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THE CONTRIBUTION OF PAUL'S VIEW OF THE TIME PROCESS
TO HIS PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

or

The Dimension of Salvation in Time

By

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.
April, 1956

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INTRODUCTION

In considering Paul's philosophy of history, it becomes apparent that he has a very vivid historical sense, that the time process is of vital importance to his thought. In fact it is structurally necessary to the essence of his position and message. Why is this so?

A. Dimensions of Thought

Since God's work in history is that of redemption and the recreation of man spiritually so that he may live, from this derives the importance, first, of tracing His work heretofore; second, of anticipating the outcome of His so far reaching a strategy; and finally, locating this activity dramatically and powerfully in the present by the tactics through which it is being carried out. These are the temporal elements of the salvation of man. They compose a linear, horizontal dimension with the empty cross standing at the fulcrum upon which the destiny of the world is turned and by which the cosmic realities are measured. This dimension, the time process, is but one component of the Pauline view, but with it the dimensions

remaining¹ comprise the purely existential, in which immediate belief - similar to Bultmann's view - attempts to stand naked of that which preeminently distinguishes Christianity from philosophy on the one hand and psychology on the other, namely its roots in the cumulative historical record of God making Himself known to man in the main stream of men's experiences: this He not only has done but will culminate, and is validating. There is, therefore, a definite enlargement of the significance and value, not to mention the purpose and sweep of the time process in history.

The existential plane, that of the perception of Paul's provisionally dualistic philosophical viewpoint (provisional in that it is not ultimate though real in experience preceding the Day of the Lord), is protected by the garment - and supported by the foundation which history supplies. Conversely it will die of exposure or sink in relativistic quicksands if lacking that other dimension - the time process of history, which is the subject of this thesis.

B. Temporal Significance

Basically Paul's view of history draws its significance from past events which cohere in a meaning lying in fulfillment in the future.

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1. Of the three dimensions of Paul's thought which one may discern, viz., the horizontal time dimension; the vertical, or height-depth polarity, expressive of the zenith-nadir dimension of ultimate spiritual reality; and the dimension of proximity or remoteness, of ingress or egress, of appropriation or rejection; the two latter are interrelated in that - drawing near to God, "He will draw near unto you". Beyond that, God having drawn near to man in Christ, as with Paul, the transcendence of God and the quality of the depth of personal sin are simultaneously revealed to man by Him. (I Timothy 1:12-17)

Thus it is that faith is the lesson which he draws from the past, faith in God as faithful to His promises. The fulfillment of these is future. Paul shows the way in which - on the basis of past experience when God was trusted as to His promises and made them good - He will yet return to inaugurate the promised Kingdom in all its glory as Christ takes all rule and power over the nations of the world. Yet with full appreciation of the spiritual genealogy from the past of which he is inheritor and of the destiny which soon will be that of the hoping Church, Paul has a most vigorous and searching focus on the present as life is being lived from day to day. He emphasizes that, of faith and hope and love, love is the greatest, because it is not essentially of a temporal dimension in the same way in which faith and hope are, - because not subject to time's limited duration. With this ethic, as Paul Ramsey has conclusively demonstrated,¹ the Christian life is governed, the life pleasing to God. It is so because it is centered upon the great commandment and because it is selflessly concerned with the neighbor. The only way in which this love may be known is in Jesus Christ who reveals it to man in history. Thus the present as a component of history achieves relational value to history as man is bound to man in the self-giving love revealed and transmitted through Christ, and reenacted again and again in daily life.

Paul's time consciousness is of a crucial sort in that the history of the Israelites is fulfilled in Jesus Christ; moreover the history of the world is to be culminated in his second coming, an imminent event. The importance of history is evident in the way Paul

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1. Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, p. xi, xiv, xvii, 151, 152, 388.

takes pains to re-view Israelite history and to re-interpret it to substantiate its larger meaning, finding both historical evidence and interpretive evidence from the sources in the Old Testament for his theses. His inclusive perspective covers all time, all men, all creation, which tends to place his thought beyond the reach of philosophy of history since its premises are in some important ways from beyond the purview of history per se; yet these invariably derive from "a prophetic interpretation of certain events in history".¹ He bases his own understanding upon the fact that God has been active in history, and that the experience of God in the life of man is consistent, and he cites cases to prove it.

C. Paul's Vantage Point

Yet, although he is less concerned with the recounting of history than its citation to support the teaching in which he is engaged in his sermons and letters, he sees the whole of Jewish history from a new elevation. This view is from the vantage point of the major and in fact the ultimate Event - the crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul was not an historian, as one reporting historical events primarily, but rather an interpreter of the meaning of the essence of his and his nation's history. Further, his interest in history broke through the dike of Jewish national exclusiveness to the Gentile world, both in the distance he went backward into history, and in the contemplation of the future sovereignty of the Messiah of the chosen people over

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1. Alan Richardson: Christian Apologetics, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947, p. 108.

all the nations of the world. This had immediate implications which he saw plainly. He thereby challenged the beliefs and practices based on events in Jewish history taken apart from Christ Jesus. Paul saw the scope of history because he saw the unity of all history in relation to Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection formed the climax and turning point of history.

D. Time Process as a Category

Canon Alan Richardson has said:

Christianity is not itself a philosophy of history; it is rather the source of insights into the meaning of historical events which yield key-categories for the construction of philosophies of history.¹

Certainly a key category for a philosophy of history is the understanding of the time process in history. To seek for purpose in history is to posit a goal which will confirm such meaning as has become evident in the events of history. One may maintain that the key to the design of the whole for Paul is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And yet the time process must be examined to permit this concept to find its foundation and to enable us to grasp more meaningfully this Event when it is seen as the intersecting point of time and eternity, of God and man, of the power of Sin unto Death and the power of Righteousness unto Life.

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1. Richardson, op. cit., p. 108.

E. Limits of Thesis

To accomplish that examination, this thesis contains a study of Paul's method of approach to history. On this basis, there is a discussion of the analysis which he makes of the past and the matters of chief importance to him from distant and more recent history. His concern for the future is an important vector of his thought next considered; finally the practical and dynamic relevance of the Gospel is seen in Paul's present, ethical focus. The scope of this thesis does not include other dimensions which will be found in Paul's philosophy of history.¹ His views of the time process ought not, therefore, to be considered as a complete representation of what is important to a Pauline philosophy of history.

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1. Ante. p. v.

CHAPTER ONE

PAUL'S METHOD IN THE USE OF HISTORY

CHAPTER ONE

PAUL'S METHOD IN THE USE OF HISTORY

A. Introduction

Paul's methods are instructive as to his concept of history. Therefore, these will be considered briefly to show the relevance of history to him. There were several varieties of historical outlook among the ancient historians of the Graeco-Roman world. Paul - it will become evident - differed from these. His perspective for interpretation of the past is more than Jewish, however. For one who finds in history a pattern revealed, the use of allegory is valid to show truths in events which the participants did not discern. Besides allegory, and typology, Paul uses the citation of factual data of history to convince Jew and Gentile alike of the revolutionary message verified by the resurrection.

B. Varieties of Historical Outlook

Herodotus gave a record of things which had happened so that they would not be forgotten by the passage of time, and so that great events would speak their own point for posterity. The course of time is periodic, cyclical, and history shows a repetitive pattern. Thucydides leaves aside the epic and religious features of Herodotus in the pragmatic investigations of an unchanging human nature which shows itself in the political struggles which to him constituted

history. Nothing new will occur in history although individuals and peoples may learn to act more intelligently. There is no tendency to judge the course of history from the "viewpoint of a future which is distinct from the past by having an open horizon and an ultimate goal".¹ Polybius approached the concept of all events as leading up to a single definite end - the world dominion of Rome, but he had no primary interest in the future as such. History was a naturalistic cycle of political revolutions in which repetition the historian may predict the future of a given state. Because of the mutability of fortune, the chief lessons to be drawn from the alternating glories and disasters has been described thus, "to be moderate in times of prosperity and to become wise by the misfortunes of others".² Paul, unlike these, knew the meaning of the past and the future only in so far as God had made it known, according to his will, in the history of the Jewish nation and preeminently in the Messiah. The God of the fathers was above nature and no cycle of nature determined His sovereign activity. Paul was an inheritor of the linear Jewish concept of history in which, rather than recurrence, there is climactic development toward a realization of the purpose of God which is being worked out in history.³

C. Paul's Christian Perspective

Paul interprets history in the light of the historical event which gave meaning and purpose to all which had gone before. Because

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1. Karl Lowith, Meaning in History, the theological implications of the philosophy of history; Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949, p.7.
2. Ibid., p. 9, quoting Polybius.
3. For Paul's view of that purpose, post, Chapter II, p. 21 ff.
Cf. Acts 13:38,46,47.

of the overwhelming certainty of the death of Jesus Christ and the staggering reality of His resurrection, Paul's understanding of the Jewish religion which had led him by relentless logic to persecute those claiming Jesus to be the Christ, was profoundly challenged: "...whatever gain I had (as a Pharisee and Jew) I counted as loss for the sake of Christ".¹ It may well be that the years of solitude he spent after his conversion were the time when the full implications of the revelation given him were realized.

