psalms of Solomon refer to punishment in Hades similar to the New Testament Gehenna: "Therefore their inheritance is Sheol and darkness and destruction, And they shall not be found in the day when the righteous obtain mercy . . ." (Psalms of Solomon 14:6). "And the inheritance of sinners is destruction and darkness, And their iniquities shall pursue them into Sheol beneath" (Psalms of Solomon 15:11).

of Lazarus and the rich man does not suggest an intermediate state.<sup>294</sup> The "great chasm," fixed to keep those on either side from passing to the other, is evidence that "Abraham's bosom" did not refer to a temporary abode. "The division among men made at death, on the basis of their earthly life, is an unchangeable and final division."<sup>295</sup> The chasm (or gulf) represented God's irreversible judgment passed upon man at death.<sup>296</sup> One is likewise confronted with a passage in Hebrews which suggests that the individual would move immediately at death into eternity: ". . . it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

Consider now this theme as it is found in the Pauline material. In II Corinthians, for instance, Paul said, ". . . we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (5:8). The implication is that at death one would move immediately into the presence of his Lord.<sup>297</sup>

---

<sup>294</sup>William Strawson, Jesus and the Future Life (London: Epworth Press, 1959), pp. 210 ff.; T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, first published as Part II of The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937 (London: SCM Press, 1949), pp. 299 ff.; Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, pp. 182 ff.

<sup>295</sup>Strawson, Jesus and the Future Life, p. 211.

<sup>296</sup>Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, pp. 185-186; cf. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, p. 299; also Berkhof, Systematic Theology, p. 693.

<sup>297</sup>James Denney, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. V, p. 760. Bodily transformation does not occur immediately at death, but only at the end, says Oscar Cullmann (Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? [London: Epworth Press, 1958], p. 48). Therefore, those who die "in Christ" remain in an interim state until the end. Cullmann's support for his position, however, appears inadequate. He makes the unwarranted (and repeated, see pp. 51-53, 55-57) claim that "sleep is a familiar New Testament designation for the interim condition and is a literal description of the dead (see also G. B. Stevens, The Pauline Theology [London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1892], pp. 342-343). Evidence to the contrary has already

To reside in the body did not mean that fellowship with Christ was absent, but that it was imperfect, and the Apostle longed for the day when he would see "face to face."<sup>298</sup>

Paul considered the possibility of having to die before the Lord returned. This was a grim thought, but his anxiety was removed as he reflected that death would bring him into a more perfect relationship with Christ which the mortal body prevented him from experiencing.<sup>299</sup> Certainly when Paul wrote to the Philippians some years later, the thought and prospect of death was before him, but it held no terror. If the choice was his to make, he would scarcely know which to choose, whether to leave and be with Christ or remain in the flesh and continue his work (Phil. 1:21-24). Both these Epistles are in basic agreement

---

been given in this chapter of this study. Cullmann also describes the Intermediate State as "nakedness . . . waiting for the resurrection of the body"; though the deceased Christian "sleeps" bodiless, he still has the Holy Spirit (Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?, pp. 54-56). Cullmann's view appears to be a rather strange mixture of Greek and Hebrew thought; we wonder how Paul the Jew, the champion of bodily resurrection who feared being "unclothed," could look forward (Phil. 1:23, II Cor. 5) to such an "unbodied" existence at death.

<sup>298</sup> R. H. Strachan, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 103. Swete comments that the Presence which we have with us here is absence when compared with the Presence now being enjoyed by those who have died in Christ (Henry B. Swete, The Life of the World to Come [New York: Macmillan and Company, 1917], p. 33).

<sup>299</sup> Swete, The Life of the World to Come, p. 30. "But what if we should not live to see the coming of the Lord, or to be clothed, without death, by the spiritual body? What then? Still we are confident, we are content. Death, though we do not choose it--though we would choose to be changed, and not to die--death will be better for us than life in this mortal body. For here we are absent from the Lord; there we shall be present with Him. Here we are away from home; there we shall be at home with the Lord. Our only anxiety is that, whether in the body or out of the body, we may be pleasing to Him" (Swete's

regarding the Christian dead: death is "gain" (Phil. 1:21) for the deceased is present, "at home with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8) and "with Christ" which is "far better" (Phil. 1:23) than being in the body.<sup>300</sup>

We see that, while Paul was thinking of the second coming in terms of his own lifetime, the intermediate state was not an urgent problem to which he had to give much thought. This could well be why he chose to speak vaguely of the dead as those who sleep (I Thess. 4:13, 14; I Cor. 15:51). In II Corinthians, however, he became much more definite as he spoke of moving, at death, from his frail bodily tabernacle to a permanent house and dwelling place in heaven.<sup>301</sup> Finally in Philippians his thought leapt over any idea of an intermediate dwelling as though this were an earlier consideration no longer tenable or perhaps never really suggested or thought through in the first instance. Death would bring the Christian immediately into the presence of Christ. This allowed for no lapse of time beyond the grave.

### Final Destiny

Paul's language describing man's final destiny is not that of a systematic theologian. To ascertain the essential Pauline doctrine here, we can group all of the relevant passages into three groups, each of which appears to posit a different view: conditional immortality, universal restoration, and everlasting separation. Examining these

---

paraphrase of II Corinthians 5, The Life of the World to Come, p. 30).

<sup>300</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>301</sup>Bruce, St. Paul's Conception of Christianity, p. 364.



passages closely, we find that there are two unresolved doctrines coexisting in Paul's letters. The doctrine of universal restoration finds legitimate support in the Apostle's writings, but by implication only. It is only implied (albeit strongly) in connection with God's final victory. On the other hand, the doctrine of everlasting separation, that those who die "without Christ" are eternally cut off from God, finds stronger support in Paul's writings, but he never excludes the possibility that God will some day triumph over the hearts of all men. First, however, let us consider the concept of conditional immortality, the view probably least held by Paul.

#### Conditional Immortality

According to this belief, immortality is only for the redeemed, whereas the wicked are punished and eventually annihilated. Variations of this thought are to be found in the following Pauline passages, each of which will be treated separately, with the important words and phrases underlined.

#### Romans 2:12

All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

Here the Apostle warned that every person would be judged on the basis of what he knew, and, as a result, some would "perish." As usual, the Apostle did not elaborate on what he meant by "perish." Obviously Paul meant more than simply loss of physical life, but can one go so far as to say that during eternity the sinner will be completely destroyed? Is one justified in saying that those who perish shall lose

their souls in a literal sense? Does the word "ἀπολοῦνται" imply annihilation? If so, then this passage lends considerable support to the doctrine of conditional immortality. But there is no need to insist that "perish" refers to complete and literal destruction; in fact, Paul seemed to have no intention of conveying the idea of annihilation in this verse.<sup>302</sup> The word, "perish"<sup>303</sup> (or "will perish"), is best understood in terms of ruin and loss rather than literal destruction.

I Corinthians 3:17a

If anyone destroys God's Temple, God will destroy him.

Concerning God's judgments ἀπολλύειν or ἀπολλύναι are commonly used instead of φθείρει found in this verse. In this case, however, φθείρει is preferred because of its double meaning of "corrupt" and "destroy." The sinner, who destroys by corrupting that which is holy and good, thereby brings destruction upon himself from God.<sup>304</sup> Such destruction meant more than physical punishment, but the exact meaning and full implication of "destroy" are not clear. Some, in fact, substitute the word "injure" in place of destroy.<sup>305</sup> In that

---

<sup>302</sup>H. C. G. Moule, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, Cambridge Bible for Schools and College (Cambridge: The University Press, 1908), pp. 69-70.

<sup>303</sup>ἀπολοῦνται in Rom. 2:12 is the opposite of σωτηρίαν in Rom. 1:16.

<sup>304</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 67.

<sup>305</sup>Joseph A. Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (3rd ed.; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885), pp. 63, 71-72.

case the verse reads, "If anyone injures God's Temple, God will injure him." Neither the context nor the particular wording in this instance seems to suggest annihilation<sup>306</sup> or destruction in the literal sense, but rather a ruin and loss of some terrible kind.

#### Philippians 1:28b

This is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

The same word for destruction in this passage is also found in Philippians 3:19. "Ruin" conveys a similar thought;<sup>307</sup> so does "perdition."<sup>308</sup> "Ruin" is a common New Testament expression for perdition, the opposite of salvation, and a word which very likely conveys the intended meaning in this instance. Destruction, in this verse, was to be contrasted with salvation. Paul asserted that opponents of the Gospel would suffer loss of eternal life and exclusion from the kingdom of God (3:19; II Thess. 1:9). The term ἀπώλειαν indicates destruction of a specific nature as opposed to destruction or waste in general (as found in Mk. 14:4). The destruction spoken of in this instance refers to loss of eternal life but not literal extinction. The contrast of ἀπώλειαν (of destruction) and σωτηρίαν (of salvation) is a

---

<sup>306</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 67. Although the meaning of this term is somewhat uncertain, it "must not be pressed to mean annihilation."

<sup>307</sup>J. High Michael, The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), pp. 70-71.

<sup>308</sup>Francis W. Beare, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, Harper's New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 67-68.

further indication that this is the intended meaning.<sup>309</sup>

Philippians 3:19-21

Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

The word used here for destruction is also used in Philippians 1:28. The Authorized Version uses "perdition" in Philippians 1:28 and "destruction" in the present verse. The Revised Standard Version uses "destruction" in both places. At any rate, Paul was attempting to express the very opposite of salvation. In the New Testament destruction (ἀπώλετο) was used in both the physical and moral sense, yet the latter was implied in most instances and was always used in this capacity by Paul.<sup>310</sup> This destruction has been described as "the loss of everything that makes life worth living, exclusion from the kingdom of God and the glorious eternal home of the righteous."<sup>311</sup>

I Thessalonians 5:3

When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape.

The emphasis here is upon the suddenness of the travail facing

<sup>309</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians and to Philemon, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), p. 35.

<sup>310</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>311</sup>Maurice Jones, The Epistle to the Philippians, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Co., 1918), p. 60.

those who are not prepared at the Lord's coming.<sup>312</sup> "Destruction"

(ὅλεθρος) would come upon the unprepared and none shall escape. Certainly the inescapable judgment of God would mean anguish for the ungodly, but we are left to ponder the full meaning of the word ὅλεθρος. This is used in an even stronger sense in II Thessalonians 1:9.

## II Thessalonians 1:5-10

This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering--since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Paul's reference in verse 9 is especially significant: those who do not know God and do not obey him would suffer "eternal destruction" (αἰώνιον ὅλεθρον). Such destruction (both in this verse and in I Thessalonians 5:3) indicates the ruin which would befall the ungodly at Christ's coming.

Αἰώνιος (eternal) suggests that ὅλεθρος (destruction) would be the fate of the ungodly throughout the age. Notice, in Appendix II, that "endlessness" is not the primary meaning of this word. Though this exceeds the temporal ruin which is mentioned (and contrasted) in II Corinthians 4:18, Paul did not seem to be arguing for the sudden

---

<sup>312</sup>John W. Bailey, "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. XI, p. 309.

annihilation of the wicked, for αἰώνιος suggests continuous destruction. "Destruction" is lifted out of time conditions. Like κόλασιν αἰώνιον (punishment eternal) in Matthew 24:46, this ὀλεθρος αἰώνιον (destruction eternal) is the opposite of ζωή αἰώνιος (life eternal),<sup>313</sup>

Although "destruction" is a Pauline term (I Thess. 5:3; I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 6:9), the Greek word ὀλεθρος used in this instance is less common than its New Testament counterpart (ἀπώλεια). The latter, with a greater ethical dimension than the former, carries a literal idea in classical Greek. Still, Paul is attempting to convey primarily the idea of exclusion from the presence of the Lord.<sup>314</sup> This same general idea is suggested in I Thessalonians 5:3, but the language of the present passage is much stronger.

Certainly this word conveys an awful thought regarding man's destiny, but we must admit once more that it does not necessarily imply literal destruction nor is it meant to be a proof text for conditional immortality.

---

<sup>313</sup>G. G. Findlay, The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1904), p. 150.

Bailey claims that what Paul actually has in mind by "destruction" was exclusion from the presence of the Lord. The word "eternal" refers to the age to come following the revelation of the Lord and did not necessarily mean endless in duration (Bailey, "First and Second Thessalonians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. XI, p. 321).

<sup>314</sup>Bailey, "First and Second Thessalonians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. XI, pp. 320-321.

## II Thessalonians 2:7-10

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming . . . and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Paul, refering to the overthrow of the Antichrist, interpreted the ultimate fate of this "person" as utter destruction. The ones who would perish would be those who would fall into eternal destruction (ἀπώλεια) (compare I Cor. 1:18; II Cor. 2:15). The passage indicates that their future fate had already been decided (or rather they had decided it for themselves).<sup>315</sup> The fact that these had refused to embrace the truth as revealed through Jesus Christ set them apart as "the ones perishing."<sup>316</sup>

### Universal Restoration

This is the oft-held belief that evil will ultimately be done away with and finally all souls will be reconciled to God. Such thought does not deny punishment, but contends that it will be remedial rather than final. An element of "universal restoration" is noted in the following Pauline passages, again each one commented on separately.

#### Romans 11:32

For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.

<sup>315</sup>Gottlieb Lunemann, The Epistle to the Thessalonians, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880), p. 220.

<sup>316</sup>Findlay, Thessalonians, Cambridge Greek Testament, p. 184.

Paul brought his argument to a close after showing that Israel's rejection was not inconsistent with divine justice or divine promises. He placed the responsibility on the shoulders of Israel herself,<sup>317</sup> whose disobedience assisted in revealing the ultimate purpose of God. This had helped the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles and encouraged the speculation (hope) that eventually all Israel would be restored. This can be properly understood only when one sees that God's purpose is to shower mercy on all. Paul spoke of this as the "unfolding of a mystery." God seems to have sentenced mankind (first Gentile and then Jew) to a state of unbelief, but only that his ultimate purpose of "mercy to all" be finally revealed. This indicates a divine purpose in both the sin of mankind and the faithlessness of the Jews.<sup>318</sup>

Paul's argument in this section of Romans is really a philosophy of history.<sup>319</sup> God desired to show mercy upon all people so that eventually both Jew and Gentile alike would be saved by entering his kingdom. Divine wisdom continued to guide all things to their final conclusion by methods which one could not fully understand.<sup>320</sup> Of course Paul was speaking of groups and peoples here, not single individuals.<sup>321</sup> This in no way

---

<sup>317</sup>William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p. 333.

<sup>318</sup>Ibid., pp. 338-339.

<sup>319</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>320</sup>Ibid.

<sup>321</sup>Alfred E. Garvie, Romans, The Century Bible (Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack, n.d.), p. 252.



implied the salvation of all men. The future state of all mankind was the issue before Paul. To this he related the temporary rejection of the Jews to show that the rejection was not inconsistent with God's overall plan. While this verse reflects God's desire for the salvation of all men, it offers no proof that all men shall in fact be saved. Yet it does indicate that God desires the redemption of all peoples. This seems to suggest universal restoration, but Paul never spelled this out in terms that apply to individuals.

#### I Corinthians 15:20-28

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Some<sup>322</sup> find evidence in this passage for belief in universal restoration since these verses predict a universal triumph of Christ. It is not clear as to exactly how the ultimate victory of Christ would be attained, but through either destruction or salvation the purpose of God would finally be revealed in a state of universal peace.<sup>323</sup> But this passage requires closer observation. Both Adam and Christ brought about a change in the condition of mankind. Through Adam came death and disaster and through Christ life and deliverance: "For as in Adam all die,

---

<sup>322</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, pp. 174-176.

<sup>323</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Obviously Paul was thinking of Adam and Christ in different ways, but each as the head and representative of the human race. Since "all" (πᾶντες) is in each clause, the meaning of this word becomes very important. Some contend that πᾶντες must have the same meaning in both clauses and therefore, if it meant the entire human race in the first clause, it must mean exactly the same in the second. It is possible then, from this view, that "in Christ shall all be made alive" implies all mankind will be saved. But a more proper rendering of the verse would be "all will be quickened" --quite different from saying that all shall be saved. In fact, the Apostle does not appear to have been referring to man's ultimate fate at all. He was not suggesting further probation, annihilation, or final restoration.<sup>324</sup>

The stress of the comparison (between Adam and Christ) does not rely on πᾶντες as though to say that all men would be saved in Christ just as certainly as they all died in Adam. The point is that there would be no death without the one and no life without the other. In all cases, death was grounded in Adam and likewise in all instances life was grounded in Christ;<sup>325</sup> therefore, these passages are not intended to commend or suggest universal salvation.

---

<sup>324</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, pp. 352-353.

<sup>325</sup>G. G. Findlay, "St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 926.

## II Corinthians 5:19

. . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Although the eschatological content of this passage may be questionable, it does suggest the universality of God's purpose in salvation, thereby giving a possible meaning to other passages where Paul predicts the ultimate triumph of the kingdom and the completeness of Christ's reign. Yet this verse may mean simply that God engaged in a lasting and continuing process of reconciliation with the world,<sup>326</sup> or mankind. In other words, God has done all that is necessary to reconcile man without denying man his right of response. This is another way of saying that God is working to win over the entire human race to himself.<sup>327</sup> It is not the same as saying that God will in fact one day win over every single individual of the entire human race.

## Ephesians 1:9-10

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

God has now communicated unto us the ultimate purpose of his will, this purpose being nothing less than the unification of all things in Christ. One step toward this goal was taken when the Gentiles were

---

<sup>326</sup>Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 184.

<sup>327</sup>Alfred Plummer, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1903), p. 95.

included in God's covenant. At first, this seemed disastrous for the Jews, but even Israel's temporary exclusion was revealed as part of a divine plan to achieve the ultimate and complete triumph of God.<sup>328</sup>

But are these two passages referring to individuals at all? It seems that they are not.<sup>329</sup> We conclude with Meyer that Paul did not imply that every single individual would be restored, but that the combined total of heavenly and earthly things would be renewed and united under God after the unrighteous have been sentenced to perdition.<sup>330</sup> If this is correct, then naturally these verses do not suggest a doctrine of universal restoration in the normal sense of that term.

Philippians 2:9-11 (cf. Romans 14:11)

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Particular significance was attached to a name in ancient times. The knowledge of a sacred name gave one power over another. A soldier took his oath in the name of Caesar and thereby became Caesar's man. Likewise, a Christian convert was baptized in the name of Jesus, and by doing so yielded himself to Jesus' will and entered into a special

---

<sup>328</sup>Murray, Ephesians, Cambridge Greek Testament, p. 21.

<sup>329</sup>Meyer, Ephesians and Philemon, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, pp. 50 ff.; Salmond, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III, p. 262.

<sup>330</sup>Meyer, Ephesians and Philemon, Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, p. 54.

relationship with him.<sup>331</sup>

In this passage, Paul reminded the Philippians of the confession (Jesus is "Lord") they had made and said the time would come when all things in God's creation would join together in submitting to his Lordship.<sup>332</sup> To bow the knee in the name of Jesus would be to pay homage and adoration to him for whom the name stood. The entire body of created intelligent beings of the universe would not only bow in recognition of his Lordship, but "confess" as well.<sup>333</sup> But does such recognition and confession mean that all are then to be included in the kingdom? It is doubtful.

#### I Timothy 2:3-4

This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God is the "Savior of all men" as far as his desire and will are concerned, but in fact of experience he is Savior of those who believe. Salvation does not depend upon God alone, but upon the exercise of free will concerning the acceptance or rejection of this salvation.<sup>334</sup> Paul underscored the general purpose of God, but obvious facts on all sides

---

<sup>331</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistle to the Philippians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. XI, p. 50.

<sup>332</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>333</sup>Though Lightfoot does not limit the whole of creation to intelligent beings, it hardly seems in keeping with the mood of the passage nor does it add to its intended meaning.

<sup>334</sup>Newport J. D. White, "The First and Second Epistle to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus," The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. IV, p. 104.

remind one that even God's purposes are thwarted.<sup>335</sup> Somehow there must be a reconciling of God's final triumph with man's free will. These passages do not solve that problem.

#### Titus 2:11-13

For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Verse eleven speaks of the "universality of the atonement" which has been brought to all men.<sup>336</sup> This means primarily that "God has revealed a grace which is intended to save all mankind." Although God's grace "has appeared for the salvation of all men," does it follow that all men will thereby be saved? Though some feel this verse along with others mentioned point in that direction, we have shown--upon closer observation--that such conclusions are ill-founded.

#### Everlasting Separation

This view can perhaps be called the traditional view of the Church, although there have been notable exceptions and deviations over the years. Basically, this belief holds that unrepentant persons who die "without Christ" will enter into a state of separation from God without the hope of either relief or end.<sup>337</sup> This idea is found in varying

---

<sup>335</sup>J. H. Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1922), p. 41.

<sup>336</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>337</sup>Unending separation is the phrase used rather than "unending Punishment" to avoid the conflict between those insisting that only the penalty is endless in duration and others who contend that sin itself

form and emphasis throughout the Pauline writings. The following is a list of the most significant of these references and a brief discussion of each.

Romans 1:18 (also I Thessalonians 1:9-10)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth.

ὀργή Θεοῦ, the Old Testament concept of wrath, had to do with the Covenant-relation. It came either (1) upon Israelites for breaking the Covenant (Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 16:33, 46) or (2) upon non-Israelites for oppression of the Chosen People (Jer. 1:11-17; Ezek. 36:5). Later in the prophetic writings "wrath" came to point up a great day of judgment, the day of the Lord (Is. 2:10; Jer. 30:7-8; Joel 3:12 ff.; Obad. 8 ff.; Saph. 3:8 ff.). Finally, the New Testament used the word "wrath" primarily in an eschatological sense (Mt. 3:7; I Thess. 1:10; Rom. 2:5, 5:9).<sup>338</sup>

When God revealed his righteousness it was not simply an intellectual disclosure, but God's actual intervention into history for the salvation of man. Similarly, God's wrath was God's intervention in history to confront sin. A power was loosed that worked for destruction but not salvation.<sup>339</sup> But when and how would this wrath be revealed? Was it to be expected immediately or was this something only for the future? Verse

---

will be never ending. "Unending separation" incorporates both these thoughts.

<sup>338</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 41.

<sup>339</sup>Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 99.

seventeen speaks of God's intervention in the present. Since verse eighteen runs parallel in thought, we must conclude that God's wrath was being disclosed in the present. On the other hand, the wrath of God, undoubtedly, had an eschatological concept for Paul and must always be viewed with this dimension in mind.

As we have seen in Paul's general concept of resurrection, there was a tension between present and future. Therefore, it is not a matter of present or future, but both. God's wrath is like "the righteousness from God," a present reality that does not reach complete fulfillment until eternity, when the "day of wrath" arrives.<sup>340</sup>

#### Romans 2:5-10

But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

Paul was referring here to the traditional day of judgment when God's wrath would be fulfilled and his rewards and punishments passed out. Such a picture of "judgment day" was consistent with early Christian belief and easily recognized by his listeners. For Paul, however, there was no sharp distinction between the future judgment and the

---

<sup>340</sup>Ibid., p. 100. Barth warns of misinterpreting "wrath" as something alien to God's nature. This wrath was revealed in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and is seen at work in the death sentence of all disobedient men. If God's own Son was not spared, neither shall man be spared (Karl Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans [London: SCM Press, 1959], p. 26).



experience of the present. That "day of wrath" which would come in the future would only complete the process already begun. Paul often looked at the same idea two ways. Here he was stressing the fact, however, that when the wrath was revealed there would be no difference made between Jew and Gentile. The moral order was one and there was no partiality about God.<sup>341</sup> We have seen how the "day of the Lord" was interpreted as a time of judgment from Amos onward.<sup>342</sup> In verse nine

στυγερὰ is a strong word indicating "torturing confinement" although it has been suggested that its original meaning was probably lost in its usage.<sup>343</sup> The concept that the Jew would come unto judgment derived from the fact that the Jews had priority in hearing the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).

#### Romans 2:15-16

They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Paul showed that Gentile and Jew alike were without excuse when they committed evil. Though verse fifteen referred to the present day, verse sixteen most certainly pointed to the day of judgment when "according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." This would be especially true in light of Paul's reference to "the day of

<sup>341</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), p. 33.

<sup>342</sup>Amos 5:18; Is. 2:22 ff., 13:6 ff.; Jer. 46:10; Joel 2:1 ff.; Zeph. 1:7 ff.; Sech. 14:1; Ezek. 7:7 ff.; Mal. 3:2.

<sup>343</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 57.

wrath" in Romans 2:5.<sup>344</sup> Paul regarded judgment as a vital part of his "gospel." The thought of God judging the world was nothing new, as revealed in Jewish prophecy and legend, and to a limited extent in Greek thought, but Paul gave it new dimension by teaching that God would judge the world through Jesus Christ. These forces of judgment were already at work, but their final culmination was yet to come.

These verses teach nothing dogmatic about what lies beyond the "day of judgment." The accepted belief of Paul's time conceived of the life to come in terms of punishment and reward,<sup>345</sup> but beyond this one can say little.

#### I Corinthians 6:9-10

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

In these two verses Paul summed up what he had been saying in this and the preceding chapter about the unrighteous not having any part in the kingdom of God.<sup>346</sup> The kingdom here was regarded as future (unlike 4:20): the phrase, "inherit the kingdom of God," was familiar to Jews as the promise made to Abraham. Paul, however, thought of this inheritance in spiritual terms and therefore enlarged upon the idea when he told the Corinthians that they could be disinherited even though as

---

<sup>344</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 126.

<sup>345</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 180.

<sup>346</sup>J. J. Iias, Jr., The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Cambridge Greek Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1892), p. 74.

Christians they were rightful heirs. By their own actions they could put their inheritance forever out of reach.<sup>347</sup>

Although this passage takes for granted the kingdom of God sometime in the future (as well as the present) and also states that the unrighteous will not have a part in it, we are not told the consequence of such separation or the length of its duration. One might also wonder if it is possible to be "reclaimed" after forfeiting the inheritance received at baptism and entrance into the Christian life. Yet the whole tone of the passage makes it clear that the unrighteous were to be excluded from God's future kingdom just as they were from his present kingdom. There is no hint that they might be acceptable at a later time.

## II Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.

Every person would come before the judgment seat of Christ to be revealed and made known to the world as God has known him to be all the while.<sup>348</sup> Judgment would not be done en masse, but individually, and each one would receive to himself those things which were to be his, whether good or evil. Each would reap as he had sown.

The implication is that there would be no other period when

---

<sup>347</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 118.

<sup>348</sup>J. H. Bernard, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III, p. 68.

punishment or reward might be earned, though the question remains unanswered concerning the form of such punishment.

#### Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

After listing these works of the flesh, Paul added emphatically that those people committing such acts would be excluded from the kingdom of God, not only "now" but "then." This kingdom doubtless referred to the reign of God which was to begin with the return of Christ.<sup>349</sup> Since warnings against these sins had been a part of Paul's previous discourses, he made no effort to spell out exactly what was meant by being excluded or having no inheritance in the kingdom.<sup>350</sup> What has been said earlier about the vagueness concerning man's state during his "noninheritance" of the kingdom applies here.

#### Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

A man who had sown "into" (literal meaning of the Greek) the

---

<sup>349</sup>Ernest De Witt Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1921), p. 311.

<sup>350</sup>Federic Rendall, "The Epistle to the Galatians," in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III, p. 187.

flesh and the Spirit could expect either a harvest of destruction or eternal life. The process by which this would happen was not fully explained, but the implication was that all men would experience resurrection and judgment when "life" and "death" would be passed out.<sup>351</sup> φθώρα ("corruption and decay") refers primarily to moral decay, but it does not exclude the physical sense. This word indicates that corruption and death so possess the lives of the ungodly that they become incapable of rising to eternal life. These people do not share in the Christian hope of resurrection to eternal life because they have already denied the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead.<sup>352</sup>

---

<sup>351</sup>George S. Duncan, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934), p. 186. Leckie sees in this passage indications of conditional immortality, since there are forewarnings that all evil is transient (The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 171).

<sup>352</sup>Burton, Galatians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 342. Paul uses the term "life eternal" (ζωή αἰώνιος) in several instances (Rom. 2:7, 5:21, 6:22; I Tim. 1:6-12; Tit. 3:7), although less frequently than found in Johannine literature. ζωή is also used by Paul, meaning physical life, the opposite of death, (Rom. 8:38; I Cor. 3:22; Phil. 1:20). When used with αἰών, it refers to the period of existence in the body (I Cor. 15:19; I Tim. 4:8) and contrasted to life following the resurrection. Most commonly, however, ζωή is used by Paul to describe the ideal existence for moral beings in which is included righteousness, divine approval and blessedness (Rom. 6:4, 7:10, 8:2, 6). Such life is possessed by God (Col. 3:3; Eph. 4:18), by Christ (Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 4:10), and also by the believer. (This life is possible because of the believer's special relationships to God in Christ, both in this life [Rom. 6:4; II Cor. 4:10] and in the life to come [II Cor. 5:4].) When ζωή is used with αἰώνιος, the meaning becomes life "eternal"; in its highest form, the word means nothing less than the life of God himself, and it is this very life in which the Christian is invited to partake. Paul reminds man that this new dimension of existence is a gift from God (Rom. 6:23) and cannot be earned, yet in order to receive the gift one must commit himself to Christ, for this new life and belief in Jesus Christ go hand in hand (I Tim. 1:16).

## II Thessalonians 1:9-10

They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed, . . .

Paul's awareness of God's justice permeated this passage. The law of retribution was inescapable and punishment was inseparably bound with sin. The sinner always hoped that he would be able to evade the inevitable, but such thought was only part of the process by which he was deceived. Men must answer for their actions. If their reward did not come here, then it would come in another world.<sup>353</sup> And this punishment would be "eternal": we will see in Appendix II that αἰώνιος meant much more than simply "having no end," yet some do insist that it means primarily that no end is visible.<sup>354</sup> Αἰώνιον, "time," was time that traveled beyond the remote horizon and continued on uninterrupted beyond the farthest age. This concept has encouraged belief in the doctrine of everlasting evil.

Thus one finds a wide range of thought in Pauline material regarding man's final destiny. If at times these views reflect inconsistency and ambivalence, we are reminded that the Apostle never set out to write a systematized eschatology, nor do we possess all that he preached or wrote that might aid us in better understanding his thought. Paul held two unreconciled views of man's final destiny. On one hand, there was the final and complete triumph of God over all his creation.

---

<sup>353</sup>James Denney, "The Epistles to the Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, p. 364.

<sup>354</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 516.  
Denney, "Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, pp. 365-366.

There were also the unrighteous individuals relegated to an eternity of despair where they remained separated from God.

Legitimate questions are raised regarding God's final victory. Paul never promised the ultimate redemption of every person, but clearly this was the implication if ultimately God would be "all in all." Yet those leaving this life unrepentant were given no hope of "another chance" beyond the grave. It seems that Paul never fully resolved this conflict in his own mind. He felt strongly that in the end nothing could or would thwart God's ultimate will, yet he never completely reconciled this with the idea of man's freedom. Both doctrines, then, are truly Pauline. To emphasize one to the exclusion of the other is to do that which the Apostle was unwilling to do himself.

## CHAPTER III

### PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY FOR TODAY

How quickly and with what ease do we begin to view things about us as permanent fixtures and think of ourselves as citizens instead of pilgrims. We need reminding of the uncertainty and evanescence of this life, of our works, and even of this world. Viewing the rise and fall of kingdoms and realizing that he himself must make a similar journey, man quite naturally wants to know whether this is all there is, or if anything at all is really permanent. At this point, Christian eschatology can make its fundamental contribution,<sup>1</sup> helping man keep life in its proper perspective. To a transitory world it offers a permanent and changeless God. The pilgrim of this life, challenged to become a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom, becomes aware that seen things pass away and that certain unseen things are eternal.<sup>2</sup>

Eschatology reveals God's concern with the total movement of history, thereby giving purpose to past, present, and future. It "insists that the architect is concerned not simply with the present and the immediate future but also with the ultimate end of history."<sup>3</sup> Although the whole course of history "remains plastic to the will of

<sup>1</sup>Headlam, St. Paul and Christianity, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Guy, The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things," p. 182.



God,"<sup>4</sup> it is man's "completed" or final state that reveals the true meaning of his existence.

Such a view is not alien to some forms of Greek thought: Aristotle maintained that the true nature of a thing was revealed more by its final stage than by its beginning.<sup>5</sup> The completed statue reveals the true nature of the block of marble. The hardness and durability of the saw is appreciated as necessary only when one understands that the saw's ultimate purpose is to cut wood or even iron. Likewise, the ultimate meaning of man and his universe is properly understood only as it is viewed from the "End," in light of its final consummation and God's ultimate victory and eternal reign.

#### Understanding Pauline Eschatology

Our main task in this final chapter is to consider the significance of Pauline eschatology for contemporary man. What is the abiding message conveyed by the doctrine of the Second Coming, Judgment, and Resurrection, and how can this message be related in modern terms to our present generation?

#### Pauline Eschatology: Its Limitations

To view any subject in its proper perspective we must become aware of its limitations as well as its contributions. At the beginning of this chapter, therefore, it is necessary to note some of the limitations

<sup>4</sup>Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, p. 239.

<sup>5</sup>Aristotle The Physics II. iii. 194b31-195a, trans. by Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford, The Loeb Classical Library. Cf. ibid., 194b5-194b13.

of Paul's work. Paul provided no systematic statement of doctrine.

Schoeps confessed that he was "not able to see Paul as a logical systematic thinker in one cast of ideas."<sup>6</sup> Deissmann added that Paul had room in his personality for contradictions that would have shattered a smaller man.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, we will be disappointed if we hope to find in Paul's eschatology a precise description or detailed account of final times. There was a distinct lack of scenery surrounding these events and, as a result, they are in sharp contrast to the highly colored and elaborate visions of the Jewish apocalyptic writers. No encouragement was given to those who would speculate on the "signs of the times"; nevertheless, the assurance remains that believers will continue with Christ beyond the grave, and that unbelievers will remain separated from Christ in death just as they have in life.

Pauline eschatology: its need  
for contemporary expression

First-century concepts and language can distort and limit our understanding of Pauline thought. The use of figurative language borrowed from Jewish apocalyptic thought, the ultimately minor, though troublesome, inconsistencies of views<sup>8</sup>; and the natural differences that exist between first-century and twentieth-century culture increase our

---

<sup>6</sup>Schoeps, Paul, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup>Adolf Deissmann, St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), p. 62.

<sup>8</sup>Guy, The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things," pp. 180-181.

difficulty in reaching from the twentieth century back toward Paul.

The "outer court" of Pauline thought contained many contemporary influences which convey little or no meaning to the modern mind. These influences should be recognized for what they are, and the message itself reclothed in a contemporary vocabulary which has meaning and relevance for today. However, instead of accepting the challenge of flexibility, change is often met with resistance and accepted only with great reluctance. No doubt Peabody is justified in saying that what is timeless in Paul is often subordinated (or ignored) while many of the contemporary elements are taught as essential.<sup>9</sup> The difficult task for any Pauline interpreter is to read beyond the Apostle's often outmoded language.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Pauline eschatology, as we have seen, depended heavily upon Jewish imagery for expression of its belief. The apocalyptic pictures of the end (especially in Thessalonians) reflect much of the traditional Jewish eschatology of his day. A completely literalistic interpretation of such things distorts the real Pauline message and makes the Apostle's thought meaningless for our present day. The distance between our world and Paul's first-century language, thought patterns, and concept of the universe is too great.

#### Pauline eschatology: its "demythologizing"

To some extent every minister faces the task of "demythologizing"

---

<sup>9</sup>F. G. Peabody, The Apostle Paul and the Modern World (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1923), p. 130.

<sup>10</sup>Barclay refers to four kinds of stagnation which threaten the Church today: (1) Stagnation in the statement of belief, (2) Stagnation in language, (3) Stagnation in worship, and (4) Stagnation in method (William Barclay, "Seen in Passing," The British Weekly, April 11, 1968).

each time he prepares a sermon. He then sees that the interpretation of Paul's message is not a thing to be done once and then forgotten. It is a continuing task which can never be "completed" in any real sense because it must be done anew in each generation. Bultmann, who criticized liberal theologians of the last century for throwing away the kerygma with the myth, has elicited the same criticism about his own interpretations of gospel messages.<sup>11</sup> Strawson has rightly said that, "While many would agree with his intentions, few scholars support Bultmann's extreme conclusions."<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich stated that "the words which are most used in religion are also those whose genuine meaning is almost completely lost and whose impact on the human mind is nearly negligible. Such words must be reborn, if possible, and thrown away if this is not possible."<sup>13</sup> Yet care must be taken to insure that our "new" language and images do not further distort the picture or need more demythologizing than that which has been cast aside. Is, for instance, "the ground of being" an expression that is clearer and more comprehensible to modern man than the more familiar term, God? Must we assume that anyone who speaks of God as "up there" or "out there" is bound to some anthropomorphic view of a Heavenly Being sitting on a throne in a localized heaven?<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth, A Theological Debate, ed. by Hans W. Bartsch; trans. by R. H. Fuller, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper & Row, n.d.), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>Strawson, Jesus and the Future Life, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup>Paul Tillich, The Eternal Now (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 94.

<sup>14</sup>C. S. Lewis, "Review," in The Honest to God Debate, ed. by David L. Edwards (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 91.

Bishop Robinson tells us that "our image of God must go,"<sup>15</sup> but his rather feeble substitute for Ultimate Reality appears to encompass little more than the world itself.<sup>16</sup> Missing is the positive affirmation of a purposeful Being who exists beyond the universe and quite independently of it. If these beliefs have been sacrificed as well as their images, then we have paid too high a price for our new terminology.<sup>17</sup> There is particular concern that the objective and historical basis of Christianity not be sacrificed on the altar of subjectivism.<sup>18</sup> The Gospel has a historical foundation in that it remains a living and present reality regardless of man's response, or lack of it. The resurrection, for instance, is an event in its own right and rests solidly upon historical fact. It is more than a picture or symbol of one's experience. Some demythologizing is rightly criticized for threatening the historicity of the kerygma as event.<sup>19</sup>

Questions arise as to whether it is possible to demythologize the event of Jesus Christ at all.<sup>20</sup> Schumann suggests that the New

---

<sup>15</sup>He also states that, "I don't want to destroy anyone's imagery of God" (*Ibid.*, p. 279).

<sup>16</sup>E. L. Mascall, "Review," in The Honest to God Debate, pp. 93-94.

<sup>17</sup>This is a recurring thought expressed in one form or another by most all of those who took opposition to J. A. T. Robinson's Honest to God (London: SCM Press, 1963). See J. A. T. Robinson and David L. Edwards, The Honest to God Debate Continues (London: SCM Press, 1963).

<sup>18</sup>Strawson, Jesus and the Future Life, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>Helmut Thielicke, "The Restatement of New Testament Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth, p. 147.

<sup>20</sup>Friedrich K. Schumann, "Can the Event of Jesus Christ Be Demythologized?" in Kerygma and Myth, p. 175.

Testament story contains an invariable and purposeful amount of Old Testament imagery and mythology.<sup>21</sup> Greek mythology had for ages led man to think thoughts which transcended the language of literalism. "Everyone," says Whale, "is compelled to think here in terms of images."<sup>22</sup> By referring to God as his Father, Jesus was using the language of mythology. He was speaking of an unworldly (or otherworldly) reality in worldly terms. It therefore is necessary for us to discover and explain the meaning embodied in this expression. The term, "Father," is not eliminated, but interpreted.

"Demythologizing" cannot consist in the elimination of the "worldly" image here employed, but only in the fact that the "worldly" receives its meaning from the "unworldly." This is why we shall never succeed in producing a gospel free from mythology.<sup>23</sup>

Pauline eschatology: its dependence upon symbol and imagery

Myth and symbolism have long been used by poets and other writers to convey that which lies beyond experience and to express the inexpressible. J. S. Whale reminds us that "the Christian hope cannot be precisely described, it can only be 'pictured' in symbolic language, suggested by the vivid imagery of different New Testament writers."<sup>24</sup> Nor do we know how literally the traditional apocalyptic writers were

---

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>22</sup>Whale, Christian Doctrine, p. 173.

<sup>23</sup>Schumann, "Can the Event of Jesus Christ Be Demythologized?" in Kerygma and Myth, p. 190.

<sup>24</sup>Whale, Christian Doctrine, p. 176.

interpreted by their own contemporaries.<sup>25</sup> It is impossible for us to say now just how much of the early eschatology was regarded as a program to be fulfilled to the letter and how much of it was recognized as symbolism.<sup>26</sup>

Certainly the "end" of history can never be described in exact detail. When we speak of the Second Coming, final consummation, and the end of history, we have reached the limits of human understanding. Alan Richardson is correct in saying that what knowledge we possess "is necessarily analogical and is best communicated by myths . . . to symbolize things which strictly lie beyond history."<sup>27</sup> Thieliicke reminds us that "we can no more abandon mythology than we can cease to think in terms of time and space."<sup>28</sup> To get rid of all symbolic language would be to prevent us from describing certain significant kinds of experience. This would only aid in denying God's being and his action as a reality beyond ourselves.<sup>29</sup> The result would be further confusion, not greater clarity.

---

<sup>25</sup>Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development, p. 215.

<sup>26</sup>W. Neil, "I and II Thessalonians," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), p. 997.

<sup>27</sup>Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics (London: SCM Press, 1947), p. 197.

<sup>28</sup>Thieliicke, "The Restatement of New Testament Mythology," in Kerygma and Myth, p. 141.

<sup>29</sup>J. M. Morrison, Honesty and God (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1966), p. 31.

The Enduring Message of Pauline Eschatology

The Knowledge That Christ Came in History  
and Ushered in a New Age

God uniquely entered into history  
through the person of Jesus Christ

Now, keeping in mind the limitations of demythologizing, let us consider the abiding message of Pauline eschatology and seek to relate these truths in contemporary language to modern man. The Pauline message is basically a theology of hope centered in the person of Jesus Christ. Three affirmations undergird this hope: (1) Christ came in history and ushered in a new age (the Christian faith has a historical foundation); (2) Christ enters into the present and is with us now (the Christian hope is a present reality); (3) God holds the future and will complete the work he has begun (the Christian cause will triumph).

Behind the proclamation of "Good News" and the offer of hope to modern man is the "fact" that something tremendous has happened. This unprecedented and decisive act in history proclaims that Jesus has come and the world, therefore, can never be as it was before.<sup>30</sup> That the kingdom has not yet arrived in its "fullness" is apparent,<sup>31</sup> although the believer is cleansed and put in a right position before God in the present (I Cor. 6:11). He is made "alive" (Eph. 2:1) and the new age has begun, but a "still larger fulfillment is in store for time to

---

<sup>30</sup>H. R. Mackintosh, The Highway of God (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1931), p. 15.

<sup>31</sup>William Manson states that "there can be no such thing under any imaginable conditions as a fully realised eschatology in the strict sense" ("Eschatology in the New Testament," in W. Manson et al., Eschatology, Four Papers Read to the Society for the Study of Theology, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper, No. 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953), p. 7.



come."<sup>32</sup> This future hope is rooted in past history. "All resurrection hope," says Cullmann, "is founded upon faith in a fact of the past . . . that Christ is risen."<sup>33</sup> Indeed our very faith in the future and the meaning we find in the "present" stem from the former fact of the past.<sup>34</sup> Our trust in God for the present and future is based on the knowledge of God's redemptive activity in the past and the conviction that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Since a real meaning of history appears to be missing from much Western culture of today,<sup>35</sup> it seems all the more necessary to stress the Christian view of world history.