D. The Validity of Paul's Methodology

The use, therefore, of such methods as allegory and typology, when added to the documentation of his views based on historical evidence carefully analyzed, is not alarming nor indeed surprising. If it be that God is revealing Himself, then need it be that He will do so only by the scientific method? If so, one must infer that not only were some sixteen or so centuries - from Origen's allegorizing until the rise of German criticism - without witness, but that we are better able to understand the significance of Jesus Christ than Paul, a rather arrogant position to say the least. It is plain in any case that Paul uses all three of the above pre-scientific methods to interpret the past. In so doing, of course, he is as free as any historian or philosopher to use previous interpretations of history as well as the events themselves in the record which contains both of these sources,

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1. Philippians 3:7 ff. Cf. Galatians 1. (The Revised Standard Version will be quoted hereafter unless otherwise indicated.)

the Old Testament, and he does so. The historical Event which is crucial to his interpretation is one for which he did not resort to documents, but rather to the direct evidence of his own experience as an eyewitness.¹ This he does not allegorize, for it is this in terms of which all else is to be understood.

E. Allegory

Besides its use in Paul's time as a method of interpreting human experience, the use of allegory is justified in the same way in which one professes to see meaning in historical events:

for there would be no search for the meaning of history if its meaning were manifest in historical events. It is the very absence of meaning in the events themselves that motivates the quest.²

The problem which the allegorical method implicitly seeks to resolve is the relation between sacred and profane history, the one being far more selective in subject matter than the other in the claim that this is the only history which is finally of significance. It is best answered by saying that the history of salvation "includes all the other stories, inasmuch as it is reflected in them."³ Thus the profane ceases to be completely profane, and these events are then open to allegorical and typological interpretation. Paul speaks of the "eternal power and divine nature" as having been discerned as characteristics of God, known because "discerned mentally" through the physical creation.⁴

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1. Acts 9:3-7, 27.
2. Lowith, op. cit., p. 4.
3. Ibid., p. 185.
4. Romans 1:19-21. (Cf. Mark 4:10-12)

Allegory is not fatally distant from this view.

Paul uses allegory infrequently, however. The one explicit use of the term in the Bible is in Galatians 4:22-31. Paul cites the record of the origin of the lines of descent from Abraham, one from Hagar the servant-girl and the other by Sarah, a free woman and his wife:

All of which is allegorical, indicating two covenants, one from Mt. Sinai that generates slavery and is Hagar...It corresponds to the present Jerusalem; for it and her children are in servitude. But Jerusalem above is free, which is our Mother,...But you, brothers, are, like Isaac, children of the promise.¹

Thus Paul identifies the working of God's Spirit and the realization of the divine promise with liberation from the Law rather than in the human effort involved in the attempt to keep the Law as the way to please God. To be sure, once freed from the Law, man is freed for "the righteousness for which by faith we hope", climaxing in "a faith activated through love",² and not in the use of that liberty as "an incentive for the flesh".³ Paul's intention in the use of this allegory, drawn upon the pages of Old Testament history, is primarily to warn against relapse to legalism. His use of the incident is illustrative rather than an attempt to establish the historic recency and particularity of this Legalism, or, on the other hand, of the longstanding and ultimate validity of free obedience to God. He sets out these concepts in Romans 9 and 10 in detail, citing literally the historical record to establish his point.

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1. Galatians 4:24 ff., Berkeley Version of The New Testament, 5th Ed., Gerrit Verkuyl: Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1945.
2. Galatians 5:5,6. (Ibid.)
3. Galatians 5:13. (Ibid.)

Still, within sacred history, this event of the birth of Abraham's sons, in its circumstances, is revelatory of the contrast of the Old and the New Covenants, bringing out the basic fallacy of the ritual and purely legal ways of proving one's identity with the justified community, and also the validity of the principle of freedom implicit in faith as being the real proof. Paul's exegesis is quite sound when

one it is recognized that the Old Testament is not just history, but sacred history in which the ultimate end, which God had in view during the long period of self-revelation to a particular race of people is foreshadowed in the circumstances and events which preceded its final realization. In the Old Covenant, in other words, was prefigured the shape of things to come.¹

F. Typology

Paul also uses typological interpretation of history. The Israelites drinking from the rock in the wilderness really were drawing refreshment from Him who later claimed to be the source of the water of Life.² In spite of the privilege which these people enjoyed, the majority were destroyed due to their disobedience. This is a permanent truth. Paul calls it an example for Christians, a lesson, a warning;³ for Christians are subject to the same danger of disobedience.

It becomes evident that it is in the light of the fact of Jesus Christ that Paul employs his typology. Christ is the One who

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1. R.V.G. Tasker, The Old Testament in the New Testament, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1947, p. 103.
2. I Corinthians 10:4,5.
3. I Corinthians 10:6, 11.

is foreshadowed in the history of the Israelite people. Paul reaches back beyond the history of Moses and the Patriarchs to the accounts of Creation. Adam is a type of Jesus Christ, in whom the human race has a new beginning.¹ Eve may be a type of the Bride of Christ, the Church.² Christ is the embodiment of the Passover Lamb, sacrificed upon the deliverance which God wrought in Egypt to free Israel from slavery.³ Jesus Christ is the ultimate liberator from the fatal impurity of enslavement to sin. The great acts of salvation recorded in the Old Testament naturally found their counterpart in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and moreover their full meaning. It is true for Paul that

this typological fulfillment of the earlier in the later exhibits the true meaning of history, and without such typological interpretation the true historical development of the events themselves cannot be understood.⁴

The pattern in history is there to be discovered and is not imposed because there is a real and vital correspondence between the circumstances and meaning of the original 'typical' event and that which it is alleged to anticipate.⁵ This is consistent with the fact that there is a meaning and an overarching purpose in a linear historical movement, and that this meaning may be perceived by those who have had it revealed to them.⁶ This meaning is one consisting of the realization

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1. Romans 5:14, and I Corinthians 15:22, 45.
2. II Corinthians 11:2, 3.
3. I Corinthians 5:7, 8.
4. Richardson, op. cit., p. 190.
5. Ibid.
6. Romans 15:4, 5.

of Divine promises as the basis for Hope.¹ All those things which Paul had formerly considered 'Gain' he now considered as expendable as garbage compared to the central importance of gaining Christ, for Christ was the fulfillment of the sacred history itself and in fact of all history.²

G. Literal Factual Citation

Finally, Paul uses the facts of history to demonstrate the basic principles upon which the unfolding of the meaning in history must be seen. Although Paul uses many means to convince his audience or addressees of the truths of the Christian revelation, his use of the events of history taken literally is an indispensable one. In the speech at Pisidian Antioch, he ranges through Israelite history, in a synoptic declaration that God had been providentially acting and had just completed His supreme purpose of providing a Saviour, in fulfillment of the Messianic promise.³ He appeals to the national consciousness of the chosen people,⁴ which is to him the primary unit in the story of God's redemptive plan for the whole creation, the means by which the spiritual integration of mankind is to be achieved.⁵ In fact, that emphasis was the cause of Jewish hostility to him, which helps us to see the profundity of the difference between the particularistic

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1. Romans 15:7-13.
2. Ephesians 1:10.
3. Acts 13:17-25.
4. Acts 13:26-31.
5. Acts 13:46-47; 17:30-31; 22:12-21; 26:21-23.

historical consciousness of the Hebrews and the universal message and reinterpretation of their history which underlay the message of Christ which Paul preached.

This appeal to non-Christians by the citation of the events of sacred history was directed to Jewish people. His approach to Greeks, with their entirely different concept of history as being limited to the realm of political affairs, and their concept of deity as pluralistic and bound by the limits of the natural order, being of human character, was simply to declare the Jewish monotheistic belief of the Creator-God who is in no way limited by His creation. Dismissing the current views of the nature of the time order as something which the universal God prearranged for the purpose that men would seek Him, presumably from the evidence in His ordered creation, Paul then injects the Christian keynote. The past seasons (of ignorance!) God overlooks in the decisiveness of the Day - an ultimate event in time - when a universal judgment of the world will take place. That, in effect, will terminate the endless cycle of life because there is suddenly disclosed a purpose in history, a telos. The basis for Paul's whole contention is the "Man destined for the task, and whom He (God) proved true to everyone by raising Him from the dead."¹ Paul introduces the unique, unprecedented, and determinative Event into the endless cycle of Greek thought to show it to have a linear direction of movement, whether his audience knew it or not. There is indeed something new under the sun! There is also a destiny.

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1. Acts 17:22-31.

Paul's use of historical evidence will come in for further scrutiny in chapter II, as Paul explains and demonstrates the historical continuity of the Christian faith with the revelation of God in Israelite history prior to the coming of the Messiah.