Christ's victory over death is the historic fact which enabled his disciples to proclaim him "Lord." The resurrection continues to speak today. It is the same risen Lord who is at the center of the Christian experience, and it is his resurrection that is proclaimed by the Church.<sup>36</sup> This verifies the claim that "Christ is the ultimate

---

<sup>32</sup>Ernst Von Dobschutz, The Eschatology of the Gospels (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 22.

<sup>33</sup>Cullmann, Christ and Time, p. 241.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>35</sup>Berkhof says that in the last one and one-half centuries western culture has almost completely lost the notion of a meaning of history. This sense of "meaninglessness," as one would expect, has weakened western culture. Communism, on the other hand, is convinced that history does have meaning and is guided with purpose. This becomes a source of motivation for the Communist. To accept their "meaning of history," however, one must also accept dictatorship, loss of freedom, and deprivation for the individual. This leaves many to make the "unfortunate choice between a wrong meaning or no meaning at all" (Hendrikus Berkhof, Christ, the Meaning of History [1st English ed.; London: SCM Press, 1966], pp. 34-35).

<sup>36</sup>E. G. Selwyn, "Eschatology in I Peter," in The Background of

truth of things, the ultimate way of life for men, and the ultimate life, namely 'life eternal.'<sup>37</sup> The Easter message is eternally contemporary; hope and joy are forever relevant.

The Christian does not belittle the fact that sin is still a present and powerful reality in the world, but announces that it no longer reigns. Satan has fallen, and the ultimate victory has been secured though the war is not yet over.<sup>38</sup> This note of victory beats at the very heart of the kerygma. "I am persuaded," says Gustaf Aulén, "that no form of Christian teaching has any future before it except such as can keep steadily in view the reality of the evil of the world, and go to meet the evil with a battle song of triumph."<sup>39</sup>

All men are now living in the "interim period" between Christ's resurrection and the end. In this sense, as Schweitzer points out, the ethic of the present age is an "interim ethic." This concept underscores the necessity for a positive response to the Gospel message. The end has dawned, but the present is still with us. The kingdom of God is coming in all of its fullness, not as the result of human effort, but from God. Christians live in expectation of the coming consummation of the kingdom of God which had its beginning with the resurrection of

---

the New Testament and Its Eschatology, ed. by W. D. Davies and D. Daube, in honor of C. H. Dodd (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), p. 401.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Cullmann, Christ and Time, p. 84.

<sup>39</sup>Gustaf Aulén, Christus Victor (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), p. 159. Although Aulén is thinking particularly of the atonement in this instance, the application is nevertheless fitting because of the natural connection between the atonement and resurrection.

Christ.<sup>40</sup> Nothing can prevent the eschatological end from being realized. Thus man's hope.

The resurrection "turned Christ loose in the world." We are not called to "remember Christ," however, but to know and experience him as a living and present reality. Paul's repeated emphasis on being "in Christ" reminds us that a new dimension of life is possible in the present. Christ is intent on making "new men" of all those who take him seriously. It is doubtful whether any of us realize the full significance of being "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37), but a reservoir of power awaits those who take seriously the promise of transformed life.<sup>41</sup> "The triumphant powers of the Spirit are all about . . . , ready to flood in by the opened channel of faith."<sup>42</sup> Hence the "Good News." Thus, although the conclusive battle has been fought and sin and death have been defeated, we continue to confront them in human experience, the significant difference being that we no longer fear these forces nor is the end any longer in doubt.

---

<sup>40</sup>Walter Kunneth, The Theology of the Resurrection (1st English ed.; London: SCM Press, 1965), p. 267.

<sup>41</sup>"If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation" (II Cor. 5:17); he has "victory" over sin, death, and the law (I Cor. 15:56-57); he rises above his circumstances and limitations (Phil. 4:11-12); he has power (Phil. 3:10); he can "do all things in him" (Phil. 4:13).

<sup>42</sup>Mackintosh, The Highway of God, p. 21. The "Spirit," of course, is inseparably connected with the resurrection. Cullmann states that "the Holy Spirit is operative in the present as the power of the resurrection" (Christ and Time, p. 236).

Christ has brought sin under divine judgment

At Calvary the "wrath of God" was revealed against sin for the past, present, and future. Sin, at that moment, was exposed in all its horror and wickedness, and there it was defeated. Man's bondage was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in [the cross]" (Col. 2:15).<sup>43</sup> Man had hitherto been under bondage of sin and the power of Satan. Christ's "obedience unto death" broke the dominion of evil, however, and offered man a new hope and power. Even now man does not fully comprehend the significance of this event nor is he able to explain adequately how the victory took place. But this is not necessary; the important fact is our recognition that the Church lives today in the power manifest through the victory of the cross and empty tomb. Convinced that this is true, Christ's followers have for almost twenty centuries gone about the world proclaiming the kingdom of God.<sup>44</sup>

Paul sees salvation in terms of the "finished work of Christ," as a present experience and a future hope. There is not always a sharp distinction between these three "tenses" and, as we have seen, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to speak of one as wholly separate from the others.<sup>45</sup> They are in the final sense inextricably bound

---

<sup>43</sup>p. T. Forsyth refers to Jesus' work on the cross as "consummatory and final" (The Person and Place of Jesus Christ [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911], p. 81).

<sup>44</sup>Newbigin, Sin and Salvation, p. 90.

<sup>45</sup>However, in discussing the relevance of Pauline eschatology we can clarify matters by thinking first of Christ's role in history, then his present role in the life of the believer and finally the fulfillment of God's ongoing work as it will be revealed in the "End."

together.

The Assurance That Christ Enters into the Present  
and Is with Us Now

Christ comes now

We have seen that Paul tended to think of the coming of Christ in terms of the future. Certainly this future hope must not be abandoned or belittled, even though it contains much that we are unable to understand. Yet it would be equally wrong to overlook the fact that there is a sense in which Jesus is always coming. We cannot treat lightly the fact that "Christ comes to us in our immediate situation."<sup>46</sup> He cuts across the heart of our universe in every age and confronts men with divine truth; therefore, in a very real sense all men must take a side, either for Christ or against him.<sup>47</sup> Just as we think of the coming of Christ in Bethlehem over nineteen hundred years ago, so we can also expect him to enter into our contemporary situation at this present point in history. It is precisely by this "coming" into the present that Christ calls and challenges us today.<sup>48</sup> Leslie Weatherhead emphasizes the immediacy of Christ's call:

In the hour of death; in the moment of a great decision for right; in the choice of a high ideal; in the determination of some great resolve, Jesus comes to human hearts. He comes to us in the stranger seeking shelter, in the lonely breaking heart that comes to us for comfort, in the little child who seeks our love; and he who will minister to such finds Advent

---

<sup>46</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Coming of Christ (Cambridge: University Press, 1951), p. 42.

<sup>47</sup>Robinson, In the End, God, p. 69.

<sup>48</sup>Dodd, The Coming of Christ, p. 22.

imminent indeed, for he may celebrate it in his heart.<sup>49</sup>

We must, therefore, not think of Christian eschatology strictly in terms of the future. With the advent of Christ we know that the kingdom of God has come nearer than ever before.<sup>50</sup> Are we equally aware, however, that this Christ who "came" and "will come" again to complete his work is the same Christ who is "always coming" and who breaks in upon the present scene to confront modern man?

This in turn is a call to decision: like Matthew, all of us are faced with Christ's challenge to "Follow me" (Mt. 9:9).<sup>51</sup>

### Christ judges now

In the past the tendency has been to place great stress upon the "final" judgment (e.g., Dante's The Inferno and Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"), while saying little about "immediate" judgment. Yet this is an experience of the present as well as the future. "Judgment is going on now and always," says A. M. Hunter.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the judgment of the Kyrios begins at once upon one's encounter with Christ.<sup>53</sup> Jesus came into the world to show men the beauty and

---

<sup>49</sup>Leslie D. Weatherhead, After Death (London: Epworth Press, 1956), pp. 95-96.

<sup>50</sup>Oscar Cullmann, "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament," in The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, p. 411.

<sup>51</sup>Bultmann, as we know, places particular emphasis upon the "call to decision" (Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, pp. 9, 43). Cullmann, likewise, stresses the demand for each person to make a decision in faith, and he is careful to distinguish between the "listening" and the "believing" (Salvation in History, pp. 66, 69).

<sup>52</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 130.

<sup>53</sup>Kunneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, p. 283.

mercy of God. If man can stand unmoved, untouched, and unresponsive in the presence of divine love, then it is man who is judged, not God. A man's response to Jesus reveals what kind of man he really is. "God judges men," writes James Stewart, "not by legal righteousness, but by their response to His righteousness in Christ; not, that is, by position, but by direction; not by the fact that some are ethically better equipped than others, but by the fact that some have their faces to Christ and some their backs."<sup>54</sup>

Modern man will almost certainly not accept Paul's view that because of one person's sin (Rom. 5) corporate guilt spreads to all mankind. Twentieth-century man does not normally think in these terms. This argument undoubtedly needs reinterpretation for the present regardless of how effective it may have been for those of the first century, and it was an impressive argument, indeed, for the Jew, who believed in tribal solidarity and thus emphasized the group rather than the individual.<sup>55</sup> What is unquestionably true today, however, and needs saying again and again is that the story of Adam is the personal experience of every man. All are contaminated by sin. Admitting this is particularly important, since the recognition of sin is an obvious prerequisite to repentance.

The recognition of sin calls for repentance not just at the final judgment, but now. His presence among us reveals our most unbecoming, but real, selves. His beauty reveals our ugliness. His concern

---

<sup>54</sup>James Stuart Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 96.

<sup>55</sup>Barclay, The Mind of St. Paul, pp. 138-139.

unmasks our selfishness, his humility our pride, his righteousness our wretchedness. In this respect God's judgment is already operating in the present. Such judgment (or wrath) shows just how seriously and with what displeasure God treats sin. The "wrath of God" is being poured out now on the ungodly (Rom. 1:18-32). This "wrath," says Bultmann, "without temporal limitation means divine punishment."<sup>56</sup>

### Christ offers new life now

Eternal life is as real a possibility for the present as for the future. Given the opportunity, Pauline eschatology can do much to assist modern man in discovering the true significance of "new life" in the present. Actually, John's doctrine of "eternal life" and Paul's concept of believers being raised to new life in Christ are very similar.<sup>57</sup> The conviction that man can actually, through a personal encounter with the risen Christ, enter into an entirely new dimension of life is a certainty of which Paul never tires of speaking. The Christian hope, therefore, is a present reality assuring the believer of freedom from sin's dominion (Rom. 6:6, 7, 14), from condemnation (Rom. 8:1), from the "dominion of darkness" (Col. 1:13), from the "law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2), and from passions of the flesh and desires of the body (Eph. 2:3). This kind of living is so far superior to the mundane and sin-infected

---

<sup>56</sup>Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 289. A. M. Hunter refers to divine wrath and condemnation as "God's holy love reacting against evil, the 'adverse wind' of his will blowing against the sinner not only at Judgment Day but now" (Introducing New Testament Theology [London: SCM Press, 1954], p. 92).

<sup>57</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 37.



existence of the nonbeliever that it can be adequately described only as "new life." Paul's favorite expression for this new creation and a term which he uses to describe all true Christians is the phrase "in Christ."

"In Christ" expresses the intimate communion which exists between the risen Lord and his faithful who are still on earth. Christ is in such complete possession of the believer's life that Paul could say without seeming to boast that "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). This was not some religious experience peculiar to Paul. Nor was it as though he had some special priority that others did not have or was more "susceptible" to God's grace than anyone else. This was a reality and life which could and should be known experientially by all Christians. This was part of that "present hope" which is the special birthright of all true sons.

The gift of eternal life imparted now is a fact not always stressed in modern Christianity. The real resurrection must never be understood only as an objective event to be anticipated sometime in the future. It is true that the future promises a fulfillment which the present does not yet possess, and it is equally significant that all such hope rests on the historical base of Christ's own resurrection; yet the central promise of the resurrection is for new life now. It is not so much a new condition to be anticipated, but attained.<sup>58</sup> The present hope of entering a new dimension of existence, indeed experiencing new life itself, is as real a possibility for the twentieth-century

---

<sup>58</sup>Salmond, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 554.

Christians as for those of the first century. By proclaiming that Christ enters into the present and offers new life now, we are not only being true to Pauline eschatology but are also stressing one of the most fundamental Christian truths.

The Realization That God Holds the Future  
and Will Complete the Work He Has Begun

God's purpose guides history  
toward its fulfillment

Basically, Christian eschatology is an affirmation of Christian hope.<sup>59</sup> This hope is reflected in Pauline theology, in the Apostle's doctrine of "last things," and is connected with the idea of Christ's return. Paul is confident that history is a movement with a definite purpose toward a culmination, not merely a series of disconnected and meaningless events. The end to which history is moving is nothing less than the complete and final victory of God.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, God's will is to be manifest throughout the universe and acknowledged by all his creation. His glory will be revealed in the lives of the faithful. Evil will be destroyed, goodness will remain. This doctrine expresses the certainty "that the Lord of history, who is the Father of Christ, will complete his saving work."<sup>61</sup> It is this consummation, the final and complete triumph of God toward which the whole creation is moving. Christ's Second Coming becomes clearer to us as we increasingly understand his "first" coming. The same purpose motivates both; there will

<sup>59</sup>Kuneth, The Theology of the Resurrection, p. 232.

<sup>60</sup>Quick, Doctrines of the Creed, p. 245.

<sup>61</sup>Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, p. 129.

be nothing in the "Second" Coming contradictory to Christ's purpose as revealed in his "first" coming. Our hope is not based on "how" the Savior comes, but on the fact that he does come. J. E. Fison reminds us that

from the very beginning the Biblical God has been on the move in grace to man and in the very end he will be on the move in grace to man. The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is at the heart of the eschatological Christian gospel. His presence now guarantees his parousia then.<sup>62</sup>

Instead of contributing to passivity and moral apathy, the doctrine of the Second Coming encourages Christian action and participation. Since no one but God knows the "day and the hour" (Mt. 24:36) the task of spreading the Gospel becomes all the more urgent. The hour is always "near" and the admonition is to "watch . . . lest he come suddenly and find you asleep" (Mk. 13:35-36). The servant must be faithful in his work for he knows not the time of his Master's return (Mt. 24:45-51). The lamps must always be trimmed (Mt. 25:1-13). His coming will be as a thief in the night (I Thess. 5:2).

Paul's message is essentially optimistic, though he did not minimize the realities of sin and suffering in the present world.<sup>63</sup> One day (no one knew how soon) the whole universe, which was then in "travail," would be delivered, caught up in glory. The "sufferings of this present

---

<sup>62</sup>J. E. Fison, The Christian Hope (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1954), p. 254.

<sup>63</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Meaning of Paul for Today (London: The Swarthmore Press, 1922), pp. 30 ff.

Paul speaks of creation being subjected to futility, bondage, and decay (Rom. 8:20-21). The whole creation groans in travail (Rom. 8:22). The Christian's treasure is in "earthen vessels" (II Cor. 4:7) and he is constantly being "given up to death for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:11).

time" were real and must be taken into account, but they were "not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).

Such confidence was based on the fact that the final destination of the universe was certain. Grounded in this hope Paul could write confidently in the face of difficulty that "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8-9). Only by viewing history "from the End"<sup>64</sup> does one find justification for such confidence and optimism.

With the assurance of final deliverance and transformation, the questions of "how" and "when" suddenly become less important. Are we to expect the kind of miraculous change that will produce literally a new heaven and earth?<sup>65</sup> Are there signs by which we may anticipate this fulfillment and transformation? How will it all happen? We must remind those who are troubled by such questions that Biblical writers (as well as ourselves) were forced to speak in pictures about those things which no one has seen or heard (I Cor. 2:9); nevertheless, these pictures were not fanciful caricatures of the imagination. At their very center was the person of Jesus Christ. There is the timeless truth that Christ will draw all men unto himself, as a part of that divine plan which relentlessly guides history toward its fulfillment.

---

<sup>64</sup>Robinson, In the End, God, p. 125.

<sup>65</sup>Dodd points out that man (personal relations) is the basic problem of the universe. This being true, no mere physical transformation will solve our problems (The Meaning of Paul for Today, p. 33).

### God's redemption will affect all creation

The Christian hope is not limited to man alone, but touches all creation; indeed, "creation itself shall be a partner with (man) in his glory."<sup>66</sup> It will be delivered and set free from the bondage of corruption in which it now groans in travail (Rom. 8:19-22). Christians look forward to the restitution of all things as Christ's work is carried to its completion in both man and nature.<sup>67</sup> We can, in other words, expect God to complete the work he has begun. The Christian hope for the future, then, is based on the very nature of God, the God "who does not leave incomplete what he has begun."<sup>68</sup> Paul set himself in opposition to those who viewed history with despair and saw no hope for the future. He wrote from the firm conviction that eventually God would be "all in all." He believed that "history (has) a Lord, a purpose, and an end,"<sup>69</sup> and that God's redemptive purpose extended to all his creation.

### God's kingdom will be complete

In one sense, man's redemption remains incomplete throughout this life. Its completion is a future hope. Already Christ has died, risen and the new age begun, but there is more to come. Already the Christian has faced God in judgment (through the act of justification), been raised to new life (symbolized by baptism) and is now living "in Christ." But there is more: one day he will be free from the limitation

<sup>66</sup>Salmund, The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 554.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 555.

<sup>68</sup>Berkhof, Christ, the Meaning of History, p. 189.

<sup>69</sup>Hunter, Introducing New Testament Theology, p. 100.

of the flesh and be as his Lord. The Christian is promised final redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23), but he continues to struggle with the flesh, a symbol of all that is weak and miserable. Death remains the "last enemy" and the Christian longs for the "completion" of his salvation.

What, then, do we say of Pauline eschatology? Is it outdated and no longer relevant for twentieth-century man? Is the message so embedded in first-century imagery and mythology that it cannot be retrieved and restored? On the contrary, the eschatology of Paul embodies a message that is timeless. Behind the veil of apocalyptic symbolism we find a positive affirmation of Christian hope which is as relevant and robust today as when first spoken. This hope is rooted in God's redemptive activity of the past, especially as revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Things have never again been the same since he came. A new age has been ushered in and already men are entering his kingdom. He claims the right of allegiance of every person. In return he offers eternal life beginning now, but continuing after death. Meanwhile, the world moves toward its final consummation where sin will be purged and all of creation restored to its original purpose. The entire universe will acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. The imperfect will pass away for the perfect will have come (I Cor. 13:10).

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### THE PAULINE USE OF THE TERM "DEATH"

"Death" is a word which must be properly understood in the Pauline sense before we can hope to understand his thought. Since Paul was no systematic theologian, we will examine his use of the word by considering certain significant passages from his epistles in which he focused on the concept of death, its connection with sin, and its contrast to life. We will see Paul assigning different meanings to "death" and "life," oscillating between their physical and ethical connotations. Significant words and phrases have been underlined.

#### Romans 5:12, 19-21

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned--. . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. . . . as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Adam was the head of the old aeon, which was the age of death, and Christ was the head of the new aeon, which was the age of life. This entire passage contrasts the fall of Adam with the justifying work of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Paul viewed mankind as an organic unit with a single body and a single head; Adam, therefore, was not just a single individual, but the head of an "old" humanity and whatever happened to the head involved

---

<sup>1</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 210.



also the body.<sup>2</sup> In the seventh chapter of Joshua we see the Lord's anger being kindled against all Israel because Achan had "broken faith"; likewise, all humanity can be thought of as Adam's family, and Adam's sin was the sin of all the race. One can already see the contrast (and parallelism) in the two great representatives of humanity--Adam and Christ. Through Adam came sin and death. Through Christ came righteousness and life.<sup>3</sup>

At this point, however, "death" for Paul had both a physical and spiritual meaning. Spiritually, it indicated final separation from God. C. H. Dodd suggests that in this passage "death" was a comprehensive term for the disastrous consequences of sin, both physical and spiritual.<sup>4</sup> Sin, for Paul, was not necessarily a deliberate act for which an individual was guilty, but any condition in which men fall short of the glory of God. Sin carried no guilt in the absence of law or where there was no intention to be disobedient. This was not the case with Adam, however, when he deliberately disobeyed God.<sup>5</sup> Adam's act of transgression allowed sin and death to reign over all, even over those whose sins were not like Adam's knowing act of disobedience.

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>3</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 131. Paul is consistent with the Jewish thought of his time by saying that sin entered the human race through Adam and that (physical) death came in by sin. This interpretation of Genesis 3 with which Paul was familiar taught that Adam was immortal, but lost his immortality as a penalty of disobedience (Dodd, Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 81).

<sup>4</sup>Dodd, Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Paul spoke of death as "reigning." Death was a power under which man lived and to whom he was in bondage. The contrast was often made between "death", the destructive tyrant under whose power we stand, and "life," which was also a power and was given through faith in Christ to set us free. Thus, when Paul spoke of death, he often spoke of its dominion. Those under its rule were slaves. Nygren mentioned that "sin is the servant who goes ahead to prepare the way for death."<sup>6</sup> Paul saw sin and death as beginning simultaneously, and increasing their dominion over the world; only those who entered a life "in Christ" could break free from this life "in Adam."<sup>7</sup>

Romans 6:1-13

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

(Rom. 6:5)

There are some sixteen references to death in the first thirteen verses of this chapter. In the opening verses, Paul attempted to show that through baptism we become especially related to Christ and freed from the dominion of sin. Through baptism, we became members of the "body of Christ"; therefore, Paul spoke of Christ's death as our death, and his resurrection as our resurrection.<sup>8</sup> Baptism also spoke of death. The sacrament marked the death of the old man and the birth

---

<sup>6</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 216.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-221.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 232-233.

of the new.<sup>9</sup> We read that the baptized believer has "died in sin" (Rom. 6:2). Baptism for Paul was not merely obedience to, but actually incorporation into, Christ. Baptism was made "into Christ's death" because it was due primarily to the death of Christ that the barrier of sin between God and man was removed. At baptism it was possible for the Christian to enter into a changed condition. Paul stressed this idea of death and does not separate the death of the Christian from the death of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

The reference Paul made to death in verse seven was almost certainly that of physical death in the ordinary sense. The dead person was made free from sin, not in the sense of being free from the guilt of sins committed in life, but insofar as the dead person would sin no more.<sup>11</sup> C. H. Dodd suggested that Paul was alluding to the fact that in "the new sphere of life the power of sin over a man is broken."<sup>12</sup>

#### Romans 6:16, 20-23

Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? . . .

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become

---

<sup>9</sup>Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans (Oxford: University Press, 1933), p. 193.

<sup>10</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 156.

<sup>11</sup>Meyer, Romans, Vol. I, p. 290.

<sup>12</sup>Dodd, Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 91.

slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The meaning of death (θάνατος) in verse twenty-one seems to be eternal death.<sup>13</sup> This is also a possibility for verses seventeen and twenty-three. In the final verse of the chapter Paul underscored his major theme: the believer had escaped death<sup>14</sup> which ruled in the old aeon and now shared in the life of the new aeon. In restating this thought Paul referred to sin and wages. The implication was that by our behavior we could earn, or merit, death, but the true Christian, who could never earn eternal life, received it as a gift from God.

Romans 7:4-5, 8-13, 24

Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. . . . But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

He began here by reminding his listeners that physical death cancels all debt and responsibilities in the sense that a person could

<sup>13</sup>Meyer, Romans, Vol. I, p. 301.

<sup>14</sup>Though not physical death, of course.

no longer be punished. He illustrated this by saying that a woman was legally free to remarry if her husband died. Paul viewed sin and death as distinctive powers. Their corruption affected men on both sides of the grave. Paul was careful, therefore, not to say this about the law, although in fact it, too, became a power that destroyed. This happened only because sin found "opportunity" through the law and therefore its original purpose was thwarted.<sup>15</sup>

The exposition of Sandy and Headlam is very helpful concerning proper understanding of verses 7-10:

. . . it was the Law and nothing else through which I learnt the true nature of Sin. For instance I knew the awfulness of covetous or illicit desire only by the Law saying "Thou shalt not covet" . . . For without Law to bring it out Sin lies dead (inert and passive). And while sin was dead, I (my inner self) was alive, in happy unconsciousness, following my bent with no pangs of conscience excited by Law. But then came this Tenth Commandment; and with its coming Sin awoke to life, while I died the living death of sin, precursor of eternal death. And the commandment which was given to point men the way of life, this very commandment was found in my case to lead to death.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, in verse twenty-four Paul cried to be delivered "from the body of this death." It has been suggested that τοῦτο may have been meant to go with σώματος to read "from this body of death," but the connection with Θανάτου seems more appropriate. Sin and death come naturally together. As the body was involved in sin, so one was

---

<sup>15</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, pp. 280-281

<sup>16</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 177. Dodd describes "death" in this sense to be "the condition of impotence resulting from unsuccessful moral struggle." Of course this is far removed from the "death to sin" spoken of in 6:2 (Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 111).

involved in mortality. Therefore, physical death was followed by eternal death. The body perished first, then the soul.<sup>17</sup>

Paul's agony was real, for even though he was a member of the "body of Christ" he also lived in the flesh and thereby was a part of natural humanity which was subject to the "down pull" of sin and death. As long as there was life there existed tension between the old and new aeon. Every Christian faces the dualism of living both "in the flesh" and being "in Christ." All long to be free from such a "body of death," but the mortal must wait before he puts on immortality (I Cor. 15:53-54).

Romans 8:1-2, 10-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. . . . But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

Dead, sin and wrath--all powers of destruction in Pauline thought--are so intertwined that it is difficult to draw a clear line of distinction between them. They belong together, and where one is found, so invariably are the others. Here, for instance, Paul was speaking of being "free from death." Death, however, was not only closely aligned with sin, wrath and the law, but it was also inseparably connected with the old aeon and all that it implied.<sup>18</sup>

When Paul spoke of death, he was not usually thinking of a

---

<sup>17</sup>Sandy and Headlam, Romans, The International Critical Commentary, p. 184.

<sup>18</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 304.

person's physical life coming to an end. More significant to him was seeing death as a universal power who dominated and ruled mankind. Therefore, in this chapter, the Apostle concluded that the person "in Christ" was not only free from Wrath (Chapter 5), free from Sin (Chapter 6), free from the Law (Chapter 7), but also free from Death (Chapter 8). Paul gathered all of these related powers together and said that for the Christians there was then no "condemnation."<sup>19</sup>

The consequence of having desires, motives, and thoughts related to lower goals (everything opposed to goodness and righteousness) means that one's entire self is opposed to God.<sup>20</sup> Such living produces what could rightly be called a state of death, for in its present condition destruction is already at work. Yet, "if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10). Here the Christian, in one sense, stands between the two aeons. He still lives "in the flesh" with all the sinful pull and weakness that involves. At the same time he lives "in the Spirit," which involves righteousness and life. Being both righteous and sinner at the same time, therefore he stands under life and also under death; indeed, any backsliding on his part will thrust him back into his former bondage under death. Paul said that the outer man (the body) was dead because of sin. By the same token, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. This is the paradox of every Christian as

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 305-311.

<sup>20</sup>Dodd, Romans, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 122.

long as he has earthly existence.<sup>21</sup> The body therefore is subject to death, but in spirit, even now the Christian belongs to the new aeon.<sup>22</sup>

#### I Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

St. John spoke symbolically of this ultimate triumph when he mentioned that Death and Hades would be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). The theme here was the one that Paul repeated elsewhere: God's power will be used to overcome death, to overcome its spiritual negation in this life and to overcome its physical aspect in the next.

#### I Corinthians 1:18

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Paul was referring either to the certainty of future destruction or the destruction which was already beginning to take place for the lost, here and now. The latter seems more likely. The verb from John 3:16 was used by Paul as a standard expression for the destiny of the wicked. The present tense seems to indicate a certainty in this matter of "perishing," regardless of whether it is referring to the past, present, or future; however, this is no authority for predetermining the destruction of the wicked nor does it indicate annihilation or endless torment. As a matter of fact, Paul does not define what he meant by "perishing," although eternal loss or exclusion may be meant.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Nygren, Commentary on Romans, p. 322.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 324-325.

<sup>23</sup>Robertson and Plummer, First Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 18.



## II Corinthians 2:15-16

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

One must be careful about a rigid interpretation of ἐκ and εἰς.

Some suggest that this continued succession means no more than "from day to day." Problems arise, however, when we take ἐκ to mean "out of" and εἰς to mean "into," thus leading us into an overly literal translation, "out of death into death." Most would agree that the Gospel may mean εἰς θάνατον (unto death) for some, but it would be difficult to see how the Gospel could be ἐκ θανάτου (out of death) in the sense that it proceeds "out of death." The real intention here is to show progress from one evil condition to another in a movement of from bad to worse. The unbeliever is in a fatal condition when the Gospel comes to him and the effect of the Gospel message is simply to confirm that the fatal tendency has already begun.<sup>24</sup>

Preaching is always εὐωδία (a sweet smell) to God, but not always to men. To some the Gospel meant death from beginning to end, while to others it was life from beginning to end. "Those who are perishing" conveys the idea that they are on the road to destruction and will certainly meet that fate unless a complete change takes place.<sup>25</sup>

## II Corinthians 4:3

. . . if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 71. See also Denney, "Second Corinthians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. V, pp. 740-741.

It is not the fault of the Gospel that it is rejected by some. The hearer is at fault when he listens to preaching not with the desire for truth, but rather to confirm his own views. This is the plight of those who are lost, or perishing.<sup>26</sup> Paul did not excuse unbelief and made it perfectly clear that men were responsible to God for rejecting the Gospel. The word ἀπολλόμενοις means that such people are on their way to complete and final ruin.<sup>27</sup>

## II Corinthians 4:11-12

For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

The meaning of this passage is primarily literal. It was most common to see Christians facing peril and death for the sake of their faith. This constant jeopardy of one's life is yet justified as long as it is for Christ. And just when we seem to be "given up to death" it is then that he delivers us and allows that we continue in his service. Paul then concluded that "death works in us, but life in you." This means that ὁ θάνατος is to be understood in physical terms and ἡ ζωὴ is mainly spiritual. He was saying to the Corinthians, "We have the physical suffering and you the spiritual gain" (although Paul would not deny that ἡ ζωὴ was in himself also).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Plummer, Second Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, p. 114.

<sup>27</sup>Floyd V. Filson, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. X, p. 315.

<sup>28</sup>Plummer, Second Corinthians, The International Critical Commentary, pp. 131-132.

This is a way of saying that both death and life are at work in the Christian at the same time as he continues close fellowship with the crucified and risen Lord. While death is at work in us, however, it is for the good of others that we suffer. Throughout this passage the physical meaning of death is obviously what the Apostle had in mind.

Ephesians 2:1-2, 5-7

And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. . . . even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Paul explained the condition which existed for any person, Jew or Gentile, who attempted to live without Christ as being "dead in trespasses and sins." The man who continued to live unreconciled to God became by that very fact a dead man. Death and judgment were constantly the companion of such a person and his works were "dead works." He was as a dead tree cut off from its root; as a fire when the spark has gone out; dead as a man was dead when his heart stops beating.<sup>29</sup> As with the departed Christian we say "put to death in the flesh, but living in the spirit." The unrighteous find the opposite to be true for them because they are put to death in the spirit while still living in the flesh.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Findlay, "Ephesians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, pp. 28-29.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. Sin is deadly, Professor Barclay points out, in at least three different ways. It kills innocence. It kills ideals. It kills the will (William Barclay, The Letters to the Galatians and

# Philippians 1:21-24

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

At times Paul spoke of death as a sleep out of which all men would be awakened at some future general resurrection (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:14, 16). When death seemed imminent, however, Paul spoke of it not in terms of falling asleep, but of immediately entering into the presence of his Lord.<sup>31</sup> He was not thinking so much here of the act of dying as the consequence of dying, the state after death. Paul longed to dissolve the earthly tabernacle and go home to Christ, yet he felt a responsibility for those with whom he was working and realized that God yet had work for him to do.

# Colossians 3:1-6

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

Ephesians [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956], pp. 113-115). On the other hand, the work of Christ combats and achieves victory over sin in each of these areas for the believer. Jesus does not give man back his lost innocence, but he does take away the guilt and sense of estrangement which has resulted from sin and allows him to return to God. Secondly, Jesus reawakens the ideal in the heart of man that sin destroyed. Finally, Jesus revives, restores and recreates the will which had been lost to sin (Ibid., pp. 119-121).

<sup>31</sup>Phil. 1:23.

You have died in baptism, said Paul in verse three. Rising from the baptismal waters, you have died to the world and been born again, but only to God. The Greeks often spoke of a person who was dead and buried as being "hidden in the earth." As physical death brought man to be hidden in the earth, so the Christian dying a spiritual death in baptism was "hidden in Christ."<sup>32</sup>

Here again, Paul used "death" in the moral rather than the physical sense. Every person had a moral personality consisting of two parts. In each of us there exists the "old man" and the "new." It was this old man with all of his members that must be slain. He must continually be put to death.<sup>33</sup>

Colossians 2:12-13

And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

Baptism is the death, or grave, of the old man and the birth of the new. Baptism therefore is an image of the Christian's participation in both the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Is the life spoken of in verse thirteen to be understood in a spiritual sense of regeneration of the moral being or in the literal

---

<sup>32</sup>Barclay, The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon (London: Macmillan and Co., 1876), p. 211.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

sense of immortality beginning now and to be fully realized later? Paul likely would have never thought of these two ideas of life as being separate. To him the glorified life to come was only a continuation of the present moral and spiritual life, but in a fuller and completed sense.<sup>35</sup>

## II Timothy 1:9-10

[God] who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

God's purpose in becoming incarnate was that he might "abolish death" and reveal through the resurrection his complete sovereignty over all the temporal order including death. After all, life is the purpose of creation, not death. Now the gospel proclaimed that death (which was the last enemy) had been overcome. Of course men would still taste of physical death, but the sting, the agony, and all that it implied was defeated forever.<sup>36</sup> Yet the final and complete victory over this "enemy" would be realized only at the "end" when God became all in all (I Cor. 15:24-28).

One sees from the brief examination of these Pauline passages that the Apostle's concept of "death" often differed considerably from our ordinary use of the word today. Since death for Paul was inseparably

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>36</sup>Fred D. Gealy and Morgan P. Noyes, "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus," in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. IX, pp. 468-469.

related to sin, in only a few instances is this word ever limited to a strict and literal interpretation of physical death. Physical death is involved, of course, but the term "death" is seldom limited to that meaning alone. Paul usually saw death as a universal power which dominates and rules mankind and is symbolic of a final separation from God. This becomes a comprehensive term standing for the disastrous consequence of sin, both physical and spiritual. Sin and death go hand in hand so that death is spoken of not only as an event which puts an end to life, but as a tyrant under whose dominion sinful man lives. "Death," in this sense (including the physical), came through Adam and its power is broken only by placing one's faith in the redeeming work of Christ. He alone can set us free and bring us from death to life.

## APPENDIX II

### AIONIOS

There is a diversity of opinion among competent scholars regarding the proper and correct meaning of the word, aionios. Some are convinced that its meaning should be limited to "everlasting" and "unending" in a strictly literal sense.<sup>1</sup> Others point out that the real essence of aionios has to do not with quantity of time ("endlessness") but with a quality of life.<sup>2</sup>

The adjective, aionios, comes from the noun aion, which means a lifetime, or age. It later expanded to mean an immeasurably or indefinitely long period of time.

Plato, who may have coined the word, aionios,<sup>3</sup> used it to speak not simply of an unending period of time, but that which is "above and

---

<sup>1</sup>Salmond claims that the ordinary use of this word throughout the New Testament conveys the idea of permanence and changelessness (The Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 649). Kennedy (St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, pp. 316-319), Mackintosh (Immortality and the Future, p. 204), and Denney ("Thessalonians," in The Expositor's Bible, Vol. VI, p. 365) share similar views.

<sup>2</sup>"Eternal life stands primarily not for a greater length of days," says John Baillie, "but for a new depth of it" (And the Life Everlasting, p. 158). "There is no authority whatever for rendering it (αἰώνιος) 'everlasting,'" says F. W. Farrar (Eternal Hope, p. 197). There is no doubt that αἰώνιος is sometimes applied to things which are endless, but this fact does not indicate that the word itself means "endless" (ibid., p. 198). Professor Barclay adds that eternal life "is nothing else than the life of God himself" (William Barclay, New Testament Words [London: SCM Press, 1964], p. 38).

<sup>3</sup>Leckie, The World to Come and Final Destiny, p. 348.



beyond time."<sup>4</sup> Both body and soul were spoken of as being indestructible, for example, but they were not eternal: ". . . the soul and body, although not eternal, were, like the gods of popular opinion, indestructible . . ." (Laws X. 904). Only the gods could be eternal in this sense. The possibility did not exist for man.

On another occasion Plato spoke of God creating the universe as a moving image of eternity.<sup>5</sup> Both time and the universe closely resemble the eternal, but in fact they are only images of the real thing and are therefore terminable. The very nature of the truly eternal is that it cannot be created for it has no beginning and no end. This fact helps reveal the true meaning of aionios. It is descriptive of the eternal order as contrasted with man. It is a word which can be properly applied only to God and is descriptive of the life of God.<sup>6</sup>

Yet it is obvious that today many understand the word "eternal" as simply "forever." This hardly does justice to the term which is so intricately woven into the fabric of our New Testament.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, such

---

<sup>4</sup>Baillie, And the Life Everlasting, p. 159; cf. Farrar, Eternal Hope, pp. 199-200.

<sup>5</sup>Plato Timeaus 37 and 38.

<sup>6</sup>Barclay, New Testament Words, p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>But does "eternal" ever convey the idea of "everlasting" or is there any reference to time at all? Salmond states that aionios is so frequently used to suggest the idea of unending or untransitory that one should be careful there is proper reason for translating it otherwise, especially when applied to the destiny of the wicked (Christian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 649). In speaking of the destiny of the unrepentant, the passages are as solemn as they are varied in description. In one passage "fire" is described as "eternal" (Mt. 18:8), in another as the "punishment" (Mt. 25:46), another as the "destruction" (II Thess. 1:9), and finally as the "sin" (Mk. 3:29). Yet the same term

an interpretation, says Professor Barclay, oversimplifies and encourages misunderstanding.<sup>8</sup> Actually, the words "eternal" and "forever" are used on a number of occasions in both the Old Testament and the intertestamental writings to indicate not endlessness, but a rather definite and limited period of time. For example, some of the Jewish ordinances in the Old Testament are spoken of as "forever" and yet have long since ceased. In Exodus 12:21 ff. reference is made to sprinkling blood on the lintel and doorposts so that "the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter. . . ." This rite is to be observed as "an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever" (Ex. 12:23-24). Concerning the temple, Solomon says, "I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever" (I Kings 8:13). "For ever" is even used in connection with the length of a slave's service (Deut. 15:17; Job 41:4). In the intertestamental writings also one finds instances of "eternal" and "forever" being used in referring to a limited time period (I Enoch 10:5, 10:10).

In turning to the Pauline material itself we find that the Apostle made frequent use of the term "eternal" and employed this word to describe both the blessings of the faithful and the destruction of the wicked. He said of those who do not know God and disobey the Gospel

---

chosen to express the perpetual fate of the wicked is the same one used to help define God's immortality, his kingdom, his Son, his Spirit, and his glory. Is it not reasonable to say that the word "eternal" (aionios) conveys the idea of lasting and unchanging in both cases? (Ibid., pp. 649-650). But, as we have seen earlier, aionios is a word above and beyond time, even contrasted with time. It is the word of God as opposed to man. It conveys much more than the concept of "unending existence."

<sup>8</sup>Barclay, New Testament Words, p. 35.

that they should suffer the "punishment of eternal destruction" (II Thess. 1:9). "Eternal . . . glory" (II Cor. 4:17, II Tim. 2:10), on the other hand, awaited the Christian. He was to have "a house . . . eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1) and "eternal comfort and good" (II Thess. 2:16). These things which were unseen were "eternal" (II Cor. 4:18). God was spoken of as the "eternal God" (Rom. 16:26). He had "eternal power" (Rom. 1:20). His was an "eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:11) which he realized through Jesus Christ, and to him belonged "eternal dominion" (I Tim. 6:16). Equally significant was Paul's use of "eternal life." This term is found in the Pauline material on at least nine occasions (Rom. 2:7, 5:21, 6:22, 6:23; Gal. 6:8; I Tim. 1:16, 6:12; Tit. 1:2, 3:7).

The Pauline usage of aionios reveals then that the Apostle did actually refer to judgment and destruction as "eternal." On the other hand, it is quite clear that for the most part this is a term which he reserved for describing the blessings of the righteous. Indeed, only on one occasion in all his writings did he use "eternal" when referring to the plight of the wicked (II Thess. 1:9).

A similar use is made of this word in the Gospels and throughout the remainder of the New Testament.<sup>9</sup> Although the Scriptures do not

---

<sup>9</sup>In the Gospels, for instance, one finds reference to "eternal sin" (Mk. 3:29), "eternal fire" (Mt. 18:8, 25:41), and "eternal punishment" (Mt. 25:46). Yet in the overwhelming majority of instances this word is used in connection with the phrase "eternal life" (Mk. 10:17, 10:30; Mt. 19:29, 25:46; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:16, 3:36, 6:47, 12:25). Outside the Gospels we find in Hebrews a reference to "eternal judgment" (6:2), and in Jude one reads of "eternal fire" in connection with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:7). Aside from these two instances, however, the word "eternal" is invariably and consistently linked with God, his kingdom, and the blessings of the righteous (Heb. 5:9, 9:15; I Pet. 5:10; II Pet. 1:11; I Jn. 1:2; etc.).

attempt a careful description of "eternal life," we are given an insight into the meaning of this term in John 17:3. Jesus said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou sent." Eternal life, therefore, comes as the result of one knowing God through Jesus Christ and entering into fellowship with him. It is received as a gift (Tit. 3:5). It is the product of salvation (Tit. 3:7) and stems from the believer's faith union with Christ. A life void of this relationship is doomed to perish. In fact, to have physical life without eternal life is to be "dead in . . . trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5).

It is therefore too much to say that eternal (αἰώνιος) is a term which is never applied to the judgment of the wicked. Yet it is apparent that such references are few and that by far the most common New Testament usage is in connection with eternal life, a state of existence in which the Christian actually partakes of the life of God. In the New Testament, and certainly in the Pauline material, aiōnios clearly expresses more than longevity of days. "Fullness of days" would be a more correct expression. In the final analysis this word refers to the life of God, or, for the Christian, life with God.

# WORKS CITED

- Abbott, T. K. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1909.
- Ackerman, C. The Christian Element in Plato and the Platonic Philosophy. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1861.
- Adam, James. The Religious Teachers of Greece. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908.
- Angus, Samuel. The Environment of Early Christianity. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.
- . The Mystery Religions and Christianity. London: John Murray, 1925.
- . The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World. London: John Murray, 1929.
- Antonius, Marcus Aurelius. The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius. Translated by Meric Casaubon. London: J. M. Dent and Co., n.d.
- . To Himself. Translated by C. R. Haines. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1916.
- Apuleius. The Golden Ass. Translated by W. Adlington. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1947.
- Aristotle. The Physics. Vols. I and II. Translated by Phillip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1929.
- Armstrong, Duncan. Christianity in the Roman World. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1927.
- Arnobius. The Writings of Arnobius. Translated by A. H. Bryce and Hugh Campbell. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1871.
- Arnold, E. V. Roman Stoicism. Cambridge: University Press, 1911.
- Aulen, Gustaf. Christus Victor. London: S.P.C.K., 1965.
- Bailey, John. "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. XI. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

Baillie, John. And the Life Everlasting. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.