H. Summary and Conclusion

Paul's particular historical outlook, that of a Christian in the line of Israelite sacred history, provides him with the key by which all of history is to be interpreted. He uses allegory, typology, and the citation of the actual historical event - most central of all being the event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - to disclose the coherent pattern in the march of Jew and Gentile alike out of the recesses of the past into the era of fulfillment of the purposes of God for man. The significance of this for the time process is that we discover in his allegory, in his typology, and in his use of historic event literally taken, the elements of a pattern and meaning in history which is completed in Christ who died, rose, and will return - a living Lord.

CHAPTER TWO

PAUL'S ANALYSIS OF THE PAST

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A. Introduction

Most apparent in Paul's general thought is the universality of the gospel message. In this he is reaching out in every sense beyond the framework of Judaism. His historical premises are quite naturally those of the prophets regarding the activity of God in history, but his vantage point is that of the climactic and crucial coming of the Christ in human history just past. He is shown in this chapter to affirm his competence to interpret all of the ancient and recent acts of God in history. By the construction of the evidence from history in its moral significance, it will be seen that he finds support for its convergence in the historic person of Christ. The basic principle of understanding is seen to be Faith. The basic structure of history is evident in promise and fulfillment.

B. Premise for Interpreting History

Paul was an interpreter of history. To be sure that with which he is concerned is not international or world history such as to show Paul to be primarily an historian, or philosopher of history. But that with which he was absorbed was the one history in which such a thing as purpose or goal could occur at all, and in which there could be such a thing as a unique event.¹ Not only does this make Paul one

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1. Christopher R. North: The Old Testament Interpretation of History, London, The Epworth Press, 1946, fn. p. 19, 160.

of those who helped to establish the concept of history to which we are accustomed in the western world, but the premises which he shared with fellow-believers in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are vital to the whole idea that there is an open future for the time-process and the destiny of man, - that such a thing as fulfillment is possible and that there is meaning and structure in history. That this is not universally experienced (i.e., apart from the God of the Covenant) is not surprising. It is no more surprising than to expect such a concept as the linear view of history to arise naturally from the cycle of nature. The fundamental premise of sacred history is that God is taking the initiative in history in redemptive activity.

..the Jewish prophets alone were radical 'philosophers of history' because they had, instead of a philosophy, an unshakable faith in God's providential purpose for his chosen people... only the Jews are a really historical people, constituted as such by religion, by the act of the Sinaitic revelation.¹

C. The Christian Synopsis

This Paul shared, but he went beyond that common ground, as did the other New Testament evangelists. For them the whole panorama of the people of Israel and all the events of their 'sacred history' as a nation are

foreshadowings of the greater and final salvation given in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, apart from which they have in themselves no abiding significance and are not fully comprehensible.²

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1. Lowith, op. cit., p. 194.
2. Tasker, op. cit., p. 16.

The reason they saw matters from this perspective was doubtless in part because of the attitude of Jesus.

The historical events recorded in the Scriptures were never to Him mere historical happenings in the past; each yielded to Him an eternal and abiding truth and significance, upon which He drew in the present circumstances and difficulties of His own life. His knowledge of the Scriptures was so intimate and profound that He was always able at will to interconnect from quite different contexts passages of like matter and spirit. He penetrated the Scriptures as a unity rather than a compilation.¹

Paul had that knowledge of God's 'redemptive acts', as well as the interpretation of them - God's 'redemptive words' - by the prophets.² Yet for Paul, as for the others, it was the fulfillment of this history in Jesus Christ, which gave to it its truth and significance, and momentarily so in the event of His resurrection from the dead.³

D. Paul's Claims to Consistency.

The point which Paul is seeking to establish is that the message for which he is an apostle is authentic. The proof of this is to be seen in its consistency with the historic activity of God as represented by the past interpreters of that activity in the Scriptures - the Old Testament, and in the divine authentication from Christ who so completely fulfilled God's purposes personally.

The Christ-event at the mid-point, that is to say, is on its part illuminated by the Old Testament preparation, after this preparation has first received its light from that very mid-point.⁴

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1. Ibid., quoted from Maisie Spens, Concerning Himself, p. 65
2. John W. Bowman, Prophetic Realism and the Gospel, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1953, p. 55.
3. Acts 13:29-37.
4. Oscar Cullman, Christ and Time, the primitive Christian conception of time and history, trans. Floyd V. Filson, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1955, p. 135.

It is in this way that the redemptive history can be understood as a whole. The past process from the Creation to the coming of Christ, is a redemptive process, and in the coming of Christ we are provided with this new feature, that "we are told that this entire event to the Creation is to be interpreted from that mid-point."¹ Thus Paul may write that a veil has lain over the Mosaic writings and continues to do so for those who do not interpret from Christ.

He disavows any error or insincere motive in his teaching.² To the Galatians he refers to the ministry God has given him to the Gentiles as compared with that given to Peter for the Jews, and when the Jews in Pisidian Antioch repudiated the interpretation of sacred history as being fulfilled in Christ Jesus with a total forgiveness of sin (which the Law of Moses was not competent to accomplish) he could confidently cite Isaiah 49:6 and turn to the Gentiles, as one obeying the true intention of the God of all nations.³ He writes to Timothy, reminding him of the Sacred Scriptures (the Old Testament) whose centrality to salvation is not the least diminished by the coming of Christ, but rather is the proper means by which one is to be "made wise unto salvation" through faith in Jesus Christ,⁴ warning against false teachers.

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1. Ibid., p. 130.

2. I Thessalonians 2:3-6.

3. Acts 13:46. Isaiah 49:6 - "I have set you for a light of the Gentiles, for salvation to the ends of the earth."

4. II Timothy 3:13-17.

It is in the first chapter of Romans, however, that his consciousness of his place in redemptive history is most clearly stated. He considers himself set apart for the Gospel which God had promised through the prophets. He supports the validity of the claim that the promise was concerning God's Son by noting the Davidic genealogy of Jesus, and the open manifestation of His divinity by the power demonstrated in the resurrection.¹ This citation is made as of historic fact, and it is his privilege to be appointed as one bound to the task of setting forth this central and pivotal truth in terms of which, as he proceeds to say in subsequent chapters, the whole creation is to find the disintegrative effect of the age-long problem of sin itself finally overcome, and all men able to look ahead with Hope and live in Love.

E. The Construction of Historic Evidence.

Writing to Christians, in his epistles, Paul employs historical evidence as essential to the true understanding of the course in which God has been desiring His purpose in history to be understood. But this presupposes the basic problem - as Paul in the organization of his thought in Romans explicates - to be the need to understand, and the cause for misunderstanding. For him, whatever view of history he has it will certainly not be purely humanist in form or content, for human

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1. Romans 1:1-6. (Cf. Ephesians 3:1-6 "...my insight into the mystery of Christ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed..." with Acts 26:22.)

systems turn the truth of God into a lie.¹

1. The historic problem of sin.

Paul is not naive regarding the reality of evil.² As Barry points out,

The incarnation is not so essential to Paul as is the Redemption. Sin is the principle problem of man, not lack of knowledge, for all have sinned, and the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God.³

Paul's pessimism regarding man, morally speaking, is clear. "For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."⁴

When Paul preached to the Greeks at Athens the unique and moral element in history as its central significance, pointing to the event of the resurrection of Jesus as evidence, the Greeks did not merely reject a Hebrew concept of the time-process in history.⁵ Neither did the Judaizers simply take offense at the concept of a crucified Lord of history.⁶ The rejection of the Gospel of salvation by the Cross is due to the failure of even the highest development of human understanding to fathom the wisdom of God, which is "not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away".⁷

Sin is pervasive in the present *aiōn*, or age. It seems to be Paul's characterization of the extant temporal-movement as a whole

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1. William Nigel Kerr, "Observations on the Christological Core of Paul's View of History," The Gordon Review, Vol. I, No. 4, Dec. 1955; a quarterly published by the members of the college faculty, ed. Lloyd F. Dean, p. 133.
2. Ephesians 6:12.
3. F.R. Barry, The Relevance of Christianity, an approach to Christian ethics, London, Nisbet & Co., 1947, xiv.
4. Romans 3:22.
5. Acts 17:30-32.
6. I Corinthians 1:18-25. "For the word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing..."
7. I Corinthians 2:6.

that it is mastered and characterized by evil. This may be seen in the usage he makes of the conjunction of the terms "present" and "age". He reminds Titus that Christians are "to renounce..worldly passions...and to live godly lives in this *ῥῆν αἰῶνι* ",¹ and tells Timothy of Demas who has deserted him because "in love with *τὸν ῥῆν αἰῶνα* ".² In the letter to the Galatians, he refers to the historic work of Christ, who "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God".³ This age, then, is evidently that limited period between Creation and the "eschatological drama, and thus is identical with the 'present' age, 'this' age".⁴

Paul discerns that this condition is due to an historical or perhaps a sequential means by which something which is in its nature not purely temporal⁵ has been introduced into the fabric of man's experience. Although Andrews alleges that "in Paul there is no unified thinking on the question of sin's origin",⁶ there is nothing dubious in Paul's understanding of the way in which sin in history came about, to which Andrews himself refers:

Whether Paul looked upon Adam as an historical person it is impossible to say with certainty. Very probably he did. At any rate he recognized a corporate wrongness as belonging to humanity and traced it to an act of sin by one who represents humanity on the natural plane.⁷

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1. Titus 2:13.
2. II Timothy 4:10.
3. Galatians 1:4. Other similar references: Ephesians 2:2, 6:12.
4. Cullman, op. cit., p. 48.
5. Ephesians 2:2. "the ways of this world system, controlled by the prince of the aerial powers, the spirit.."
6. Elias Andrews, The Meaning of Christ for Paul, New York, Abington-Cokesbury, 1949, p. 41.
7. Ibid., p. 94.