Barclay, William. "Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times, The Way of the Will of God, The Stoics." Expository Times, LXXII (1960-1961), pp. 164-166, 200-203, 227-230, 258-261, 291-294.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times, The Way of Tranquility, The Epicureans." Expository Times, LXXII (1960-1961), pp. 78-81, 101-104, 146-149.

\_\_\_\_\_. Jesus As They Saw Him. London: SCM Press, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Letters to the Corinthians. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957 (Philippians and Colossians), 1954 (Thessalonians).

\_\_\_\_\_. The Letter to the Romans. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Mind of St. Paul. London: Collins Fontana Books, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. New Testament Words. London: SCM Press, 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Plain Man Looks At the Apostles' Creed. London: Collins Fontana Books, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Revelation of John. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1959.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Seen in Passing." The British Weekly, April 11, 1968.

Barrett, G. S. The Intermediate State and Last Things. London: Elliott Stock, 1896.

Barth, Karl. The Epistle to the Romans. Oxford: University Press, 1935.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Shorter Commentary on Romans. London: SCM Press, 1959.

Bartsch, Hans W. Kerygma and Myth, A Theological Debate. Translated by R. H. Fuller. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper and Row, n.d.

Bate, Herbert Newell. A Guide to the Epistles of Saint Paul. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1926.

- Beare, Francis W. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians.  
Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper and  
Brothers, 1959.
- . "The Epistle to the Ephesians." The Interpreter's Bible.  
Vol. X Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- . "The Epistle to the Philippians." Black's New Testament  
Commentary. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1959.
- . St. Paul and His Letters. New York and Nashville:  
Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Beasley-Murray, G. R. Jesus and the Future. London: Macmillan and  
Company, 1954.
- Beet, Joseph A. A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.  
3rd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885.
- . St. Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,  
and to Philemon. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890.
- Berkhof, Hendrikus. Christ, the Meaning of History. 1st English ed.  
London: SCM Press, 1966.
- Berkhof, I. Systematic Theology. London: The Banner of Truth Trust,  
1939.
- Bernard, E. R. "Resurrection." A Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by  
James Hastings. Vol. IV. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1947.
- Bernard, J. H. The Pastoral Epistles. Cambridge Greek Testament.  
Cambridge: University Press, 1922.
- . "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians." The Expositor's  
Greek Testament. Vol. III. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.
- Bevan, Edwin. Stoics and Skeptics. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.
- Black, Matthew, ed. Peake's Commentary on the Bible. London: Thomas  
Nelson and Sons, 1962.
- Box, G. H. "Fourth Ezra." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old  
Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explana-  
tory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol.  
II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- Box, G. H., and Oesterley, W. O. E. "Sirach." The Apocrypha and Pseude-  
pigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and  
Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by  
R. H. Charles. Vol. I. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.

- Brown, James B. Stoics and Saints. Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1893.
- Bruce, A. B. St. Paul's Conception of Christianity. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1894.
- Bruce, F. F. The Epistles to the Ephesians. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1961.
- Bruner, Emil. Eternal Hope. Translated by Harold Knight. London: Lutterworth Press, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Letter to the Romans. London: Lutterworth Press, 1959.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. History and Eschatology. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus and the Word. London: Collins Fontana Books, 1958.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "New Testament and Mythology." Kerygma and Myth, A Theological Debate. Edited by Hans W. Bartsch. Translated by R. H. Fuller. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper and Row, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Primitive Christianity. Edinburgh: Collins Fontana Library, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Theology of the New Testament. 2 vols. London: SCM Press, 1965.
- Burton, Ernest de Witt. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1921.
- Caird, Edward. The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers. 2 vols. Glasgow: University Publishers, 1904.
- Campbell, Lewis. Religion in Greek Literature. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1898.
- Case, S. J. "Second Adventism." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. XI. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920.
- Charles, R. H. "Apocalyptic Literature." A Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. I. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Book of Enoch." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Book of Jubilees." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Critical History of the Doctrines of A Future Life in Israel in Judaism and in Christianity, or Hebrew, Jewish and Christian Eschatology from Pre-Prophetic Times Till the Close of the New Testament Canon. 2nd ed. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Martyrdom of Isaiah." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Second Baruch." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- Cheetham, S. The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian. London: Macmillan and Company, 1897.
- Cicero. De Finibus. Translated by H. Rackham. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. De Natura. Translated by H. Rackham. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1933.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Tusculan Disputations. Translated by J. E. King. London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- Cornford, F. M. From Religion to Philosophy. London: Edward Arnold, 1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Greek Religious Thought. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1923.
- Craig, Clarence T. "The First Epistle to the Corinthians." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. X. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Cullmann, Oscar. Christ and Time. London: SCM Press, 1951.

Cullmann, Oscar. The Early Church. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament." The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology. Edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. In Honor of C. H. Dodd. Cambridge: The University Press, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_. Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead? London: Epworth Press, 1958.

\_\_\_\_\_. Salvation in History. English ed. London: SCM Press, 1967.

Cullmann, Oscar, and Leenhardt, F. J. Essays on the Lord's Supper. London: Lutterworth Press, 1958.

Cumont, Franz. After Life in Roman Paganism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922.

\_\_\_\_\_. Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans. New York: G. F. Putnam's Sons, 1912.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Mysteries of Mithra. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1903.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism. New York: Dover Publications, 1911.

Dahle, L. N. Life After Death. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1896.

Davies, W. D. Invitation to the New Testament. London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. London: S.P.C.K., 1948.

Davies, W. D., and Daub, D., ed. The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology. In Honor of C. H. Dodd. Cambridge: The University Press, 1956.

Deissmann, Adolf. St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926.

Denney, James. "The Epistles to the Thessalonians." The Expositor's Bible. Vol. VI. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians." The Expositor's Bible. Vol. V. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.

Dowick, E. C. "Eschatology." A Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. I. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1915.

Dowick, E. C. "Eschatology." Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. I. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1915.

\_\_\_\_\_. Primitive Christian Eschatology. Cambridge: University Press, 1912.

Dibelius, Martin. Paul. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1953.

Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers. Translated by R. D. Hicks. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1925.

Dodd, C. H. The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Coming of Christ. Cambridge: University Press, 1951.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Meaning of Paul for Today. London: The Swartmore Press, 1922.

\_\_\_\_\_. New Testament Studies. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Parables of the Kingdom. London: Nisbet and Company, 1935.

Dods, Marcus. "The First Epistle to the Corinthians." The Expositor's Bible. Vol. V. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.

Drummond, James. Philo Judeus. Vols. I and II. London: William Margate, 1888.

DuBose, W. P. The Gospel According to St. Paul. New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1907.

Duncan, George S. The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934.

Edwards, David L., ed. The Honest to God Debate. London: SCM Press, 1963.

Epictetus. Discourses. Translated by W. A. Oldfather. The Loeb Classical Library. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1926.

Epicurus. Fragments. Translated by Cyril Bailey. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.

The Expositor's Bible. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. 6 vols. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.

The Expositor's Greek Testament. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. 5 vols.  
London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

Fairweather, William. The Background of the Gospels. 2nd ed. Edinburgh:  
T. and T. Clark, 1911.

Farnell, L. R. Cults of the Greek States. Vol. III. Oxford: Clarendon  
Press, 1907.

\_\_\_\_\_. Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality. Oxford: Clarendon  
Press, 1921.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Greek Religion." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol.  
VI. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914.

Farrar, F. W. Eternal Hope. London: Macmillan and Company, 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Life and Work of St. Paul. 2 vols. London: Cassell,  
Petter, Galpin, and Company, 1879.

Festugiere, Andre-Jean. Personal Religion Among the Greeks. Berkeley:  
University of California Press, 1954.

Filson, Floyd V. "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians." The Inter-  
preter's Bible. Vol. X. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

Findlay, G. G. The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians.  
Cambridge Greek Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1904.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Epistle to the Ephesians." The Expositor's Bible. Vol.  
VI. New York: Wilbur B. Ketcham, n.d.

\_\_\_\_\_. "St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians." The Expositor's  
Greek Testament. Vol. II. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

Fison, J. E. The Christian Hope. London: Longmans, Green and Company,  
1954.

Forsyth, P. T. The Person and Place of Jesus Christ. London: Hodder  
and Stoughton, 1911.

Fosdick, H. E. The Assurance of Immortality. London: SCM Press, 1918.

\_\_\_\_\_. A Guide to Understanding the Bible. London: Student Christian  
Movement Press, 1930.

Fritsch, C. T. "Apocrypha." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.  
Vol. I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Pseudepigrapha." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.  
Vol. III. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Gardner, Percy. "Mysteries." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Vol. IX. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.

\_\_\_\_\_. New Chapters in Greek History. London: John Murray, 1892.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Religious Experience of St. Paul. London: Williams and Norgate, 1911.

Gardner-Smith, P. The Narratives of the Resurrection. London: Methuen and Company, 1926.

Garvie, Alfred E. Romans. The Century Bible. Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack, n.d.

\_\_\_\_\_. Studies of Paul and His Eschatology. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911.

Gaster, T. H. "Dead, Abode of the." The Interpreter's Dictionary of The Bible. Vol. I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Gealy, Fred D., and Noyes, Morgan P. "Second Timothy." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. XI. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

Geddes, W. D., ed. The Phaedo of Plato with Introduction and Notes. London: Williams and Norgate, 1863.

Glasse, John. The Mysteries and Christianity. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1921.

Glasson, T. Francis. The Second Advent. London: Epworth Press, 1945.

Glover, T. R. Paul of Tarsus. London: SCM Press, 1925.

Gomperz, Theodore. Greek Thinkers. Translated by Laurie Magnus. Vol. I. London: John Murray, 1901.

\_\_\_\_\_. Greek Thinkers. Translated by G. G. Berry. Vols. II and III. London: John Murray, 1905.

Grant, F. C. Hellenistic Religions. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_. An Introduction to New Testament Thought. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950.

Gray, Buchanan. "The Psalms of Solomon." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.

- Grote, George. Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates. 3 vols.  
London: John Murray, 1865
- Guthrie, W. K. C. The Greeks and Their Gods. London: Methven and  
Company, 1950.
- Guy, H. A. The New Testament Doctrine of "Last Things." London: Oxford  
University Press, 1948.
- Halliday, W. R. The Pagan Background of Early Christianity. Liverpool:  
University Press, 1925.
- Harris, Charles. "State of the Dead (Christian)." Encyclopaedia of  
Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. XI.  
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920.
- Harrison, E. F. "Descent Into Hell." Baker's Dictionary of Theology.  
Edited by E. F. Harrison. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1960.
- Hastings, James, ed. Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. 2 vols.  
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Dictionary of the Bible. 5 vols. Edinburgh: T. and T.  
Clark, 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. 13 vols. Edinburgh:  
T. and T. Clark, 1912.
- Hatch, E. The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian  
Church. London: Williams and Norgate, 1890.
- Headlam, Arthur C. St. Paul and Christianity. London: John Murray,  
1913.
- Herberg, W. "Eschatology." The Encyclopaedia Britannica. Vol. VIII.  
London: William Benton, 1966.
- Hesiod. Works and Days. Translated by H. G. Evelyn-White. London:  
William Heinemann, 1914.
- Hicks, R. D. "Epicureans." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.  
Edited by James Hastings. Vol. V. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark,  
1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Lucretius." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited  
by James Hastings. Vol. VIII. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark,  
1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Stoic and Epicurean. London: Longmans, Green and Company,  
1911.

Holmes, Samuel. "The Wisdom of Solomon." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. I. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911.

Homer. Iliad. 2 vols. Translated by A. T. Murray. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1934.

\_\_\_\_\_. Odyssey. 2 vols. Translated by A. T. Murray. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1946.

Hooke, S. H. "Resurrection." Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Vol. II. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918.

Hunter, A. M. The Gospel According to St. Mark. London: SCM Press, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_. Interpreting Paul's Gospel. London: SCM Press, 1954.

\_\_\_\_\_. Introducing New Testament Theology. London: SCM Press, 1954.

\_\_\_\_\_. Paul and His Predecessors. London: Nicholson and Watson, 1940.

Inge, William R. Christian Mysticism. London: Methven and Company, 1899.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Alexandrian Theology." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908.

The Interpreter's Bible. Edited by George A. Buttrick. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Irenaeus. The Writings of Irenaeus. Translated by A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut. "Against Heresies." Vols. I, II, V, IX. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1868 (Vols. I and V), 1869 (Vols. II and IX).

Jacob, Edmond. "Immortality." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. II. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Jaeger, Werner. Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947.

Jeremias, Joachim. The Parables of Jesus. Rev. ed. London: SCM Press, 1963.

Jones, Maurice. The Epistle to the Philippians. Westminster Commentaries. London: Methven and Company, 1918.

Kennedy, H. A. A. Philo's Contribution to Religion. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919.

. St. Paul and the Mystery Religions. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913.

. St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1904.

. The Theology of the Epistles. London: Duckworth and Company, 1919.

Kirk, G. E., and Raven, J. E. The Pre-Socratic Philosophers. Cambridge: University Press, 1957.

Klausner, Joseph. From Jesus to Paul. trans. by William F. Spinespring. London: Allen and Unwin, 1942.

Knox, John. Chapters in a Life of Paul. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1954.

Knox, John, and Cragg, Gerald R. "The Epistle to the Romans." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. IX. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

Knox, W. J. St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles. Cambridge: University Press, 1939.

Kunneth, Walter. The Theology of the Resurrection. 1st English ed. London: SCM Press, 1965.

Ladd, G. E. "Eschatology: Judgment." The New Bible Dictionary. London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962.

Lake, Kirsopp. Paul, His Heritage and Legacy. London: Christophers, 1934.

Laurin, Robert. "The Concept of Man as a Soul." Expository Times. LXXII (1960-1961).

Leckie, Joseph H. The World to Come and Final Destiny. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918.

Lewis, C. S. Mere Christianity. London: Collins Fontana Books, 1955.

. "Review." The Honest to God Debate. Edited by David L. Edwards. London: SCM Press, 1963.

Lies, J. J., Jr. The First Epistle to the Corinthians. Cambridge Greek Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1892.



Lightfoot, J. B. Epistle to the Philippians. London: Macmillan and Company, 1881.

\_\_\_\_\_. Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul. London: Macmillan and Company, 1895.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. London: Macmillan and Company, 1876.

Livingstone, R. W. The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.

Lucian. Alexander, the False Prophet. English trans. by A. M. Harmon. Vol. 4 of 8 vols. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, MCMXXV.

Luckock, Herbert M. After Death. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1896.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Intermediate State Between Death and Judgment. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1896.

Lucretius. De Rerum Natura. Translated by W. H. D. Rouse. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1931.

Lunemann, Gottlieb. The Epistle to the Thessalonians. Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880.

MacCulloch, J. A. "Eschatology." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. V. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912.

Machen, J. Gresham. The Origin of Paul's Religion. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.

Macintyre, Ronald G. The Other Side of Death. London: Macmillan and Company, 1920.

Mackintosh, H. R. The Highway of God. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1931.

\_\_\_\_\_. Immortality and the Future. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917.

Manson, T. W. "Eschatology in the New Testament." In W. Manson, et. al., Eschatology, Four Papers Read to the Society for the Study of Theology. Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper, no. 2. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953.

- Manson, T. W. The Sayings of Jesus. First published as Part II of The Mission and Message of Jesus, 1937. London: SCM Press, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Teaching of Jesus. Cambridge: University Press, 1931.
- Manson, William. Jesus and the Christian. London: James Clark and Company, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_, et al. Eschatology, Four Papers Read to the Society for the Study of Theology. Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper, no. 2. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953.
- Martin, R. P. Carmen Christi. Cambridge: University Press, 1967.
- Mascall, E. L. "Review." The Honest to God Debate. Edited by David L. Edwards. London: SCM Press, 1953.
- Matthews, W. R. The Hope of Immortality. London: SCM Press, 1936.
- Meyer, H. A. W. Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to Philemon. Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans. Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Vol. I. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1873-1874.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Meyer's Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Vol. II. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1880.
- Michael, J. High. The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928.
- Moffatt, James. "The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians." The Expositor's Greek Testament. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Parousia." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. IX. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1917.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Second Maccabees." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- Moltmann, Jurgen. Theology of Hope. London: SCM Press, 1967.

- Moody, Dale. The Hope of Glory. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1964.
- More, Paul E. Hellenistic Philosophies. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923.
- Morgan, W. The Religion and Theology of Paul. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1917.
- Morrison, J. M. Honesty and God. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1966.
- Morton, A. Q., and McLeman, James. Paul, the Man and the Myth. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963.
- Motyer, J. A. After Death. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965.
- Moule, H. C. G. The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans. Cambridge Bible for Schools and College. Cambridge: University Press, 1908.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans." The Expositor's Bible. Vol. V. New York: Wilbur B. Ketham, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Philippian Studies. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897.
- Muller, Karl Otfried. History of the Literature of Ancient Greece. Translated by G. C. Lewis. London: Baldwin, 1846.
- Munch, Johannes. Paul and the Salvation of Mankind. London: SCM Press, 1959.
- Murray, Gilbert. Five Stages of Greek Religion. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Four Stages of Greek Religion. London: Oxford University Press, 1912.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Stoic, Christian, and Humanist. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1950.
- Murray, J. O. F. The Epistle to the Ephesians. Cambridge Greek Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1914.
- Neil, William. "I and II Thessalonians." Peake's Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Matthew Black. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. St. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians. Torch Bible Commentary. Naperville, Illinois: Allenson, 1957.

The New Bible Dictionary. Edited by J. D. Douglas. London: The Inter-  
Varsity Fellowship, 1962.

Newbigin, Leslie. Sin and Salvation. London: SCM Press, 1956.

Newport, J. D. White. "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the  
Epistle to Titus." The Expositor's Greek Testament. Vol. IV.  
London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

Nygren, Anders. Commentary on Romans. London: SCM Press, 1952.

Oesterley, W. O. E. The Doctrine of the Last Things. London: John  
Murray, 1908.

. "First Maccabees." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the  
Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and  
Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles.  
Vol. I. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911.

. An Introduction to the Books of the Apocrypha. London:  
S.P.C.K., 1935.

Otto, Rudolph. The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man. London: Lutter-  
worth Press, 1938.

The Pastor of Hermes. The Apostolic Fathers. Vol. I. Ante-Nicene  
Christian Library. Edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson.  
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867.

Peabody, F. G. The Apostle Paul and the Modern World. New York: Mac-  
millan and Company, 1923.

Pearson, John. Exposition of the Creed. London: William Tegg, 1862.

Pember, G. H. The Church, the Churches, and the Mysteries. London:  
Hodder and Stoughton, 1901.

Perrin, Norman. The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus. Phila-  
delphia: Westminster Press, 1963.

Pfeiffer, Robert H. History of New Testament Times with An Introduc-  
tion to the Apocrypha. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949.

Pfeiderer, Otto. Paulinism. 2 vols. London: Williams and Norgate,  
1877.

Philo. On the Cherubim, and the Flaming Sword, and Cain the first Man  
created out of Man. Trans. by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker.  
Vol. II. Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann,  
1929.

Philo. On Rewards and Punishments. Trans. by F. H. Colson. Vol. VIII. Loeb Classical Library. Boston: William Heinemann, Harvard University Press, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Migration of Abraham. Trans. by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker. Vol. IV. Loeb Classical Library. Boston: William Heinemann, Harvard University Press, 1949.

Pindar. Olympian Ode II. Translated by John Sandy. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1937.

Plato. The Apology. Translated by H. N. Fowler. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1947.

\_\_\_\_\_. Cratylus. from The Dialogues of Plato. Trans. by B. Jowett. Vol. I, 5 volumes. 3rd ed. Oxford: University Press, 1871 (1st ed.)

\_\_\_\_\_. Laws. Trans. by R. G. Burry. The Loeb Classical Library. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1926.

\_\_\_\_\_. Phaedo. Trans. by Harold N. Fowler. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1947.

\_\_\_\_\_. Phaedrus. Trans. by H. N. Fowler. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1947.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Republic. Trans. by Paul Shorey. The Loeb Classical Library. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann, 1948.

\_\_\_\_\_. Theatetus. Trans. by Benjamin Jowett. The Dialogues of Plato. 3rd ed. 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1892. - & t

\_\_\_\_\_. Timaeus. Trans. by R. D. Archer-Hind. The Loeb Classical Library. London: Macmillan and Company, 1888.

Plummer, Alfred. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1915.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Cambridge Greek Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1903.

Plumptre, E. H. The Spirits in Prison and Other Studies on the Life After Death. London: William Isbister, Ltd., 1884.

Plutarch. "Against Colotes the Epicurean." Morals. Trans. by William Goodwin. London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1870.

\_\_\_\_\_. Morals. Trans. by William Goodwin. London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1870.

- Plutarch. Selected Essays of Plutarch. Trans. by A. O. Prickard. Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913-1918.
- Porter, Frank C. The Mind of Christ in Paul. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
- Quick, Oliver C. Doctrines of the Creed. London: Collins Fontana Library, 1963.
- Rall, Harris F. According to Paul. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944.
- Ramsey, A. M. The Resurrection of Christ. London: Centenary Press, 1945.
- Rendall, Federic. "The Epistle to the Galatians." The Expositor's Greek Testament. Vol. III. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.
- Richardson, Alan. Christian Apologetics. London: SCM Press, 1947.
- Rist, Martin. "Eschatology of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. II. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Ritchie, D. C. Plato. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902.
- Robertson, A., and Plummer, A. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1911.
- Robertson, A. T. Epochs in the Life of St. Paul. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909.
- Robin, Leon. Greek Thought. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1928.
- Robinson, H. Wheeler. The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919.
- Robinson, J. A. T. The Body. London: SCM Press, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Honest to God. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. In the End, God. London: James Clark and Company, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus and His Coming. London: SCM Press, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Resurrection in the New Testament." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. IV. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Robinson, J. A. T., and Edwards, David L. The Honest to God Debate Continues. London: SCM Press, 1963.

Robinson, T. H. Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Matthew, Hodder and Stoughton, 1936.

Rockwood, F. E., ed. Cicero's Tusculan Disputations, Book I and the Dream of Scipio. College Series of Latin Authors. Boston: Ginn and Company, The Athenaeum Press, 1903.

Rohde, Erwin. Psyche. London: Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, Ltd., 1925.

Rowley, H. H. The Relevance of Apocalyptic. London: Lutterworth Press, 1944.

Salmond, S. D. F. The Christian Doctrine of Immortality. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Epistle to the Ephesians." The Expositor's Greek Testament. Vol. III. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

a Sandy, William, and Headlam, Arthur C. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895.

se Scheeps, H. J. Paul. London: Lutterworth Press, 1961.

Schumann, Friedrich K. "Can the Event of Jesus Christ Be Demythologized?" Kergma and Myth, A Theological Debate. Edited by Hans W. Bartsch. Trans. by R. H. Fuller. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper and Row, n.d.

Schweitzer, Albert. The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle. London: A. and C. Black, 1931.

\_\_\_\_\_. Paul and His Interpreters. London: A. and C. Black, 1912.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Quest of the Historical Jesus. London: A. and C. Black, 1910.

Scott, C. A. A. Christianity According to St. Paul. Cambridge: University Press, 1927.

Scott, E. F. The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Epistle to the Philippians." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. XI. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.

- Selwyn, E. G. "Eschatology in I Peter." The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology. Edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. In honor of C. H. Dodd. Cambridge: University Press, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The First Epistle to Saint Peter. London: Macmillan and Company, 1946.
- Seneca. Epistulae Morales. Translated by R. M. Gummere. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann, 1925.
- Shaw, J. M. "Resurrection of Christ." Dictionary of the Apostolic Church. Vol. II. Edited by James Hastings. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1918.
- Shorey, Paul. "Philosophy (Greek)." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. IX. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Philosophy." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. IX. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912.
- Short, John. "Exposition, First Corinthians." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. X. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Simon, Ulrich. The End Is Not Yet. Welwyn: James Misbet and Company, 1964.
- Smyth, J. Paterson. The Gospel of the Hereafter. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964.
- Stawell, F. M. "Ionic Philosophy." Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Edited by James Hastings. Vol. VII. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.
- Stevens, George G. The Pauline Theology. London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1892.
- Stewart, James Stuart. A Faith to Proclaim. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A Man in Christ. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Thine Is the Kingdom. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1956.
- Strachan, Robert Harvey. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. The Moffatt New Testament Commentary. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935.
- Strawson, William. Jesus and the Future Life. London: Epworth Press, 1959.



- Streeter, Burnett H., Clutton-Brock, A., Emmet, C. W., and Hadfield, J. A. Immortality, An Essay in Discovery Co-Ordinating Scientific, Psychical, and Biblical Research. London: Macmillan and Company, 1930.
- Swete, Henry B. The Apostles' Creed. London: C. J. Clay and Sons, 1874.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Life of the World to Come. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1917.
- Symonds, John A. Studies of the Greek Poets. Vol. I. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902.
- Taylor, A. E. Epicurus. London: Constable and Company, 1911.
- Temple, William. Christian Faith and Life. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Tertullian. On Monogamy. Trans. by S. Thewall. The Writing of Tertullian. Vol. III. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Vol. XVIII. Ante-Nicene Library. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870.
- Thackeray, Henry St. John. The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought. London: Macmillan and Company, 1900.
- Thielicke, Helmut. "The Restatement of New Testament Mythology." Kerygma and Myth, A Theological Debate. Edited by Hans W. Bartsch. Trans. by R. H. Fuller. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper and Row, n.d.
- Thompson, G. H. T. The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon. The Cambridge Bible Commentary: New English Bible. Cambridge: University Press, 1967.
- Tillich, Paul. The Eternal Now. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Torrey, C. C. The Apocryphal Literature. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945.
- Townshend, R. B. "The Fourth Book of Maccabees." The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English with Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited by R. H. Charles. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914.
- Vidler, Alec R. Christ's Strange Work. London: SCM Press, 1963.
- Vincent, Marvin R. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians and to Philemon. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897.
- Von Dobschutz, Ernst. The Eschatology of the Gospels. London: Hodder Stoughton, 1910.

- Von Rad, Gerhard. Old Testament Theology. Trans. by D. M. G. Stalker. 2 vols. New York: Harper, 1962.
- Vos, Geerhardus. The Pauline Eschatology. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1953.
- Wallace, William. Epicureanism. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1902.
- Weatherhead, Leslie D. After Death. London: Epworth Press, 1956.
- Weiss, Johannes. The History of Primitive Christianity. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Company, 1937.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Paul and Jesus. London: Harper Brothers, 1909.
- Westcott, B. F. Epistle to the Ephesians. London: Macmillan, 1906.
- Whale, J. S. Christian Doctrine. London: Collins Fontana Books, 1957.
- White, Newport J. D. "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus." The Expositor's Greek Testament. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.
- Whitely, D. E. H. The Theology of St. Paul. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964.
- Wicks, R. R., and Scott, E. F. "The Epistle to the Philippians." The Interpreter's Bible. Vol. XI. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Williams, C. S. C. "I and II Corinthians." Peake's Commentary on the Bible. Edited by Matthew Black. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962.
- Wood, C. Y. The Life, Letters, and Religion of St. Paul. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1925.
- Wright, Charles H. H. The Intermediate State and Prayers for the Dead. London: James Nisbet and Company, 1900.
- Zeller, E. Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Greek Philosophy. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1886.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A History of Greek Philosophy. Trans. by S. E. Alleyne. 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1881.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy. Trans. by Alleyne and Abbott. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1886.

Zeller, E. Plato and the Older Academy. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1878.

\_\_\_\_\_. Socrates and the Socratic Schools. Trans. by Sir John Sandys. London: William Heinemann, 1937.

\_\_\_\_\_. Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1880.

A. Ballard

1-4

## SUMMARY

The main divisions of this work are: Influences on Pauline Thought, Pauline Concept of Last Things, and Pauline Eschatology for Today.

Pauline eschatology is not without antecedents in Paul's background. The Old Testament and Intertestamental literature provides excellent opportunity for tracing the progressive development of Jewish eschatology. From an early henotheistic view of God with well-defined limitations, Israel's concept of Jehovah expanded to one of universal proportions. This expanding concept of God made it necessary for Israel to refine considerably her thought concerning the life to come. The Christian doctrines of Second Coming, Judgment, Resurrection, Intermediate State and Final Destiny all have counterparts in Jewish eschatology. Paul was equally an innovator and a creature of his Hebraic past. An examination of the major areas of Pauline eschatology reveals the Apostle's heavy dependence upon Jewish apocalyptic imagery when speaking of Last Things.

Greek thought was the other major influence of Paul's pre-Christian life. Its most direct contribution is noted in the doctrine of Resurrection. Yet an overall indebtedness becomes evident as one traces the varying concepts of life to come among the major pre-Platonic poets, Plato, the Stoics, Epicureans and finally the Mystery Religions. Traces of Hellenistic influence, while more apparent in reference to the

resurrection, are found to some extent in all areas of Paul's world-view.

As one continues the study of Pauline thought certain limitations become obvious. The symbolism and imagery, for instance, so much a part of the first century, demand contemporary expression and interpretation. In this sense there is a need for demythologizing.

Yet the enduring message of Pauline eschatology, when clothed in contemporary expression, conveys relevant and timeless truths. At the center of this message lies a three-fold affirmation: the God who revealed himself in history has come to us in the present and will one day consummate his work in the future.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE ESSENES AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS REGARDING  
EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND PAULINE ESCHATOLOGY

The discovery and interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls have made a profound contribution to the understanding of the New Testament and the milieu in which it developed. If as Millar Burrows suggests, "Everything that is important for Judaism in the last two or three centuries before Christ and in first century A.D. is important for Christianity,"<sup>1</sup> then a knowledge of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Essene community is imperative for one who is to properly understand and interpret New Testament thought.

While neither the Bible, Rabbinical literature, nor available documents from Qumran mention the Essenes as such, Philo, Josephus, Pliny, and Hippolytus<sup>2</sup> do refer to this Jewish sect<sup>3</sup> and tell us

---

<sup>1</sup>The Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 327.

<sup>2</sup>Philo Hypothetica ii. 1-18 and Every Good Man is Free 12-13; Josephus The Jewish War II. viii. 3-13 and Antiquities XVIII. 1. 5; Pliny Natural History v; and Hippolytus The Refutation of All Heresies. Of course these do not provide our only sources of Essene information. Some of the more significant references are listed by W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann in "Qumran and Essenes: Geography, Chronology, and Identification of the Sect," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black (London: S.P.C.K., 1969), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Stendahl deliberately used the term "sect" when referring to the Essenes in order to distinguish them from the "parties" of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The latter two groups organized, and, from their respective points of view, tried to influence Jewish thought. Yet membership in these parties lacked the theological and eschatological overtones found among the Essenes. They formed the New Covenant--a community instead of a party. Krister Stendahl, The Scrolls and the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 7-10.

something of its purpose and mode of existence.<sup>4</sup> Yet a scanty amount of specific and reliable information makes it difficult to reconstruct Essene history to any large degree.

The Essenes no doubt had their origins among the Hasideans during the Maccabean period.<sup>5</sup> Out of the post revolutionary struggle for power following the Maccabean Revolution we find the emergence of the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes.<sup>6</sup> The Essenes were pious persons<sup>7</sup> who for the most part lived in settlements not unlike monasteries of a later period. Their headquarters seemed to be in Qumran and the Dead Sea area.<sup>8</sup> There apparently were no women members of the

<sup>4</sup>Early writers seem to be in agreement about their admiration and praise for the Essene community and for the saintly, disciplined lives of those who became part of this religious sect.

<sup>5</sup>"This view of the origins of the sect of the scrolls in the Hasidaean movement is now widely accepted," writes Matthew in The Scrolls and Christian Origins (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 22; see also pp. 13-24. In The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1956), p. 17, Roland E. Murphy adds, "Although we do not have a clear picture of the origins of the Qumranites, it would seem that they are associated with the strong religious groups of the Hasidim, or 'the Pious' of Maccabean times."

<sup>6</sup>Similarities between the Pharisees and Essenes are explained by some on the basis of their common origin since, as W. R. Farmer states, "each developed out of rival wings of the earlier revolutionary Hasideans" ("Essenes," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible II [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962], 145).

<sup>7</sup>Although the etymology of the word Essene is unclear, it likely means "holy" or some such equivalent term corresponding to piety. James Moffatt says one may choose between three terms: "the holy ones," "the silent ones," or "the pious ones" ("Essenes," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, V, 400). F. F. Bruce suggests that the word "Essenes" derived from the Aramaic meaning "pious" or "holy" (Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1956], p. 131, p. 132).

<sup>8</sup>W. R. Farmer suggests that Qumran was headquarters for the Essenes until they returned to Jerusalem in 36 B.C. They stayed together in one section of the city---perhaps using this as home base



community,<sup>9</sup> and Philo tells us they numbered four thousand.

Although the credibility of their writings is sometimes suspect,<sup>10</sup> it is profitable to examine the contributions of Philo, Pliny, Josephus, and Hippolytus since each of these describes some facet of the life of the Essenes.

Philo, born about 20 B.C. and died about A.D. 50, numbers the Essenes at more than four thousand,<sup>11</sup> and believes their name to be a variation of the Greek ὁσιότης meaning holiness.<sup>12</sup> He gives us some interesting descriptions of this sect group. They live in rural villages to avoid the iniquity of city life.<sup>13</sup> They work at a variety

---

as they established Essene communities in various locations throughout Judea--and later returned to Qumran following Herod's death. See Farmer's "Essenes," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II, 145.

<sup>9</sup>While Josephus does not deny earlier statements of Essene celibacy by Philo and Pliny, he does mention another order of Essenes, "which, while at one with the rest in its mode of life, customs, and regulations, differs from them in its views on marriage" (The Jewish War II. 160). Believing that those who cut themselves off from marriage fail in the main function of life, namely the propagation of the race, they choose to marry, but only after the woman has undergone a strenuous period of probation and purification (The Jewish War II. 160, 161).

<sup>10</sup>F. F. Bruce suggests that Pliny's description of the Essenes "is probably based on earlier sources, [and] contains a large element of rhetorical exaggeration" (Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 125). This comment was prompted by Pliny's reference to the Essenes having lived in that area for "thousands of ages" (Natural History v. 15).

G. R. Driver discounts some statements by saying simply that "Josephus has erred" (The Judaean Scrolls [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965], p. 110). Millar Burrows states that Pliny only elaborates what Philo said and as for Josephus, "his works are translations and full of interpolations." Burrows even implies agreement--or at least sympathy--with the idea that Philo may have simply invented the "virtuous Essenes" (More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls [New York: Viking Press, 1958], p. 266).

<sup>11</sup>Every Good Man is Free 75.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 76.

of jobs but nothing relating to war, nor do they employ themselves commercially.<sup>14</sup> They own no private property and hold all things in common.<sup>15</sup> They have no slaves.<sup>16</sup> They engage themselves in the study of religion and ethics and especially make use of allegory.<sup>17</sup> Only mature adults are admitted to the groups.<sup>18</sup> Their needs are cared for by other members,<sup>19</sup> and they reject marriage.<sup>20</sup>

Pliny's account of the Essenes is likewise interesting:

Lying on the west of Asphalitim, and sufficiently distant to escape its noxious exhalations, are the Esseni [Essenes], a people that live apart from the world, and marvellous beyond all others throughout the whole earth, for they have no women among them; to sexual desire they are strangers; money they have none; the palm-trees are their only companions. Day after day, however, their numbers are fully recruited by multitudes of strangers that resort to them, driven thither to adopt their usages by the tempests of fortune, and wearied with the miseries of life. Thus it is, that through thousands of ages, incredible to relate, this people eternally prolongs its existence, without a single birth taking place there; so fruitful a source of population to it is that weariness of life which is felt by others.<sup>21</sup>

Josephus, born about A.D. 37, confirms most of the statements of Philo and Pliny but goes much more into detail and describes the process by which a new person is admitted into the order. Since

---

<sup>14</sup>Philo Every Good Man is Free 75.

<sup>15</sup>Hypothetica II. 3-10.

<sup>16</sup>Every Good Man is Free 79.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 80-83.

<sup>18</sup>Hypothetica II. 3.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 14-17.

<sup>21</sup>Pliny Natural History v. 15.

Josephus was believed to have had personal knowledge of the Essenes, it is conceivable that he was passing on information from a group with which he had at one time been personally acquainted.

A candidate for membership into the Essene brotherhood faced a three-year period of probation.<sup>22</sup> During this time he was given a white garment and loin-cloth to wear identifying him as one connected with the sect.<sup>23</sup> He was also presented a small hatchet<sup>24</sup> with which he would dig a small hole when he went to relieve nature. Following the first-year probationary period the novice was "allowed to share the purer kind of holy water, but is not yet received into the meetings of the community,"<sup>25</sup> i.e., he could join in the ritual baths. It would yet be two years before he was permitted to become a full member and to share the communal meal. During this time he had to swear "tremendous oaths"<sup>26</sup> promising to be pious toward God, observe justice toward men, never abuse authority, etc.<sup>27</sup> Members of this sect underwent all forms of torture and persecution by the Romans in an effort to make them break their oaths, but to no avail. "Smiling in their agonies and mildly deriding their tormentors, they cheerfully resigned their souls, confident that they would receive them back again."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Josephus The Jewish War II. 133ff.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 139-142.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 153.

Josephus sheds further light upon the subject by describing part of the daily routine within the Essene community. Before day-break each arises to offer prayer, "as though entreating him [the sun] to rise."<sup>29</sup> Then every person goes to his various craft and continues at work until the fifth hour when all assemble again in one place for purification baths. Now purified and robed with linen garments, they go to the refectory where none of the uninitiated are permitted and share in a meal. Here grace is said at the beginning and at the end of the meal before persons put aside their linen garments and return to work until the evening. The evening meal is eaten in similar manner with no disturbance as loud talking, but this time guests may share the meal.<sup>30</sup>

Of particular importance to this study is the Essene doctrine of immortality and their belief regarding the continuing existence of man. Although the Essene community was Jewish in nature, in regard to this part of their faith they were very much hellenistic. It seems that the Greek concept of the body being the prison-house of the soul had become an Essene belief. Upon being released at death from the "bonds of the flesh," the soul was believed to be free for its return to the higher stratosphere from whence it had come. The soul described as "immortal and imperishable" reminds one of Plato's argument in the *Phaedo* as he attempted to prove just such a belief. It is worthwhile to quote Josephus' remarks in full regarding this significant part of Essene belief:

For it is a fixed belief of theirs that the body is corruptible

---

<sup>29</sup>Josephus The Jewish War II. 128.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 128-133.

and its constituent matter impermanent, but that the soul is immortal and imperishable. Emanating from the finest ether, these souls become entangled, as it were, in the prison-house of the body, to which they are dragged down by a sort of natural spell; but when once they are released from the bonds of the flesh, then, as though liberated from a long servitude, they rejoice and are borne aloft. Sharing the belief of the sons of Greece, they maintain that for virtuous souls there is reserved an abode beyond the ocean, a place which is not oppressed by rain or snow or heat, but is refreshed by the ever gentle breath of the west wind coming in from the ocean; while they relegate base souls to a murky and temptuous dungeon, big with never-ending punishments. The Greeks, I imagine, had the same conception when they set apart the isles of the blessed for their brave men, whom they call heroes and demigods, and the region of the impious for the souls of the wicked down in Hades, where, as their mythologists tell, persons such as Sisyphus, Tantalus, Ixion, and Tityus are undergoing punishment. Their aim was first to establish the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and secondly to promote virtue and to deter from vice; for the good are made better in their lifetime by the hope of reward after death, and the passions of the wicked are restrained by the fear that, even though they escape detection while alive, they will undergo never-ending punishment after their decease. Such are the theological views of the Essenes concerning the soul, whereby they irresistibly attract all who have once tasted their philosophy.<sup>31</sup>

While for the most part Hippolytus<sup>32</sup> agrees with Josephus' account of the Essenes,<sup>33</sup> there is one point at which their reports conflict. In the record of Josephus, the Essenes come down strongly on the side of Greek thought as they accept belief in the immortality of the soul but deny bodily resurrection. This, of course, contrasts

---

<sup>31</sup>Josephus The Jewish War II. 154-158.

<sup>32</sup>Hippolytus The Refutation of All Heresies, written in the third century A.D.

<sup>33</sup>Although F. F. Bruce finds enough difference between the two accounts to write, "Hippolytus appears to have had access to a reliable and independent source of information, which enabled him to correct Josephus' account in certain points, and to supplement it in others" (Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 130), yet there appears no difference so significant as their opposing accounts concerning bodily resurrection.

with traditional Judaic doctrine which continued to think in terms of a bodily form accompanying man into the next life when the future existence was believed in at all. In the account of Hippolytus there is a strange mixture of supposed Essene belief that couples the idea of bodily resurrection with accompanying thoughts of the soul's immortality.

[The Essenes] . . . acknowledge both that the flesh will rise again, and that it will be immortal, in the same manner as the soul is already imperishable. [And they maintain] that the soul when separated in the present life [from the body, departs] into one place, which is well ventilated and lightsome, [where], they say, [the soul] rests until judgment. . . . Now they affirm that there will be both a judgment and a conflagration of the universe, and that the wicked will be eternally punished.<sup>34</sup>

The community of Qumran and the Essenes seem inevitably linked together.<sup>35</sup> While it will be observed that strong voices are being raised in opposition to those who naively assume a Qumran-Essene relationship, nevertheless one is faced with too much evidence to deny that such a relationship is possible.<sup>36</sup> Since the Qumran literature never specifically mentions the Essenes as such some have been led to reject the "Qumran-Essene hypothesis" as untenable and unprovable. G. R. Driver has argued strongly against identifying the sect at Qumran as Essenes.<sup>37</sup> He suggests that they have been thus identified (wrongly) by many because of their obvious similarities with the Covenanters--similarities which have, upon closer examination, proved

---

<sup>34</sup>Hippolytus Refutation of All Heresies 15.

<sup>35</sup>F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 125.

<sup>36</sup>"Even should it prove impossible to identify the Qumran Sect with any historically known group, its close connection with the Essenes cannot, for all that, be gainsaid" (Géza Vermès, Discovery in the Judaean Desert [New York: Desclee Co., 1956], p. 53).

<sup>37</sup>G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, especially pp. 100-121.

superficial.<sup>38</sup> Professor Driver convincingly challenges those who uncritically assume positive identification of the Essenes with the Qumran community and thus has been helpful in underscoring serious questions about such an outright identification of the two groups. In fact, he refuses to make such an identification at all.<sup>39</sup> But, on the other hand, it seems too much to deny that these two bodies had any connection or identity whatsoever. It appears that if some have been guilty of uncritically assuming identity of these two groups, certainly Driver is equally in error for refusing to recognize the legitimate likenesses that would seem to indicate some degree of relatedness. Even in view of acknowledged difficulties at certain points, it does appear that there was a definite affinity between the Qumran community and the Essenes--an affinity recognized to some degree by a number of scholars.<sup>40</sup> Dupont-Sommer says emphatically that the Qumran community was Essene. Members of the community were, he claims, the same Essenes in fact who are described by Philo, Josephus,

---

<sup>38</sup>G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, pp. 106, 121.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>40</sup>"It is possible that the sect of the scrolls was either a group from which the Essenes developed or a closely related group, and that in either case the texts have come down to us through the Essenes" (H. H. Rowley, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Significance [London: Independent Press, 1955], p. 20). Similar views are reflected by F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 135; Géza Vermès, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 30; and Millar Burrows, who writes, "The current tendency to use the term 'Essene' in a broad way to include the Qumran Sect along with others of the same general character is not seriously objectionable" (More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 273). Although Matthew Black cannot hold to "Qumran-Essene" theory without qualification, he does accept a modified form of it (The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, p. 4).

and Pliny.<sup>41</sup> Certainly the arguments from geography,<sup>42</sup> chronology,<sup>43</sup> and similarity of beliefs and practices<sup>44</sup> tend to favor a definite relationship between the two groups.<sup>45</sup>

The Essenes were apparently divided into different groups<sup>46</sup> while still going under the comprehensive name of "Essene." Therefore, it is possible that the Qumran community was one such Essene group which held many things in common with related groups, but which also had distinctive features of its own.<sup>47</sup> Such seems to be a logi-

<sup>41</sup>A. Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran, translated by Géza Vermès (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1962), p. 409.