He adds that this is rooted in the ancient concept of solidarity "according to which mankind is regarded as a corporate body which acts and suffers in the person of its representative...". This Paul discusses in Romans 5:12 ff in connection with the work of Christ, the last Adam, who reverses the whole sweep of the history of this age in principle by overcoming Sin. Paul details the process of devolution in history from God at the very outset of the letter to the Roman Christians.¹ Original knowledge of God "ever since the creation of the world faded through ingratitude and dishonor shown Him. Knowledge yielded to speculation. Speculation, to the darkness of self-deceit. From this ensued the removal of divine restraint against Sin in man's life, with consequent moral depravity. Just as sin is universal and equally its consequences, so the pervasive effect is not by any means limited to Gentiles.² Even the nation with the unique history (God's redemptive activity) is culpable.

Sin is the historic problem of man, as to his understanding of divine purpose in his history, and thence as to his ethical practices.

2. Abraham's experience of faith.

Paul maintains that the essential principle by which God's purpose in history is to be grasped is faith. He does not approach the matter in an ideal or philosophic way, but employs historical evidence to uphold this as the consistent pattern of response by which promise and fulfillment are linked together into experience. This

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1. Romans 2:9, 10. "...the Jew first and also the Greek".

2. Romans 1:18-2:10.

response is determinative for the proper interpretation of the redemptive process in time.¹

Paul uses the record of Abraham as it stands examining it to interpret his historically foundational experience for what it really was.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.²

He cites the interpretation of this principle which David recorded, as though to show that David is conscious of the importance of this experience of Abraham, though this David does not say explicitly. Paul critically examines the circumstances of the incident so as to show that it was not on account of the works of Abraham nor for the benefit of the circumcised Jewish nation that Abraham was considered righteous. The historical chronology of the event demonstrates that the willingness of Abraham to believe the promise of God that he would have innumerable descendants, even in the absence of a promised heir, was the reason he was considered righteous.³ It also shows that the circumcision followed as a sign of the Covenant which God extended; so that the faith-principle is anterior to the establishment of the chosen people and of the very Covenant which was such a foundational concept and structure in Israelite history.

Abraham's historical experience of trusting God occurred again in the case of Isaac. Abraham's trust was justified when put to the test, as Paul takes for granted.⁴ The nature of faith is disclosed

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1. Titus 1:1-3.

2. Romans 4:3.

3. Romans 4:1,2; Cf. Genesis 15:1-6; and 17:1-11, 16.

4. Romans 4:16-19.

in the way Abraham "kept hoping in faith when hope was gone", in God, whom Paul finds consistent in His ways of making "the dead to live and calls into existence what has no being".¹

The important matter to Paul in both cases is the morally different valuation placed on Abraham specifically because of his confidence in the purpose of God in history.² This confidence, to Paul, was that there was a consistency between the promise - the potential as freely opened up to disoriented and sinful man - and the realization or actual in the framework of the ultimately Real, God. To have this confidence is to know that God is just, and that there is ultimate harmony in the pattern of His-Story, of salvation.³ He brings his interpretation of this key part of sacred history to sharp focus at the end of the fourth chapter by saying⁴

This, however was not written for him alone, "It was accredited to him,"but for us as well, to whom it will be accredited as believers in Him who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, who was handed over on account of our misdeeds and was raised by reason of our justification.

Paul's inference is that where the principle of faith is lacking, disorientation from God remains. Therefore, the distinction of nationality - Jewish from Gentile - is not determinative, whereas that of faith versus pursuit of legal minutiae is determinative.⁵ The

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. So that the promise could be guaranteed to all who have faith. Abraham hoped believing that what God promised would be realized.
3. Romans 4:20-24.
4. Romans 4:23-25.
5. Galatians 3:6-9. In the verses immediately preceding, Paul refers to the incoming of the Spirit by means of faith on the part of the hearers. This is intimately connected with "justification", therefore.

distinctions made are shifted to a different and a universal plane.

Paul returns again to the patriarchal experience, in writing to those in Galatia, and to the centrality of the faith-principle with respect to the breach which is being made in the universal sinfulness of man.¹ In so doing, Paul has reached back beyond the Mosaic frame of reference which to him is fundamentally parenthetical in the purposes of the Lord of History:

This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.²

Marsh points out the great significance of the Exodus experience to recorded Israelite history.³ Moses interpreted these experiences normatively as the means by which history was rightly to be interpreted, based upon the revelation of God and the redemptive acts of God, including those antecedent to Sinai.⁴ Paul does represent these events as fulfillment,⁵ symbolized in the sacraments, but it is far more significant to him that this entire Law dispensation was actually somewhat of an interregnum. He inquires, "Why then the Law?" and answers, "It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made..."⁶

Having demonstrated the universality of sin in the experience of both Jew and Gentile, and the contingent character of the Law, and

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1. Galatians 4:3-6.
2. Galatians 3:17.
3. John Marsh, The Fulness of Time, London, Nisbet & Co., 1952, p. 51.
4. Marsh, op. cit., p. 58.
5. I Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-4.
6. Galatians 3:19.

having shown the priority of the principle of faith to the establishment of the Israelite nation in Abraham, Paul sums up the purpose in history as interpreted by the records thus:

But the scriptures consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.¹

That which was promised is the gift of the Spirit. This will be discussed in chapter IV. Here is evident again the way in which Paul breaks through the particularism which characterized Judaism. The full meaning of that sacred history is literally completed in Jesus Christ as the universal Saviour for "those who believe". Its meaning is realized only by the premise of faith in Him. It has been noted that the basis of all views of history arise from a faith-principle.² This sort of response to God's promise is the valid basis for seeing divine purpose in history which would be evidenced in a historical fulfillment,³ and it is precisely this which shows - from the "interpreting mid-point" - the normative experience of Abraham for what it is.

God's sovereignty is reaffirmed over all the nations, over Jew and Greek alike, and the unity of history which stemmed from Yahweh

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1. Galatians 3:22.
2. Kerr, op. cit., p. 133.
3. With respect to this promise-fulfillment sequence, both Cullman and Marsh are explicit, each in slightly differing ways. Marsh, op. cit., p. 157 says, "'before' and 'after' certainly have their place in any apprehension or explication of time, but the fundamental biblical category, we believe, is that of 'fulfillment'." Cullman, op. cit., p. 135, says the relationship between the Old Testament historical process and the "unique, once-for all event of the mid-point" provides meaning for redemptive history only when it is conceived in a strict time sense as a relationship between "preparation and fulfillment."

as "the Lord of universal morality"¹ is convincingly established. The unique record of God acting redemptively in history is disclosed to be one whose significance was to be measured from the beginning of human history and the pivotal and determinative experience of Abraham rather than to be limited to the national bondage in Egypt and the granting of the Law through Moses at Sinai. All of this could be properly understood from the elevated perspective of faith in the fulfillment of redemption in Jesus Christ. The question immediately arose that if this were true, what of the consistency of God whose purpose could be questioned in permitting the rejection of Jesus Christ by the majority of the very people whose experience was so essential to proper understanding of this very fulfillment in history.

3. The consistency of purpose in history.

In the ninth through the eleventh chapters of Romans, Paul constructs a lengthy argument so as to vindicate the consistency of God in light of the rejection of Jesus by the majority of the Jews. This argument is based upon a series of interpretations of historical incidents. The question as to whether God had not failed in His purpose is answered negatively, mainly by affirming the sovereignty of God in and over the affairs of men in history.

The promise came to the select Israel, yes, but Abraham's seed is a lineage of faith. Historically, Isaac was a child born out of God's covenant with a believing Abraham² unlike Ishmael who was

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1. North, op. cit., p. 72.
2. Romans 9:8.

born not of faith. The process of selection continues in the revelation to Rebecca that of her sons God would give priority to Jacob, the younger one. Malachi sees, according to Paul, an empirical historical proof of the fact that God has selected the Hebrews¹ as Jacob's heirs.

God's sovereignty is affirmed in the role hostile Pharaoh played. Although he had an elevated position and power, yet in God's dealing with him, the more he hardened his heart, the more clearly was God's power seen by all for that very reason! Yet conversely, this clear demonstration of God's sovereignty does not warrant the inference that God is capricious or unjust for - again historically - God has shown great patience with those deserving of destruction, and also a great benevolence even to the Gentiles.²

He quotes Isaiah's affirmation that God will surely leave a remnant to be saved despite what the people deserve, a view he holds evidently by a vital hope in the purpose of God for the nation combined with the empirical examination of the past.³ Paul denies that God has broken with the continuity of His Story of salvation by rejecting His people, but holds that as in the time of Elijah so also in the current rejection of the Messiah Himself, there is a remnant of those who have faith in God and in His salvation.⁴

The role of the Jewish people, God's chosen, the uniquely historical people, is, then, one of being the medium for the unfolding drama of salvation consummated in Christ risen from the dead. Paul

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1. Romans 9:13. Cf. Malachi 1:1-3.
2. Romans 9:22, 23.
3. Romans 9:27, 29.
4. Romans 11:2-5.

describes the place of the Jews in history as one of privilege since they were entrusted with the oracles of God. This does not exempt them from the universal fact of sin and its disintegrating effect. There is no room for pride, national or religious, since all are made right with God by faith in the same way.¹ The Jews had mistaken the contingent for the ultimate in their valuation of legal moral uprightness over the faith-principle and in the exclusiveness which denied to the nations the promised blessing which was to come through their sacred history.² In every place where Paul preached to Jews recorded in the book of the Acts, the Jews rejected Jesus for the most part,³ from the common people up to King Agrippa,⁴ even as their leaders in Jerusalem had done.⁵

This general rejection, however, makes possible the enrichment of the rest of the world, as the message is thereby directed to those by whom it was not initially to have been received.⁶ Of course at one time all were on a par.⁷ Adam sinned and death came to all thereby. In all this God showed restraint from severe judgment

so that He might make known the wealth of His glory to the recipients of mercy, whom previously He prepared for glory... even from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles.⁸

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1. Romans 3:19-30.
2. Romans 4:13-16; 11:28.
3. Acts 13:46; 14:2,19; 17:1-5; 18:6,13; 21:28; 22:21,22.
4. Acts 26:19-28.
5. Acts 13:26-31.
6. Romans 11:11,12.
7. Ante., p. 16-18.
8. Romans 9:23,24.

Paul believes that just as the Jews through whom God was preparing salvation in Christ were not spared in their rejection of Him when He came, so even more former Gentiles will not be spared should they not, in the light of this, hold to the kindness of God's grace of salvation by faith. There is yet the hope that the Jews will be saved when the universality of the message of reconciliation has come full circle.¹ This paradoxical way of God's wisdom, which - since all are regarded equally as sinners - places all, Jew along with Gentile, in the position of needing the mercy He freely offers, can only elicit Paul's amazed praise.² He concludes his letter to the Romans, his most history-laden writing, and, significantly, theologically his most important, by ascribing to God a summary of praise. In this we are able to perceive his strong sense of the consistency of the Sovereign Lord of time and the nations in working out His purpose in history:

Now to Him who is able to strengthen you in agreement with my Gospel, even the proclaiming of Jesus Christ, which involves the revealing of the secret, that after the silence of many centuries has now been disclosed by order of the eternal God and by means of prophetic Writings is made known, so that all the gentiles shall be led to obedience of faith, - to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever, Amen.³

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul shows what the essential object of faith should be - the foundation of the whole message which he proclaims. The real events of which he has been an eyewitness, along with the other Christians who preceded him, are the

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1. Romans 11:19-27.
2. Romans 11:30-36.
3. Romans 16:25-27.

facts of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, in full accord with the scriptures. The resurrection was a real historical fact. He had met the risen Lord on the road to Damascus. He appeals beyond this to a detailed citation of the witnesses of the event just after it happened.¹ He points out further:

But if Christ is not raised, then your faith is futile; you are still in your sins, and what is more, those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.²

As Cullman says:

Only now can it be shown how sin and redemption, which constitute the theme of all the process, make necessary from the outset this particular process, which has as its goal an incarnate and crucified Christ, and which develops in a time process to the incarnation and the crucifixion.³

The resurrection is equally important for Cullman.⁴

F. Summary and Conclusion

Thus the history of salvation breaks out upon the world. It comes as a message of faith in a God whose purposes are being completed in the historical continuum of the people of God (who are constituted such by the universal principle of faith in Him) and in the moral and spiritual purging, integrating and reorienting acts of God climaxing in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. This climax is the manifest purpose of God in time, the fulfillment of promise.

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1. I Corinthians 15:1-9,14; also Acts 13:31.
2. I Corinthians 15:17,18.
3. Cullman, op. cit., p. 136.
4. Ibid., p. 137.

The historical nature of this 'midpoint', of this 'center', of this climax, is to Paul of transcendent importance, for in Jesus Christ the divine process of selection has reached its quintessence, "For in him dwells the whole fulness of the deity bodily".¹

...when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son born of woman, born under the law, to redeem...²

The point of view that redemptive history presents is indeed found in the Old Testament, but nevertheless only in a preparatory way; it can be constructed into a straight and complete line only in the light of the fulfillment which has already taken place in time, in the death and resurrection of Christ.³

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1. Colossians 2:9.
2. Galatians 4:4,5.
3. Cullman, op. cit., p. 59.

CHAPTER THREE

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE

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A. Introduction

Paul's concern for the future is based in the conviction that therein lies the culmination of the reconciliation accomplished in Christ. His basis for understanding this event is his faith in the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead as the "first-fruits of them that sleep", and this is expressed as Hope in the completion of the redemptive process. The future is discussed in connection with the final resolution of history, and temporal elements are introduced by Paul mainly as presaging that End. The End itself is a major event of unprecedented nature whose uniqueness is contingent to that of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. At this ultimate point, Paul's time sense does not appear pronounced, perhaps due to the inadequacy of sequential understanding to comprehend the unveiling of existential Reality, the fulness of God.

B. Basis for Understanding the Future

It is at the midpoint of redemptive history that the basis for the understanding of the future is found.¹ Redemptive history is not oriented about the end of history.² Rather, it has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This means therefore

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1. Cullman, op. cit., p. 107.

2. Bowman, op. cit., p. 108.

the introduction of a vital, living Hope into history in lieu of the despair due to the pervasiveness of Sin, and its corollary, Death.

God...saved us and called us...in virtue of his own purpose... through the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹

Although Paul is deeply concerned over the universal significance of the past fulfillment of the hope of the Israelite nation in Jesus Christ, and the identification of this with His resurrection from the dead, as may be seen when he addresses the crowds in Jerusalem, and on subsequent occasions when on trial,² yet the fact remains that the hope is still forward-looking. But whereas in Judaism in Paul's time resurrection hope was only hope, in the New Testament, and in Paul as well, "resurrection hope and resurrection faith are closely associated".³ The life of the Spirit has come to Paul by faith as the fulfillment of the hope of the fathers, so that he describes as "sons of God" those led by the Spirit, and yet the adoption as sons, the "redemption of the body", is still to be.⁴

For in this hope we are saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.⁵

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1. II Timothy 1:9,10.
2. Acts 22:1-22, and also 23:6..."with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial". Cf. Acts 24:15 where he refers to the hope of general resurrection, and 26:6,22,23, where he connects the hope to the resurrection of Christ.
3. Cullman, op. cit., p. 234.
4. Romans 8:23.
5. Romans 8:24,25.

The full realization of the life of the Spirit, will finally be attained only in the resurrection.¹ This is a prospect "infinitely preferable" to present experience.²

We are justified by faith, and so are at peace with God. On this basis, Paul says, "we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God ... and hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit..."³ His expectations for the future rest in the past Event of the Christ and in the present experience of the Spirit. Thus he says:

...much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.⁴

In preaching to the Athenians, he stressed the moral purpose in history

because he (God) has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead.⁵

But his dominating and determinative thought always is "Christ and him crucified", which is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For Paul,

the center of time is not in the object of hope but rather in an already occurred historical fact. This then means that the hope for the future can now be supported by faith in the past, faith in the already concluded decisive battle.⁶

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1. Romans 8:11.
2. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 271, discussing II Corinthians 5:1-8.
3. Romans 5:1-5.
4. Romans 5:9,10.
5. Acts 17:31.
6. Cullman, op. cit., p. 87.

For through the concrete fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the past, the future resurrection and judgment becomes an as yet unfulfilled but a sure expectation. Hope therefore is the basis for Paul's interpretation of the future.

This is confident faith expressed in the consistency and the sovereignty of God, that "he who began a good work...will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"¹ when the dialectic of history is over, and "every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father".²

C. The ~~Extent~~ of the Future

In the discussion of what lies ahead, Paul's interest is not with any intermediate questions, but rather

His yearning overleaps all between death and resurrection, and hurries to its goal for reunion with Jesus... At bottom all that happens to his body before the Resurrection is quite indifferent.³

One may detect this long range concern for the future when he says:

So whether we are at home [in the body] or away [from the body] we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...⁴

The discussion of the extent of the future is for Paul chiefly anticipatory of the terminus itself, whenever it may be. The best evidence for this is derived from a comprehensive grasp of Pauline thought concerning the culmination of history.