<sup>42</sup>The Essene and Qumran communities both located themselves in the Judaeen wilderness near the Dead Sea (Roland E. Murphy, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible [Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1956], p. 16).

<sup>43</sup>Both the Essenes and the Qumran community flourished during the latter part of the second century B.C. until the second half of the first century A.D. (F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 132). See also Theodor H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1956), pp. vii, viii.

<sup>44</sup>Both lived a communal life emphasizing discipline, ritual, and asceticism. They both were dedicated to studying and interpreting the Old Testament Law (Roland E. Murphy, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible, pp. 16, 17).

<sup>45</sup>F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 132, 133.

<sup>46</sup>In his Natural History, Pliny tells us there were four classes of Essenes; in Egypt they were divided into sects (see notes on chapter 15, book v, by John Bostock and H. T. Riley in their translation of the Natural History [London: Henry G. Bohn, 1955], Vol. I). Josephus mentions four grades of Essenes in The Jewish Wars II. 150.

<sup>47</sup>We find a similar thought reflected by Millar Burrows as he compares the organization and rules of the group or groups which produced the Damascus Document and the Manual of Discipline: "We have seen that these two documents have a great deal in common, though there are sufficient differences to show that they do not come from exactly the same group. They may represent different branches of the same movement or different stages in its history, if not both" (The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 230).



cal consideration<sup>48</sup> and one which this writer believes is the most feasible.<sup>49</sup>

After examining their differences and similarities and admitting to some still unresolved discrepancies, one concludes that the Qumran community most certainly did reflect some form of Essene life or influence. But actually the problem of Essene identification is less significant than the fact that there is a considerable amount of material concerning the Qumran community and its religious beliefs.

Thus, a consideration of some of the more important aspects of the Qumran documents is in order, especially as they relate to this study in the field of eschatology. Such beliefs will then be contrasted and compared with New Testament teaching in general and Pauline eschatology in particular.

No firm conclusions have yet been reached concerning the exact date of the Qumran material although there are indications that "outer limits" are somewhere between second century B.C. and the end of first century A.D. or shortly thereafter.<sup>50</sup>

The Messianic beliefs of the Qumran community are extremely

<sup>48</sup>Views of similar emphasis are reflected by F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 125-135; Matthew Black, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, p. 4; and Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 273, 274.

<sup>49</sup>The term Essene may be, as William Hugh Brownlee suggests, a title referring to a number of small sects of similar nature, one of which was the group at Qumran (The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible [New York: Oxford University Press, 1964], p. ix).

<sup>50</sup>Matthew Black suggests a date between Daniel (second century B.C.) and Bar-Cochba (second century A.D.), The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 164. Compare Raymond E. Brown, The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, pp. 37, 38.

complex<sup>51</sup> and have continued to stimulate much discussion. The term "Messiah" (meaning literally "anointed") appears frequently in the Scrolls albeit not necessarily conveying a Christianized, twentieth-century concept of this word.<sup>52</sup> Indeed the Messianic hope of the Qumran documents rests upon, not one, but two Messiahs. In struggling through the maze of conflicting theories and speculations surrounding the two Messiahs and the "Teacher of Righteousness"---confusion, fostered no doubt by difficulties in translation,<sup>53</sup> fragmentation, and inconsistencies within the scrolls themselves, inability to agree on dating, etc.---one sees that there is still little consensus.

It seems to be generally accepted that the Qumran community believed in two Messiahs,<sup>54</sup> a high-priestly Messiah and a more secular or political Messiah, with the two working together in a kind of partnership.<sup>55</sup> The "Teacher of Righteousness" is the third figure to be significantly involved in the discussion of the scrolls. He was likely founder<sup>56</sup> of the sect, its leader, and perhaps composer of some

---

<sup>51</sup>Even a cursory reading of Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, pp. 462ff., Matthew Black, Scrolls and Christianity, pp. 37ff., and Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 297ff., to mention but a few, bears this out.

<sup>52</sup>Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 297-299.

<sup>53</sup>G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, pp. 468, 469.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 462ff.

<sup>55</sup>Matthew Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 171. K. G. Kuhn views the Messiah of Israel, the political leader, as subordinate to the Messiah of Aaron, who was high priest and head of the entire Congregation of Israel ("The Two Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by K. Stendahl, pp. 55-57).

<sup>56</sup>Black, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, pp. 4, 5.

of its hymns.<sup>57</sup> Some have speculated that this "Teacher" is really none other than Jesus, while others hold that the term "Rightful Teacher" is only "the title of an office which could be held by different individuals and not the name of any single historical person."<sup>58</sup> Actually "the Righteous Teacher" remains something of an enigma with little agreement found even among scholars as to who he was or when he lived.<sup>59</sup>

Yet given these limitations, Géza Vermès<sup>60</sup> makes a significant contribution in regard to this area of study. His suggestions and explanations concerning the two Messiahs and the Teacher of Righteousness appear to have considerable merit and are well worth considering at this point.

There is no need here for a detailed account of the aforementioned figures<sup>61</sup> since this study is primarily interested in understanding what, if any, eschatological significance these enigmatic concepts may have had in a broad sense and how they can be related to the Christian heritage.

It seems that the Messiahs were to fulfill two related but not

---

<sup>57</sup>H. H. Rowley, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Significance, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup>Matthew Black, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>59</sup>Géza Vermès argues persuasively that the Teacher of Righteousness "began his public activities about 170 B.C." and that the conflict between the "Teacher" and his opponents continued until 134 B.C. when Simon the Maccabee died (Discovery in the Judean Desert, p. 87).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., especially pp. 87-105 and pp. 216-222. See also Vermès, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, especially pp. 47-52.

<sup>61</sup>Although Vermès does provide this in Discovery in the Judean Desert, especially pp. 87-105 and pp. 216-222, and in The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, especially pp. 47-52.

identical roles and were to carry out respective tasks. It is even suggested that "in the strict sense, the title Messiah should be confined to the secular leader, the Messiah of Aaron and Israel," the Davidic Messiah of popular expectation.<sup>62</sup> This leader was to prepare the way for the coming Kingdom of God by defeating the Gentiles. Yet in matters of doctrine he was subject to the Priests.<sup>63</sup>

Vermès identifies the "man" referred to in the Community Rule IV (or Manual of Discipline) as the expected Prophet since the functions of the two appear the same. Likewise he concludes that the Prophet and the Teacher of Righteousness are the same person. This being true, it was natural to find no mention of the expected Prophet in the sect's later writings because they believed he had appeared already as the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore Vermès suggests that the Messianic beliefs of the Qumran sect may have more in common with Judaeo-Christianity than one might think at first glance. It is reasonable to assume that the "Prophet" figure emerged from the Biblical sources of Deuteronomy 18:18-19, where Moses refers to a coming Prophet not unlike himself, and Malachi 4:5, where Elijah's return before the day of the Lord is prophesied. Orthodox Jews continued to think of Elijah as the one who would precede the coming of the Messianic event.<sup>65</sup> Even John the Baptist was identified by some as the "Elijah who is to come." Indeed

---

<sup>62</sup>Matthew Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 171.

<sup>63</sup>Géza Vermès, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

there may be more similarity between these Messianic beliefs than one imagines. Matthew Black suggests that "apart from the addition of the High Priest and the Prophet as eschatological figures, the only distinctive feature of the Qumran Messianic hope would seem to be that it took its ideal of the Davidic Prince from the Book of Ezekiel."<sup>66</sup> For Christians, Jesus has always combined the prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles in his personhood.

Especially in the inter-Testamental<sup>67</sup> literature one finds a large and growing interest in "last things." For the most part traditional Jewish belief embraced the idea of two ages, the present being wicked and corrupt, and the age to come, a state of blessedness. It was generally thought that things would get worse before they got better and that the power of Satan would continue to increase until God finally intervened and ushered in the new age.

No doubt the Qumran sect was subject to many foreign influences which helped shape and alter their beliefs. Yet their central doctrines were, as Millar Burrows states, "thoroughly Jewish, derived primarily from the Old Testament."<sup>68</sup>

Therefore the group at Qumran accepted the idea of two ages which was so familiar to Jewish thought. They believed--as others had believed previously and many have since--that they were coming to the close of one era and standing therefore on the brink of a new

---

<sup>66</sup>The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 172.

<sup>67</sup>Géza Vermès refers to the Qumran sect as existing during the "inter-Testamental period of approximately 150 B.C. to A.D. 70" (The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p. 34).

<sup>68</sup>The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 282.

age.<sup>69</sup> Assured of being God's "chosen" people and confident that this same God had revealed his truth uniquely to them, this "New Covenant" set themselves apart as though in a "fortified city," welcoming other seekers of righteousness and waiting out the final stage of the age of wickedness.<sup>70</sup>

. . . I am as one  
that hath entered a stronghold,  
taken refuge behind a high wall  
until deliverance come.<sup>71</sup>

Nor does the final victory appear in doubt.

The Warrior will bend His bow  
and lift the siege for ever,  
and open the gates everlasting  
to bring forth His weapons of war;  
and His legions shall go marching  
from end to [end of the earth],  
[and there shall be no es]cape  
for the guilty impulse of men.  
They shall trample it to destruction,  
that naught remain thereof.  
There shall be no hope for it  
in [weapons] never so many,  
neither any escape  
for all that fight in its cause.  
For the victory shall belong  
unto God on High. . . .<sup>72</sup>

It is likely that the "woman in travail" in the third Hymn has some Messianic significance. John Pryke suggests that the community, caught between the two ages, was having to undergo distressing

---

<sup>69</sup>John Pryke, "Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, pp. 48-49.

<sup>70</sup>The present age was considered under the dominion of Belial. See the Manual of Discipline ii. 19 D 55. The "age of Wickness" mentioned in the Damascus Rule (VI) seems to include the present period.

<sup>71</sup>Theodor H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, Hymn V, 20--VI, 35.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

pain and agony as one civilization died and the other was being born. The agonies a mother suffers in bringing forth a child "are similar to those of the community which will bring forth from its members the Messianic leaders capable of winning the war of deliverance."<sup>73</sup> Though skeptical of giving this hymn a definite Messianic interpretation, Millar Burrows<sup>74</sup> does suggest one major reason why such an interpretation would not be impossible.<sup>75</sup> The term "wonderful counselor" reminds one of the passage in Isaiah 9:6 having reference to a Savior who is born.<sup>76</sup> T. H. Gaster views this hymn as referring to "the birth-pangs of the Messiah," illustrating the fact that times of agony and upheaval precede the final age.<sup>77</sup>

They have caused me to be  
 like a ship on the deeps of the sea,  
 and like a fortified city  
 before [the aggressor],  
 [and] like a woman in travail  
 with her first-born child,  
 upon whose belly pangs have come  
 and grievous pains,  
 filling her womb with anguish.

For the children have come to the throes of Death,  
 and she labors in her pains who bears the Man.  
 For amid the throes of Death  
 she shall bring forth a man-child.

---

<sup>73</sup>John Pryke, "Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 50.

<sup>74</sup>More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 320.

<sup>75</sup>Actually Burrows suggests two points in favor of a Messianic interpretation but indicates that the word-play on "a man" as the suffering Messiah is "only barely possible" while the term "wonderful counselor" is a much stronger indication of a Messianic reference (More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 318, 319).

<sup>76</sup>See also John Pryke, "Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 50.

<sup>77</sup>The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, p. 23.

Amid the pains of Hell  
 there shall spring from her womb  
 a Marvellous Mighty Counsellor;  
 and the Man shall be delivered from out of the throes.<sup>78</sup>

The eschatology one finds reflected here and throughout the scrolls is, as John Pryke suggests, "often Messianic by inference, and not by explicit reference."<sup>79</sup>

While the entire life of the Qumran community was characterized by eschatological expectations, it has been noted that specific identities related to the Messianic drama were often (usually) imprecise and unclear. Now it is necessary to look specifically at some of the more significant eschatological events reflected in the Qumran literature and community.

One does not find a consistent or systematic doctrine of eschatology among the Qumran sect. There is no "one set pattern" of beliefs regarding last things. This is hardly surprising, however, since the documents cover a period of approximately two hundred years and were written during a time when the whole state of Jewish eschatology was fluid.

As already noted, the Qumran community acknowledged the prevalent concept of two ages and the belief that evil would continue<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup>The Hymns III, 4, from The Dead Sea Scrolls, translated, with an Introduction and Commentaries, by Géza Vermès (New York: Heritage Press, 1962).

<sup>79</sup>"Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup>John Pryke suggests that evil would increase until the community, guided by one of their "Orthodox Teachers" lived a life pure enough to cause God to bring forth a Messiah "who would conquer the forces of evil in the forty years' war" (ibid., p. 56).



to increase in the present. Perhaps the "age of wrath" ends as God sends forth the Teacher of Righteousness:

For when they were unfaithful and forsook Him, He hid His face from Israel and His Sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword. But remembering the Covenant of forefathers, He left a remnant of Israel and did not deliver it up to be destroyed. And in the age of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after He had given them into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, He visited them and caused a root of a Plant to spring from Israel and Aaron to inherit His Land and to prosper on the good things of His earth. And they perceived their iniquity and recognized that they were guilty men, yet for twenty years they were like blind men groping for the way.

And God observed their deeds, that they sought Him with a whole heart, and He raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of His heart.<sup>81</sup>

One of the many ambiguities regarding the Teacher of Righteousness concerns his death. The Zadokite Documents are certain of his demise:

About forty years will elapse from the death of the teacher of the community until all the men who take up arms and relapse in the company of the Man of Falsehood are brought to an end.<sup>82</sup>

In Habakkuk he is killed by the Wicked Priest or his followers:

"woe . . . because of the bloodshed and for the violence done to the land, to the city and to all that dwell therein" to the Wicked Priest "woe for the wrong done to the Rightful Teacher and his counsellors God gave over to his enemies. . . ."<sup>83</sup>

In Psalm 37 he seems to survive the persecution:

The wicked watches out for the righteous and seeks to slay him.

<sup>81</sup>The Damascus Rule I, The Dead Sea Scrolls, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>82</sup>The Zadokite Document vii, 9---viii, 21, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>83</sup>Habakkuk ix, 8-12, G. R. Driver, The Judaeen Scrolls, p. 270; see also p. 128.

The Lord will not abandon him into his hand or let him be condemned when he is tried.<sup>84</sup>

Such conflicting reports may indicate that there was more than one Teacher of Righteousness. Perhaps one of these teachers in particular had a special influence upon the movement.<sup>85</sup>

To the covenanters of Qumran the Final Age had come--or at least was at hand.<sup>86</sup> Theirs was a dualistic universe<sup>87</sup> of light and darkness, truth and falsehood, good and evil. Warfare between these opposing forces was thus the conflict between Sons of Light and Sons of Darkness.<sup>88</sup> Although the date of the document is uncertain,<sup>89</sup> a rather detailed plan of the war is preserved in the War

---

<sup>84</sup>(32-33), The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>85</sup>John Pryke, "Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 57.

<sup>86</sup>Matthew Black indicates that Qumran Apocalyptic looks toward a final Judgment in which all mankind will be purified (The Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 171).

<sup>87</sup>The Manual of Discipline iii, 13--iv, 26, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>88</sup>The Manual of Discipline refers to a religious group known as the "sons of Zadok" (*ibid.*, ix, 14); or, according to G. R. Driver, "followers" of Zadok (The Judaean Scrolls, p. 130); and also the "children of light" (The Manual of Discipline i, 1-15, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster). These oppose their enemies who are referred to as "children of darkness." The Manual of Discipline begins by reminding those who wish to join the community that they must pledge themselves to "respect both God and men; to live according to his stake in the formal community of God; and to hate all the children of darkness, each according to the measure of his guilt, which God will ultimately requite" (*ibid.*). See also the Manual of Discipline III, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>89</sup>Géza Vermès believes both the War Rule and the Messianic Rule were written "in the final decades of the pre-Christian era or the beginning of the first century A.D." (The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p. 118).

Scroll.<sup>90</sup> Following the war (forty years of Messianic travail?) the age of peace is inaugurated.<sup>91</sup> With the days of violent war past, the land is filled with bliss and joy:

Fill Thy land with glory  
and Thine inheritance with blessing!  
Let there be a multitude of cattle in Thy fields,  
and in Thy palaces  
silver and gold and precious stones!

O Zion, rejoice greatly!  
Rejoice all you cities of Judah!<sup>92</sup>

The community in the new age "will be a worshipping community."<sup>93</sup> The redeemed people will be purified, instructed in wisdom, and glorified.

. . . God will then purify every deed of Man with his truth; He will refine for Himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of falsehood from the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; like purifying waters He will shed upon him the spirit of truth (to cleanse him) of all abomination and falsehood. And he shall be plunged into the spirit of purification that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the Sons of Heaven to the perfect of way. For God has chosen them for an everlasting Covenant and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs. There shall be no more lies and all the works of falsehood shall be put to shame.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup>Theodor H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, pp. 276-306.

<sup>91</sup>A communal meal (Messianic banquet?) may be connected with the new age or this could simply be the sacred meal already known to be an integral part of the Qumran Community as noted earlier in the writings of Philo and Josephus. The Hymns may have been used in connection with such sacred meals. See Géza Vermès, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, p. 149.

<sup>92</sup>The War Rule XIX, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>93</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 351.

<sup>94</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline), The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

A great conflagration seems to be part of the final phase of eschatology, as torrents of fire break forth upon the earth.

---a fire which consumes  
all foundations of clay,  
every soled bedrock;  
when the foundations of the mountains  
become a raging blaze,  
when granite rocks are turned  
to streams of pitch,  
when the flame devours  
down to the great abyss. . . ."95

The conflagration appears to either accompany or follow the great battle.<sup>96</sup> It may be important, however, that this concept of a literal destruction of the universe by fire with the creation of a new heaven and earth comes from one hymn only.<sup>97</sup> John Pryke---who is not convinced that the Qumran sect was "thorough-going in its eschatology"---explains the above reference to world destruction by suggesting the writer was giving his personal sufferings a cosmic dimension.<sup>98</sup>

The concept of universal judgment is reflected in Hymn I, Hymn IV, and perhaps again in the Manual of Discipline.

All things are graven before Thee  
on a written Reminder  
for everlasting ages,  
and for the numbered cycles  
of the eternal years  
in all their seasons;

---

<sup>95</sup>Hymn III, 19-36, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>96</sup>Matthew Black, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, p. 20.

<sup>97</sup>John Pryke, "Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, pp. 54, 55.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

they are not hidden or absent from Thee.<sup>99</sup>

. . . that at the Judgment they may destroy  
all those who transgress Thy word.<sup>100</sup>

For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end, and until the Renewal, and He knows the reward of their deeds from all eternity.<sup>101</sup>

It is often difficult to determine whether future punishment or destruction is conveyed by the Qumran material.

Thou wilt destroy in Judgment  
all men of lies.<sup>102</sup>

Thou hast allotted to them tasks  
during all their generations;  
and judgments in their appointed seasons  
according to the rule [of the two spirits,  
For Thou hast established their ways]  
for ever and ever,  
[and hast ordained from eternity]  
their visitation for reward and chastisements.  
Thou hast allotted it to all their seed  
for eternal generations and everlasting years. . . .<sup>103</sup>

In Hymn III, 19-36, there is reference to the "Pit,"<sup>104</sup>  
"Abysses," "Hell," and "Abaddon." At times the idea of Gehenna is conveyed along with the horrors of punishment, but in other instances the wicked appear to be annihilated. The final destiny of the wicked is unclear.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup>Hymn I, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>100</sup>Hymn IV, ibid.

<sup>101</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline), ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Hymn IV, ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Hymn I, ibid.

<sup>104</sup>The "Pit" being a common name for Sheol in the Old Testament.

<sup>105</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 347.

As one reads the Qumran documents he becomes keenly aware of the sect's belief in the future life. Yet it does not appear that the covenanters ever accepted the idea of bodily resurrection. Some have attempted to prove otherwise by quoting some or all of the following verses:

. . . bodies gnawed by worms may be raised from the dust  
to the Council of Thy truth.<sup>106</sup>

Hoist a banner,  
O you who lie in the dust!  
Raise up an ensigh for the destruction of wickedness  
O bodies gnawed by worms!<sup>107</sup>

And then at the time of Judgment  
the sword of God shall hasten,  
and all the sons of his truth shall awake  
to [overthrow] wickedness.<sup>108</sup>

But upon closer examination it appears that any doctrine of resurrection based on the aforementioned verses for support would be precarious indeed. It may be that John Pryke is correct in suggesting that some of these texts have more in common with the Angelic Liturgy where those raised from the dead join "the angelic company of spirits and . . . [are] transmuted from the matter into spirit, from man into angelic being."<sup>109</sup>

There appears no convincing evidence in the Qumran documents to suggest serious belief in bodily resurrection. Beliefs of the

---

<sup>106</sup>Hymn XI, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>107</sup>Hymn VI, ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>"Eschatology in the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 56. See also Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins, pp. 139, 140.

sect seem much nearer the more hellenized concept of immortality of the soul.