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1. Philippians 1:6.
2. Philippians 2:11.
3. H.A.A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things, New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son, 1904, p. 272, quoting Wernle, in Anfänge.
4. II Corinthians 5:9,10.

1. Imminence of the Lord's return.

From the prophetic outlook, any rapid development of spiritual forces in any direction seemed to presage the Day of the Lord,¹ and this also characterizes Paul. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul describes the opposition to the gospel, and the *ὁργή* of God - which "is to come" in chapter one, but which "has come upon them forever" in the second chapter.² This *ὁργή* is an eschatological term and is here closely tied to the spiritual hostility against God. Evil forces have intensified by the time he wrote II Thessalonians. The rapidly growing faith and love of the Christians is measured by the increased tempo of persecution and disobedience of their opponents. In the midst of these thoughts occurs such a passage as this:

..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...when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints..³

So for Paul also, the movement of events seemed to portend the coming of the last days very soon, perhaps even in his own life. "I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short..."⁴ While this is evident in his earlier letters, he soon needed to correct misconceptions as to the imminence of the Day.⁵ Although the expectation of its imminence seems to recede in II Corinthians, it revives in Romans.⁶

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1. Bowman, op. cit., p. 50.
2. I Thessalonians 1:10; 2:16.
3. II Thessalonians 1:7-10; others include I Thessalonians 3:13, 4:15-17,..."then we who are alive...shall be caught up...", 5:4-6,23.
4. I Corinthians 7:29,31.
5. II Thessalonians 2:2.
6. Romans 8.

In the letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians the center of attention is not on the end of history so much as the Body of Christ in the present world and Christ her exalted Lord, and discussion of the future is comprehended in the basic and inclusive term *ἐλπίς*, or Hope.¹ In Philippians, Kennedy feels that there is evidence that the two elements of imminent expectation in their lifetime and of his own death prior to a later coming of the Lord are both present, so that there is a blend of the two.² Yet even in the early letter to the Thessalonians, Paul professes irrelevancy as to the worth of any representation of the *χρόνων* and *καιρῶν* since "you yourselves know that it will come like a thief in the night".³ In the second letter to them, he deliberately tries to explain that certainty is not destroyed if temporal imminence should be postponed.

The merging into one another of the concepts of imminence and certainty was a feature of Hebraic thought...(and) once history has been fulfilled in the Cross and Resurrection, the conditions for its end were unceasingly established.⁴

Paul cautions the Thessalonians against the opposite dangers of laxity and ecstasy, both being expressions of irresponsibility in regard to the Day of the coming.

But since we belong to the day, let us be sobey and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.⁵

Neither Paul nor the New Testament is interested much in apocalyptic schemes or in timetables.⁶

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1. Colossians 1:5,23; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4.
2. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 163,164. Cf. Philippians 1:23, and 1:6 with 3:11.
3. I Thessalonians 5:1,2.
4. Marsh, op. cit., p. 136. Cf. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 171.
5. I Thessalonians 5:8.
6. T. Preiss, "Vision of History in the New Testament" Journal of Religion, Vol. XXX, No. 3, July, 1950, p. 164.

The reason for this is that

The end [τέλος] is no longer an unknown future term; it is a Person whom we have seen, have heard, and have touched. Eschatology is concentrated in Christology. Eternal life means to know the Father in the Son.¹

The Christian hope does not stand or fall with the expectation of an imminent end, as has been shown from the thought of Paul. The reason that his hope was not in the least diminished by the delay of the Parousia is because from the outset

its starting point had been that the center, the fixed point of orientation, lies not in the future but in the past, and accordingly in an assured fact which cannot be touched by the delay in the Parousia.²

2. Preliminary developments presaging the end.

Paul does not have an eschatology in that he did not approach the subject in a systematic way, nor does he "even supply the material for constructing anything in the nature of a scheme, far less does he attempt to reach such a construction for himself".³ Therefore it is difficult to impose a system upon what he has presented. It is possible, however, to detect in his thought certain trends, which he considers characteristic of history just before its finale.

The salvation of the Jews, as a consequence of their hardening of heart, was to come only when the full number, the πλήρωμα, of the Gentiles have been saved.⁴ This is part of the "mystery" of the election which has yet to take place. It would seem that this usage of the term would not be unrelated to "the mystery of his will" in the divine purpose, to unite all things in heaven and earth in Christ,

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1. Ibid., p. 163.

2. Cullman, op. cit., p. 88.

3. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 21.

4. Romans 11:25-32.

a plan τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν , "for the fulness of time".¹

In writing to Timothy, Paul forewarns him of the development of evil which is to come. It is to come as a sign of the impending judgment, as already has been noted in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians;² but it is in the use of the temporal term καιρός , connected with a context clearly referring to the approaching end, that this best becomes evident. Paul uses the word for the most part in referring to the present 'time of opportunity' to be saved, as will be seen in chapter IV,³ but there are some five Pauline uses of it with reference to what is to come.⁴

Paul warns Timothy that there will be in later times some who will depart from the faith "by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons".⁵ This apostacy will be matched by "times of stress" in the ἐσχάταις , or "last" days. There will be perversion of character among men, whose love is not toward God, but toward self, toward money, toward pleasure.⁶ It is his solemn remonstrance to Timothy to preach urgently, εὐκαιρῶς ἀκαιρῶς , in the time of opportunity and even out of it, for the καιρός is coming when

..people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings.⁷

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1. Ephesians 1:10.
2. Ante., p. 33.
3. Post., p. 57.
4. One of these refers to the revealing which will take place when the Lord appears. I Timothy 6:15.
5. I Timothy 4:1 ff. See also Jude 18 for the apostolic prediction of the last χρόνου .
6. II Timothy 3:1 ff.
7. II Timothy 4:2,3.

This charge he gives Timothy

..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..¹

The hazard of miscalculating the Day of the coming again of the Lord Jesus is a danger not limited to modern millenarians. Paul has told the Thessalonians that

as to the times and seasons, brethren you have no need to have anything written to you..²

Yet by the time he next wrote to them they had become involved in speculation that the day of the Lord had already come..³ Here he makes a specific statement as to the climactic embodiment of evil preceding the Day of the Lord, in order to point out its futurity:

Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed...proclaiming himself to be God..⁴

He will be revealed in his *καρπῷ*. The mystery of this lawlessness is already at work, but it is being restrained temporarily at present.

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 coming..⁵

He goes on to describe the coincidence of the apostacy with the coming of the lawless one. Rather than rejecting him, Jew and Gentile will receive him, those that is who do "not believe the truth", and who refused righteousness..⁶

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1. II Timothy 4:1.
2. I Thessalonians 5:1.
3. James Moffatt in The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. IV, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, New York, Hodder & Stoughton, p. 47-48.
4. I Thessalonians 2:4.
5. I Thessalonians 2:8.
6. I Thessalonians 2:12.

Finally, Paul cautions the Corinthians against pronouncing judgment "before the time",

Before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purpose of men's hearts.¹

It is evident that pessimistic thoughts occupy his mind in anticipating the future in so far as it is measured with reference to the End *ἡ δὲ πόσις*, up until the Day of the Lord's coming.

3. Perseverance the interim concept, not progress.

This pessimism is to be regarded at the same time as an indication of the progress of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit,² The coming of the Lord is not only so as to judge the wicked, and to destroy the Lawless One, but so as to judge the righteous, to reveal the sons of God, as well as to raise the dead. The durative hope which Paul entertains is not one of progress, however. No such sense of an inevitable participation in success characterizes Paul. Although he spares no words in speaking of the past triumph of Christ over sin and death³ and has complete confidence in the present ability of God to perform His work in the believer,⁴ this confidence is in nature a living hope for the fulfillment of the promise of which the Spirit is the guarantee. The guarantee consists in the fact that the Spirit who raised Jesus "will give life to your mortal bodies also", since He dwells within.⁵

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1. I Corinthians 4:5.
2. Paul recognizes this in I Thessalonians. See ante. p. 33.
Cf. II Thessalonians 3:1.
3. Colossians 1:19,20; 2:15.
4. Romans 8:31-39 is a good example. "If God is for us, who is against us?"
5. Romans 8:11.

This is a hope which intrinsically perseveres in the face of the unseen, the empirically incomplete.

Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.¹

He is obliged, therefore, to exhort others to persevere -

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

and also to discipline himself, "lest after preaching to others

I myself should be disqualified."² He foresees all he had cherished

that I may gain Christ, and be found in him...that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead".³

It is this, not progress, which is foremost in Paul's anticipation of the interim days before the Day of the Lord.

It is true that in Romans 9-11, and in Colossians and Ephesians there is the suggestion of the extension and building up of the Body of Christ, the Church, throughout history.⁴ But is not this stress in these letters precisely the elaboration of the product of perseverance in terms of the actual life of the Church? Paul refers in Ephesians to the Spirit as "the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it",⁵ and says that this will occur on "the day of redemption"⁶; refers also to "the one hope that belongs to your call",⁷ and concludes with a warning to prepare for "the evil day,

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1. Romans 8:24,25.
2. I Corinthians 9:24-27.
3. Philippians 3:8-11.
4. Preiss, Op. cit., p. 167.
5. Ephesians 1:14.
6. Ephesians 4:30. See fn. 7, p. 45.
7. Ephesians 4:4.

and having done all, to stand".¹ The mystery at the heart of the revelation given to the saints is "Christ in you, the hope of glory", and it is for this that Paul strives, with all the energy God gives.²

There are some additional references to the connection of the present with the future. These disclose further the importance of perseverance as related to the interpretation of the ultimate future. Sometimes these come as an expression of hope in God's sovereignty over the future, and sometimes as an appeal, based on this hope, to the believers' ability to endure.

He considers the Thessalonians to be his "hope or joy or crown of boasting before the Lord Jesus at his coming", because of the Word of God at work in them currently.³ In a series of benedictions, he expresses the hope that "the Lord would establish them in blameless holiness"⁴ at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints, sanctify them completely and keep them - "spirit and soul and body" - blameless "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ".⁵ To the Corinthians he writes:

And he will establish you to the finish, so that no blame may be yours at the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is reliable...⁶

To the Romans:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.⁷

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1. Ephesians 6:13.
2. Colossians 1:27-29.
3. I Thessalonians 2:19,20.
4. I Thessalonians 3:13.
5. I Thessalonians 5:23.
6. I Corinthians 1:8. (Verkuy1).
7. Romans 15:13.

For the Colossians, he prays that they be equipped to live a life "worthy of the Lord", strengthened with His resources "for all endurance and patience with joy" since God has given us a share in the "inheritance of the saints in light".¹ He reminds the Thessalonians that God had chosen them to be saved, so that they might obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions...by us."² At the conclusion of the elaborate discussion of the meaning of the resurrection, and Christ's victory over death and sin, Paul is in a position to say,

Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.³

Timothy is urged to keep "the sum of the charges contained in the epistle"⁴

unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this will be made manifest at the proper time by the ...only Sovereign, ...the Lord of Lords.⁵

Paul finally puts it succinctly thus:

The saying is sure:
If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;
if we endure, we shall also reign with him;
if we deny him, he also will deny us;
if we are faithless, he remains faithful-
for he cannot deny himself.⁶

Where the gospel is "bearing fruit and growing",⁷ this is not progress but victory. Where there is victory, there must be no

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1. Colossians 1:12.
2. II Thessalonians 2:15.
3. I Corinthians 15:58.
4. J.R.Dummelow, A Commentary on the Holy Bible, New York: Macmillan, 1952, p. 1000.
5. I Timothy 6:14,15.
6. II Timothy 2:11-13.
7. Colossians 1:6.

weariness in well doing, "for in due season ($\chi\alpha\rho\omega$) we shall reap if we do not lose heart".¹ This recognizes the event of the Coming in its rightful importance as being a time of glad realization of hitherto unseen hopes.

D. The Event of the Coming

Rather than to consider the return of the Lord almost a postscript to history as some intimate in the desire to guarantee the historic significance of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus,² we must sense the reality of the event and its importance. Only if we do not take the last judgment seriously do we find it necessary somehow

to make up the balance inside history, to create a philosophy of history, to neglect the parable of the tares,³

and to come to the ambiguous conclusion that history will be the final judge. The coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ will mark the open culmination of redemption. It may, therefore, be considered the fulfillment of the promise guaranteed by indwelling Spirit of Life Eternal. It also is the unqualified fulfillment of the essential meaning in history since its central purpose, achieved already in essence at history's turning point in Christ's death and resurrection, is experienced as complete.

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1. Galatians 6:9. Cf. Colossians 2:20.
2. Bowman, op. cit., p. 183, views the consummation with brief detachment since "it is exactly within history...that the prophetic spirit sees God's will achieving its goal".
3. Preiss, op. cit., p. 167.

1. Suddenness; its reality.

Paul is in no doubt as to the event. Of all the events of the end, "the climax holds the chief interest. He believes in a definite moment when the veils are to be withdrawn."¹ The suddenness of the event leaves no room for doubt as to its significance. It will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the apparent calm of midnight; it is just when "people" believe that peace and security are assured that the stark drama of destruction will be experienced like birthpangs. For the "brethren", on the other hand, who are "sons of the day", the Day of the Lord should give no cause for being rudely awakened. Watchfulness and soberness with "the breastplate of faith and love, and ...a helmet the hope of salvation" are the Christian preparation for the Day. The Day of the Lord means wrath for those "of the night", but salvation for "sons of light".² In exhorting the Roman Christians to fulfill the law by loving the neighbor, he alludes to the approaching salvation and urges alertness; "the night is far gone, the day is at hand".³ In testifying to the Christo-centric interpretation of history as the manifestation of its purpose and meaning,⁴ Paul is not ashamed of present suffering brought on by this,

for I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what I have entrusted to him.⁵

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1. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 190.
2. I Thessalonians 5:1-10.
3. Romans 13:11.
4. II Timothy 1:8-10.
5. II Timothy 1:12.

2. Uniqueness; its importance.

The historical importance of the end of history would appear to be of considerable moment. Yet this very fact lends itself to the opposite emphases which exercise contemporary thought. Either the reign of God is regarded - with the apocalypticists - as a miraculous event in relation to which man can only "Keep ready or get ready for it",¹ or - with the "realistic" position which would regard that of the apocalypticists as a "travesty of the Scriptural teaching"² - the reign of God is affirmed to be a realized fact whenever men acknowledge God's sovereignty,³ "yesterday, today, and forever".⁴ In fact Bowman goes beyond the evidence to acknowledge that there will be an end to creation but that it will not "afford anything distinctively new or novel",⁵ and further, referring to the Christian ability to see God's purpose in history,

This insight and this restoration, both occurring on the plane of history, are salvation. What else do we await?⁶

Paul might reply

There is further laid away for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will reward me in that Day, and not to me alone, but to all who have loved His appearing.⁷

History does not simply run out to a boring finish. As Marsh insists:

The Parousia (presence or coming) or Apocalypse (uncovering cannot itself add to the achieved fulfillment, but it can and will make manifest to all the fact of that fulfillment.⁸

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1. Bowman, op. cit., p. 200, quoting R. Bultmann, Theology, p. 9.
2. Ibid., N.B. the title, "Prophetic Realism".
3. Ibid., p. 202, 265. He thus represents a form of "realized eschatology".
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 272.
6. Ibid.
7. II Timothy 4:8, (Verkuy1).
8. Marsh, op. cit., p. 135.

Herein lies one element in the uniqueness of this event. He who "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them"¹ is at the right hand of God from which he will appear, and believers "with Him in glory".² It is not seeing the issue whole to maintain that since we are now being changed into His likeness from glory to glory in the Spirit, the transition is simply one from "the temporal to the eternal order at death". It is not true to Paul to hold that the future holds no really "new excitement".³

The reality of spiritual growth does not obscure for him the equal reality of the problem of suffering in the world.⁴ The end of history with the return of the Lord will bring the end of suffering because the antitheses against God and his purposes will have ended, and the suffering which for this reason inheres in the atonement will be completed.⁵ Suffering for the sake of the Lord is as real as its outcome, our ultimate glorification with Him, but the latter is incomparably more portentous.⁶ When the sons of God are revealed, that for which the whole creation, along with believers, has been "groaning in travail" will take place. The end of the reconciliation - the "redemption of our bodies" - will be complete.⁷

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1. Colossians 2:15.
2. Colossians 3:4.
3. Bowman, op. cit., p. 272,273, passim.
4. Philippians 1:29,30.
5. Romans 8:18.
6. Romans 8:17,18.
7. Romans 8:19-23. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 13, notes that the full content of the term "redemption" itself as Paul uses it is not limited in scope to the atonement but that it "stretches into the future" and enhances the ultimate bodily transformation to the likeness of the glorified Christ at his coming. Cf. Philippians 3:21.

Perseverance in the midst of persecutions is "evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God", because it is prophetic of that time when "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven...inflicting vengeance", and at the same time coming "to grant rest" to those who are enduring suffering for His sake.¹ Thus it is possible for Paul to rejoice in his making complete what remains of Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body...the church.²

Thus indeed the moral meaning in history becomes evident.

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 one has done.³

Those who oppose themselves to God and the good news of Jesus Christ 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..⁴

These are unique elements connected with the end of history in the revelation of Jesus Christ at the time of His coming - the public manifestation of the one whose victory over sin and death is known by faith today, the termination of suffering occasioned by this faith and the glorification with Christ which accompanies the resurrection of the body,⁵ as well as differentiation of moral actualities and final judgment.