After studying the Qumran documents, it is understandable why the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been called "the most important ever made in the field of Biblical archaeology."<sup>110</sup> Even the casual reader recognizes an affinity between the scrolls and Christianity--a similarity so basic that it cannot be explained as mere coincidence. Many of the same concepts are found in both groups. In some instances the language is identical. Common terms are easily recognizable. Such similarities--though often superficial upon closer examination--have led to all kinds of speculation. Were Jesus and John both Essenes?<sup>111</sup> Was Christ the mysterious "Teacher of Righteousness"? Was the Christian Church simply another form of Essenism and the Christian sacraments only the continuation of practices and rituals first begun in the Qumran community?

While the scrolls are of utmost importance in the study of the

---

<sup>110</sup>R. B. Y. Scott, Treasures from Judaean Caves (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1955), p. 43.

<sup>111</sup>Millar Burrows, after reviewing considerable evidence (Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 328, 329; More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 56-63) on both sides, concludes: "John the Baptist probably had some knowledge of the Qumran covenanters and some sympathy with the ideas, though he also differed from them at many points; in some of his ideas and attitudes he may have been influenced by them; he may have visited their settlement, or even possibly have been a member of the sect for a while, though there is no good reason to think so; in any case, in his public ministry (which is all we really know anything about, aside from his birth) he was entirely independent of them and was sharply opposed to some of their most characteristic tenets" (More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 63). See also F. F. Bruce, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 140-143. Though some have tried to place Jesus into the Essene mold it has by and large been a futile effort (see Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 329 and pp. 329-311 and More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 64-110).

New Testament and Christian beginnings,<sup>112</sup> Matthew Black rightly warns against the dangers of exaggerating their importance.<sup>113</sup>

Perhaps one can best avoid the extremes by considering evidence indicating both similarities and differences between the Qumran and Christian communities as revealed by the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament.

Some of the more obvious forms of relatedness are suggested in similarity one sees between the Qumran common meal and the communion celebration of the early Christians. Both are "sacred" meals and are thought to be generally accompanied by bread and wine and eaten following a blessing.<sup>114</sup>

Ritual baths and baptisms are likewise found among both the Christian and the Jewish sect. The Qumran community allowed the initiate to join in the ritual baths only after the first year's probation. It was one of the signs by which a person was recognized as entering (or preparing to enter) the community. Similarly baptism was understood by Christians as a "rite of admission" in a general sense.

Furthermore, common ownership of property was practiced by both the Christians and the Qumranites. But, as Oscar Cullmann

---

<sup>112</sup>F. F. Bruce points out that when the scrolls were first discovered many assumed their chief contribution would be in giving further illumination to the history of the Old Testament text. While this judgment is valid in many ways, with the continued excavations, more and more the contribution has been on the side of the New Testament (Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 137).

<sup>113</sup>The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins, p. 3.

<sup>114</sup>Only after a certain period of preparation could the Essenes partake of this meal.



points out, "in the Essene sect the community of goods is obligatory and organized . . . whereas in the early church the community of goods was voluntary."<sup>115</sup>

Of course John the Baptist is perhaps the most likely candidate for an Essene cloak. He was baptizing in the Jordan river which was not more than twenty miles from the Qumran settlement. His extreme asceticism resembles that of the Essene community and some have suggested that John's emphasis upon baptism and the ritual baptism of the covenanters was more than coincidence.<sup>116</sup> In fact, Oscar Cullmann believes that there may have been indirect Essene influence upon Christianity by the route of Qumran--John the Baptist--early church.<sup>117</sup>

The Johannine writings have some distinct similarities with the Qumran sect. John's symbolic use of light and darkness, referred to by Millar Burrows as "modified dualism,"<sup>118</sup> reveals a common concept jointly shared.<sup>119</sup> One finds John referring to followers of Christ as "children of light,"<sup>120</sup> just as the covenanters of Qumran thought of

---

<sup>115</sup>Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, p. 21.

<sup>116</sup>A. Dupont-Sommer, The Essene Writings from Qumran, p. 371.

<sup>117</sup>"The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, p. 25.

<sup>118</sup>More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 123.

<sup>119</sup>G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 545. "In both the Scrolls and the Johannine literature good and evil are constantly contrasted under the figures now of light and darkness, now of truth and perversity or iniquity," writes Driver.

<sup>120</sup>John 12:36.

themselves as "sons of light."<sup>121</sup>

Further likenesses are found in the Pauline literature. Both Paul and the covenanters are convinced that true righteousness is of God and not of man.

Verily I know that righteousness lies not with men,  
nor perfection of conduct with mortals.  
Only with God on High  
are all works of righteousness. . . .<sup>122</sup>

. . . not having a righteousness of my own, . . . but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. . . .<sup>123</sup>

W. D. Davies points to the similarity between Paul's contrasting flesh and spirit and the scrolls' contrast of the two spirits--truth and error.<sup>124</sup>

It is known that for Paul the term "flesh" describes man's state of corruption. It symbolizes all that is weak and undesirable. "Flesh" is in a state of rebellion against the spirit<sup>125</sup> and is a power with which men must cope.<sup>126</sup> Likewise in the scrolls one reads:

As for me,  
I belong to wicked mankind,  
to the company of ungodly flesh.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline) I, II, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>122</sup>Hymn IV, 5-40, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>123</sup>Phillippians 3:9.

<sup>124</sup>"Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, pp. 157-182.

<sup>125</sup>Galatians 5:17.

<sup>126</sup>Romans 7:24.

<sup>127</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline) XI, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

But what is flesh (to be worthy) of this?  
 What is a creature of clay  
     for such marvels to be done. . . .  
 Righteousness, I know is not of men. . . .<sup>128</sup>

There are noticeable similarities between various Qumran texts and the sayings of Jesus. Both call for their followers to seek perfection.<sup>129</sup> Both commend charity toward one's enemy and remind men to leave final judgment with God. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. . . ."<sup>130</sup> and "Judge not, that ye be not judged"<sup>131</sup> are characteristic teachings of Jesus. Not unlike these sayings are those found in the Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline) X:

I will pay to no man the reward of evil,  
 I will pursue him with goodness,  
 for judgement of all the living is with God  
 and it is He who will render to man his reward.

It may be significant, however, that outside of the Sermon on the Mount similarities between the sayings of Jesus and teachings found in the Dead Sea Scrolls are at a minimum.<sup>132</sup> Millar Burrows underscores an even more important fact as he points out that "in four of its most distinctive characteristics--asceticism, legalism, ritualism, and exclusiveness--the Qumran community represents the opposite ex-

---

<sup>128</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline) IV, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., VIII and Matthew 5:48.

<sup>130</sup>Matthew 5:44 KJV.

<sup>131</sup>Matthew 7:1.

<sup>132</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 103.

tremes from the religion of Jesus."<sup>133</sup>

Some of the more obvious likenesses between the New Testament teachings and those of the Qumran community have been noted, but upon closer examination it becomes apparent that distinctiveness is perhaps the most characteristic aspect of these two groups of writings.

Since the Qumran sect and Christianity both have rootage in Judaism and share much of the same scriptural heritage, it is not surprising to find certain similarities. Furthermore there would be a natural affinity in both language and thought between the young Christian church and the Qumran community since not a great distance separated the two geographically. Yet, as one knows, it is possible for one group to share much in common with another while at the same

---

<sup>133</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 92. From these four points, Burrows argues persuasively showing that "no serious student of the Dead Sea Scrolls has actually denied the originality of Jesus" (*ibid.*, p. 88). (1) Asceticism: The Qumran community withdrew from society and for the most part lived a life of strict self-denial in their secluded retreat. Jesus came "eating and drinking" and displeased some for not being more ascetic. (2) Legalism: The Qumran sect outdid the Pharisees in legalism. Jesus and the Essenes took opposing positions concerning the Law. An example of this is revealed in the Sabbath observances where even the rescue of a newborn calf is prohibited (see the Damascus Document XI, 14. Jesus, of course, reminded his hearers that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. (3) Ritualism: The Essenes were noted for their ritual and ceremonial washings. Jesus' disciples offended the Pharisees by eating with unwashed hands and Jesus later reminded those who were offended that "what defiles a man is not what goes into his stomach but what comes out of his heart" (Mark 7:1-23). (4) Exclusiveness: It took one two years of preparation and purification before he could join in the common meals. Jesus consistently dined with sinners and others who were ceremoniously unclean (Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, pp. 89-92). See also Oscar Cullmann, who argues along similar lines of thought, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, pp. 20-22. A. Dupont-Sommer adds to this a similar list of differences between Jesus and the Qumran community, The Essene Writings from Qumran, pp. 375-377.

time retaining its own distinctiveness.<sup>134</sup>

While one is mentioning similarities between the two groups, it is as easy to mention the differences. Nowhere in the Qumran material does one find the concept which is so clearly a part of John, namely, that the believer is in present possession of eternal life. Paul's concept of life eternal is very similar to that found in the fourth gospel. Also for both Paul and John the central issue of the Christian faith is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the one who "dispels the darkness of sin and enlightens man with true knowledge of the God of glory."<sup>135</sup>

Both similarities and contrasts abound. Either can be exaggerated. No doubt there was some contact between the Qumran community and the early Christian church, though one must be careful when speaking of determinative influences. Without diminishing the importance of the Qumran material, it is probable that much of the aforementioned "commonness" is attributed to the fact that both groups shared the current terminology and concepts of their day<sup>136</sup> and were both benefactors of the same Hebraic heritage.

What has been said about similarities between the New Testament and the Qumran documents in general may also be said about Pauline eschatology in particular. Points of similarity are readily

---

<sup>134</sup>Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, p. 23.

<sup>135</sup>Pierre Benoit, "Qumran and the New Testament," Paul and Qumran, edited by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), p. 19.

<sup>136</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 132.

apparent. Each believed that the end of the age was at hand and that the present time was a period of suffering and turmoil. Judgment played an important part in both eschatologies as did the conviction that God and righteousness would ultimately prevail. Paul and the Qumranites agreed that God was to be the final judge of all men. God's righteousness was the source of man's justification and His chosen ones would have an inheritance "throughout all ages to come."<sup>137</sup>

But such likenesses become even more apparent when specific passages are compared with one another. For instance, both the Pauline and Qumran documents have eschatological passages referring to a woman in travail:

Yea, I am in distress  
as a woman in travail  
bringing forth her first-born. . . .<sup>138</sup>

. . . then sudden destruction will come  
upon them as travail comes upon a  
woman with child. . . .<sup>139</sup>

Both identify the righteous as sons of light:

[Let destruction befall] the Sons of Darkness,  
but let Thy great light shine [for the sons of light]<sup>140</sup>

For you are all sons of light and sons of  
the day; we are not of the night or of  
darkness.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup>The Community Rule (or Manual of Discipline) XI, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>138</sup>Hymn III, 3-18, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>139</sup>I Thessalonians 5:3.

<sup>140</sup>The War Scroll XIV, 17; see also I, 1-17; XIII, 1--XIV, 1; etc., The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>141</sup>I Thessalonians 5:5. See also Ephesians 5:8.

Descriptions of the final conflagration and coming judgment reflect distinct similarities:

. . . when the lot of God's anger is cast  
upon the abandoned,  
when His fury is poured forth upon dissemblers,  
when the final doom of His rage  
falls on all worthless things. . . .<sup>142</sup>

. . . the gates of Hell shall be opened,  
Perdition's shafts be loosed.

Down shall they go screaming to the abyss,  
and the gates of [Hell] shall open  
upon all worthless things . . .  
and the bars of eternity  
on all unworthy intent<sup>143</sup>

. . . when the Lord Jesus is revealed from  
heaven with his mighty angels in flaming  
fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who  
do not know God and upon those who do not  
obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They shall suffer the punishment of  
eternal destruction and exclusion from the  
presence of the Lord, and from the glory  
of his might. . . .<sup>144</sup>

In the Manual of Discipline VIII and IX, the future community is pictured as the holy of holies as men walk blamelessly before God:

These are the rules of conduct for the "men of perfect holiness" in their dealings with one another.<sup>145</sup>

At that time, the men of the community will constitute a true and distinctive temple---a veritable holy of holies---wherein the priesthood may fitly foregather, and a true and distinctive synagogue made up of laymen who walk in integrity.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup>Hymn III, 19-36, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>143</sup>Hymn III, 3-18. See also the War Scroll XIII, XIV (ibid.).

<sup>144</sup>II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

<sup>145</sup>The Manual of Discipline VIII, 20, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>146</sup>The Manual of Discipline IX, ibid.

Did this future hope of Qumran become realized eschatology in I Corinthians? Probably not, although there are obvious similarities:

Do you not know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you? . . . For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.<sup>147</sup>

The Manual of Discipline refers to the community as an "ever-green plant,"<sup>148</sup> and Paul uses a similar metaphor in writing: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."<sup>149</sup>

Also, the Manual of Discipline indicates that God

. . . will shrive the earth of its guilt, bring final judgment upon wickedness, and perversity shall be no more.<sup>150</sup>

Paul adds:

. . . the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now. . . .<sup>151</sup>

Without further enlarging the list, one recognizes obvious congruities between the Pauline writings and the Qumran community concerning matters of eschatology. Clearly such parallels are more than coincidences and can be properly explained only in terms of relatedness. Nor is there any reason to assume that no contact took place between the Christian and Qumran communities. Indeed there are many reasons to believe otherwise, especially in view of their close geo-

<sup>147</sup>I Corinthians 3:16, 17. See also Ephesians 2:19-22.

<sup>148</sup>VIII, 1-19, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>149</sup>I Corinthians 3:6.

<sup>150</sup>VIII, 1-19, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

<sup>151</sup>Romans 8:21, 22.



graphical proximity.

But it is unlikely that this existent relationship between the two groups caused one to be dependent upon the other, theologically or otherwise.<sup>152</sup>

Before the parallels between Pauline and Qumran eschatologies lead one to hasty conclusions, it should be noted that such similarities are found throughout many eschatological portions of the New Testament. Not only do the Qumran covenanters share a commonness in eschatology with Paul, especially in his Thessalonian correspondence, but likenesses are also found in the apocalyptic portions of the Synoptics, II Peter, and Jude. Other similarities can be pointed to in the inter-Testamental writings, especially those of heavy apocalyptic import such as Enoch and IV Ezra. Such relatedness is to be expected since the Old Testament is the common source for both, albeit not the only source.<sup>153</sup>

The eschatology of Qumran has a definite Old Testament base. In one hymn from the Qumran community<sup>154</sup> Helmer Ringgren counts ten<sup>155</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup>William La Sor, The Amazing Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), p. 216.

<sup>153</sup>It has long been suspected that the eschatology and apocalyptic language of the New Testament had roots in writings such as Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Enoch. The Qumran documents have now given evidence of eschatology and apocalyptic thought in the century just preceding and perhaps during the time of Christ. See W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, "Qumran and the Essenes: Geography, Chronology, and Identification of the Sect," The Scrolls and Christianity, edited by Matthew Black, p. 24.

<sup>154</sup>The War Rule XII, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, translated by Géza Vermès.

<sup>155</sup>The Faith of Qumran, translated by Emilie T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 163.

Old Testament quotations within a few verses. The Dead Sea literature therefore combines an eschatology based partly upon familiar Jewish concepts and partly upon new ones. Ringgren points out that the war against Gog and Magog in the War Rule XI and XII is also found in Ezekiel 38, 39, but given a slightly different touch by the covenanters. The period of turbulence preceding the coming judgment, as indicated earlier, was described as messianic birth pangs and this concept was not at all unknown in apocalyptic literature in the Old or New Testaments. Furthermore, the Qumranite's world conflagration corresponds in many ways to the Old Testament judgment by fire,<sup>156</sup> and has certain affinity with II Peter. Similarities abound among these three groups of literature and one should be surprised if this were otherwise.

At moments the covenanters come very near New Testament thought, especially Pauline thought:

I give thanks unto thee, O Lord,  
for Thou hast freed my soul from the pit  
and drawn me up from the slough of hell  
to the crest of the world.

So walk I on uplands unbounded  
and know that there is hope  
for that which Thou didst mold out of dust  
to have consort with things eternal.<sup>157</sup>

Such sentiments obviously anticipate and help prepare the way for the New Testament. But as one moves toward a fuller concept of man's final destiny he moves more and more away from the Old Testament

---

<sup>156</sup>Helmer Ringgren, The Faith of Qumran, p. 164.

<sup>157</sup>The Book of Hymns III, 19-36, The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation, translated by Theodor H. Gaster.

and from Qumran and looks toward the Gospel.<sup>158</sup> Here one finds a whole new dimension of life and afterlife brought about by a decisive difference in Christology. Pauline eschatology (indeed all Pauline doctrines) evolve "around the central saving act of the expiatory death of Christ."<sup>159</sup> Therefore in spite of legitimate similarities between Paul and the Qumran community this remains the fundamental difference.<sup>160</sup>

It is possible to appreciate the idea of Jesus and the men from Qumran drawing "water from the same spring but carrying it in different vessels."<sup>161</sup> Yet one must remember that it is the person of Christ who makes the ultimate difference between the Gospel and the scrolls.<sup>162</sup>

A study of Qumran literature does not indicate a direct and determinative influence upon Christian thought in the sense that one is dependent upon the other. This is not to deny that current terms and concepts were used by Christians. Roland E. Murphy rightly suggests that Christians could have "adopted Qumran phraseology and practice without being conscious of the fact that these 'belonged' to

---

<sup>158</sup>Matthew Black, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine, p. 24.

<sup>159</sup>Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, p. 32. See also "The Scrolls and the New Testament: An Introduction and a Perspective," The Scrolls and the New Testament, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>160</sup>Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl, p. 32. Paul often uses terms and ideas from Qumran and other Jewish literature, but by giving them Christian context he in fact transforms the terms or ideas.

<sup>161</sup>Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 93.

<sup>162</sup>G. R. Driver, The Judaean Scrolls, p. 548.

that sect. The Essene teaching was so much a part of the first century Judaism that it is as natural for Christianity to be affected by it as the Old Testament religion in general."<sup>163</sup> But there is no indication that this was a determinative influence. Perhaps one of the more significant contributions of this material is the insight it gives to the religious matrix in which Christianity was born. It shared much in common with Christianity, perhaps more than with official Judaism which had rejected it.<sup>164</sup>

Christians can be thankful for the voice from Qumran. It was another step in preparation, and man had come nearer to the Gospel than ever before.

---

<sup>163</sup>Roland E. Murphy, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible, p. 108.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allegro, John M. The Dead Sea Scrolls. "Penguin Books"; Great Britain: C. Nicholls and Company, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of Christianity. New York: Criterion Books, 1957.
- Black, Matthew. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine. London: The Athlone Press, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (editor). The Scrolls and Christianity. London: S.P.C.K., 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Scrolls and Christian Origins. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.
- Brownlee, William Hugh. The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Bruce, F. F. Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran Texts. London: Tyndale Press, 1957.
- Burrows, Millar. The Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: The Viking Press, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: The Viking Press, 1958.
- Coss, Thurman L. Secrets from the Caves. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963.
- Davies, A. Powell. The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: The New American Library, 1956.
- Driver, G. R. The Judaean Scrolls. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965.
- Dupont-Sommer, A. The Essene Writings from Qumran. Translated by Géza Vermès. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962.

- Dupont-Sommer, A. The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes. Translated by R. D. Barnett. London: Vallentine, Mitchell and Company, 1954.
- Farmer, W. R. "Essenes," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, II, 145. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Fritsch, Charles T. The Qumran Community: Its History and Scrolls. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956.
- Gärtner, Bertil. The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament. Cambridge: University Press, 1965.
- Gaster, Theodor H. (translator). The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956.
- Graystone, Geoffrey. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Originality of Christ. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956.
- Herford, R. Travers. "Essenes," The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume IV. New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Company, 1941.
- Hippolytus The Refutation of All Heresies. Translated by the Reverend J. H. Macmahon. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1968.
- Howlett, Duncan. The Essenes and Christianity: An Interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.
- Josephus Jewish Antiquities. Books XII-XIV. Translated by Ralph Marcus. 9 volumes. London: William Heinemann, 1943.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jewish Antiquities. Books XV-XVII. Translated by Ralph Marcus. 9 volumes. London: William Heinemann, 1943.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jewish Antiquities. Books XVIII-XX. Translated by Louis H. Feldman. 9 volumes. London: William Heinemann, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Jewish War. Books I-III. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. 8 volumes. London: William Heinemann, 1927.
- La Sor, William Sanford. Amazing Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith. Chicago: Moody Press, 1956.
- Mowry, Lucetta. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early Church. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- Murphy, Roland E. The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1956.
- Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. Paul and Qumran. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968.

- Philo Every Good Man is Free and Hypothetica. Volume IX. "The Loeb Classical Library"; translated by F. H. Colson. 10 volumes. London: William Heinemann, 1941.
- Pliny The Natural History. Volume I. Translated by John Bostock and H. T. Riley. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1955.
- Rabin, Chaim. Qumran Studies. London: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- Ringgren, Helmer. The Faith of Qumran. Translated by Emilie T. Sander. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963.
- Rowley, H. H. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Significance. London: Independent Press, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Internal Dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls. "Extrait des Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienes"; Publications Universitaires de Louvain, t. XXVIII (1952), pp. 257-272.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952.
- Schubert, Kurt. The Dead Sea Community: Its Origins and Teachings. Translated by John W. Doberstein. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.
- Scott, R. B. Y. Treasure from Judaean Caves. Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1955.
- Stendahl, Krister (editor). The Scrolls and the New Testament. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.
- Sutcliffe, Edmund F. The Monks of Qumran as Depicted in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960.
- Vermès, Géza. The Dead Sea Scrolls. New York: The Heritage Press, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (translator). The Dead Sea Scrolls in English. "Penguin Books"; Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, Incorporated, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Discovery in the Judean Desert. New York: Desclee Company, 1956.