The uniqueness of these elements of the Coming of the Lord on the Day consists, nonetheless, only in their dependence upon the

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1. II Thessalonians 1:5-8. Cf. I Corinthians 1:7,8.
2. Colossians 1:24.
3. I Corinthians 3:13.
4. II Thessalonians 1:9,10. Cf. I Corinthians 4:5.
5. Cullman, op. cit., p. 141, considers this to be the decisively new element in the end of redemptive history. So also Kennedy, op. cit., p. 235.

central historical event of "first importance" for Paul, the death, burial, resurrection, (and Life) of Jesus Christ.¹ Christ is the "first-fruits" from the dead. It is almost impossible to structure a systematic sequence for the events at the end, but in this context Paul does set forth the following order:

Christ rises from the dead.
He returns and "at his coming" those who belong to Him rise.
"Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and...power."
Death is the last "enemy to be destroyed".
"When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected" to God.
This is to be done "that God may be everything to everyone".²

But Paul has no time scheme, and the Parousia, the Judgment, and the Resurrection of the dead belong to the same experience in the final analysis.³

This is God's "plan for the fulness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth"⁴ in its completion. This is the destiny toward which redemptive history moves in "the eternal purpose which [God] has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord".⁵

'After' the culmination of history in the Coming of the Lord Jesus, what then? It would seem to be a matter of semantics as to whether the goal of history is in history⁶ or beyond itself.⁷ The Day of the Lord is unquestionably for Paul a future historical climax, and

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1. I Corinthians 15:3-12.
2. I Corinthians 15:20-28.
3. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 187, 278.
4. Ephesians 1:10.
5. Ephesians 3:11.
6. Richardson, op. cit., p. 194.
7. Barry, op. cit., p. xv.

at the same time we endure through this present evil age because of having been begotten to an enduring hope.¹

There appear to be grounds for expressing the experience of resurrected man in terms of the resurrected Lord rather than, and overflowing from the terms of temporal sequence. Paul speaks of the exaltation of Christ from the dead to transcendent sovereignty over "every name that is named, not only in this age but also that which is to come".² He is the One who "fills the universe at all points",³ who has raised us up to the "heavenly places" in Him so that "in the coming ages he might show (us) the immeasurable riches of his grace".⁴ Timothy, therefore, is directed to train himself in godliness since "it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come".⁵ How is this best expressed? Paul puts it best when he says, "And so we shall forever be with the Lord".⁶

E. Summary and Conclusion.

Paul's view of history is optimistic because of "what was wrought by God in Christ the Lord", and because for him "the beginning and end are coordinate".⁷ Hence faith and hope are inseparably joined with respect to the sovereign Lord of history, the consistency of whose

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1. I Corinthians 15:19.
2. Ephesians 1:18-21.
3. Ephesians 1:23, (Verkuy1).
4. Ephesians 2:6,7.
5. I thimothy 4:8.
6. I Thessalonians 4:17, (Verkuy1).
7. Kerr, op. cit., p. 138.

redemptive purpose is made evident in its completed fulfillment, the return of Christ. The imminence or remoteness of the end of this evil age is less important than the certainty of the outcome. Evil will seem to dominate the historical stage increasingly at the expense of Christian suffering. It is an insufficient appreciation of the pervasiveness of evil, both directly and as to its indirect results, which leads to a misunderstanding of the dialectic of history. Rather than progress the substance of history will display the intensification of evil. Through all this, Christian perseverance - in hope of ultimate divine completion of redemption - gives historical continuity to the outworking of the victory of Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection up until the Day of the Lord.

This vivid climax to human history consists of the unveiling of the now unseen "and blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour",¹ and the resurrection from the dead. At the same time, it is the end of this evil age. It is therefore historical and thus a goal, real in the time-process. The goal of history is expressed as the complete reconciliation. In the "revealing" of Jesus Christ, the sovereignty of God is revealed as having eternal regard for man's free choice by a conclusive disclosure of wrath and glory at the end of the last times of opportunity; thus the moral meaning in history is made evident. The fulfillment which this "revealing" represents for the hoping Christian is intrinsic to the "revealing" because it is dependent upon the crucial death and resurrection at the

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1. Titus 2:13.

normative center of the time-process. Victory over sin and its by-products of Christian suffering and physical death, victory over the defeated principalities and powers of this evil age, vindication of the righteous judgment of God over all -- all of which were achieved in the resurrection from the death of the Cross -- are now no longer contested in the cosmos. In this sense only, redemption - realized in history - is completed, and with it all purpose in history is achieved. Thus history cannot be said longer to exist. God has become "all in all".

Finally, then, time becomes insignificant in the presence of Him who is the eternal God, as the fragmentary experience of history yields to "the fulness of him that filleth all in all".¹

For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesy is imperfect...
For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood..²

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1. Ephesians 1:23.
2. I Corinthians 13:9-12.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAUL'S FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

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A. Introduction

If God's purpose in history be fulfilled in an historic redemptive climax which discloses the meaning in the historic process of which it is a fulfillment, and if this fulfillment be one whose cosmic significance becomes evident in the ultimate future as all the latent forces issuing from that climactic resurrection bring to perfection all that was implicit in God's redeeming purpose, then the fact of His determining act at the midpoint is of utmost significance. In this chapter, it will become evident that Paul was neither an antiquarian nor an apocalypticist, but rather that the entire time-process derived its basic meaning and value from focusing on the present as the integrating center.

Thus to this end, Paul's use of certain temporal terms will be examined to give grounds for regarding time itself as crucial and its division as disclosing the centrality of the Event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Not only may Christ Jesus be considered to be the NOW in history in a chronological sense, but also the Present One in a normative sense, the latter deriving from the former. It is the Spirit's immanence which introduces the ultimate value into contemporary social order and social living. This value is at essence love. It is linked so integrally to the time-process that it is an expression of faith and hope in action. The sacraments afford an

instance in which the Christian affirms that God is Lord of the time-process, all of it, in its moral meaning.

B. Christ, the NOW of History

The significance of the time-process itself is manifestly determined by the significance of that by which it is measured, or comprehended. It is only thus that the philosophy of history is relevant as a field of thought. It has been demonstrated that Paul's interpretation of the past and his understanding of the future was achieved from the commanding elevation of the Event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the implicit orientation of Paul's thought, the present - set in its past and future context - is of pivotal importance.

1. The cruciality of time.

There are several terms which are used in the New Testament to express time, and the Pauline usage is worth surveying since it makes apparent the related importance of the elements of the time-process to him.

The term *αἰών* is used extensively, and with various application. It has been maintained that neither in the Old Testament nor in Jewish literature current to the first century was the word used to express a view of history as composed of several or even two ages.¹

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1. Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible, New York: Macmillan, 1951, p. 266; article on "Time" by John Marsh, hereafter referred to as "Marsh, Word Book".

From this, the Pauline writings at least differ. Paul identifies this age with the rule of sin;

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.¹

It is not an endless time; God is "before" the "ages"² including this evil one.

God is not conditioned by them but is sovereign. This is seen in such ascriptions of praise to God as:

To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever.³

He nevertheless participates in the ages. God, by His mighty power raised Jesus from death to transcendent rule and authority "above every name...not only in this age, (ἐν τῇ αἰῶνι τούτῃ), but also in that which is to come".⁴ For Marsh, Paul's concept of these two ages is one which has temporal aspects, but is "more characteristically 'ethical' or 'concrete'".⁵ It is not clear that the evidence supports the case. Paul alludes, in the same context, to the state of believers as having been raised up with Christ so "that in the coming ages he

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1. I Corinthians 2:6-8. Cf. Romans 12:2, II Corinthians 4:4, Galatians 1:4, Ephesians 2:2, II Timothy 4:10, etc.
2. The context suggests that this is not a poetic plural. Marsh asserts that it must necessarily be the case for every plural of αἰῶν, to be understood poetically, "by which a quantitative plural is a symbol for a qualitative difference", Marsh, Word Book, p. 266.
3. I Timothy 1:17. The last phrase is literally, "unto the ages of the ages". Cf. e.g., Ephesians 3:21, Philippians 4:20.
4. Ephesians 1:21.
5. Marsh, Word Book, p. 266.

might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus".¹ The first quoted reference is to the sovereignty of Jesus over all, whether in the current or the not-as-yet-present age. The second, would seem to disclose the extent of the believer's participation in the exaltation of Christ, in a broadly future sense. On the basis of Chapter III, the age "which is to come" is probably a reference to the era constituted by the Parousia, but anticipated by the "promised Holy Spirit", the guarantee of the inheritance "until" possession is acquired of it.²

It would appear to be laboring the evidence to suppose that when Paul speaks of Christians as those "upon whom the ends of the ages are come"³ he refers to the way in which the present age and the coming age have already met wherever a person has entered into life "in Chrst". The text rather stresses that Christians stand at the *τέλη*, the attained end or final "climax"⁴ of the ages.⁵ The sweep of aeons of time had come to its crucial point in the immediate past of the early Christians. Where Paul uses the combination of *χρόνος αἰώνιος*, this may be seen:

...the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now (νῦν) is manifested..⁶

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1. Ephesians 2:7.
2. Ephesians 1:13-14.
3. I Corinthians 10:11, (American Revised Version).
4. I Corinthians 10:10, The New Testament, An American Translation, Edgar J. Goodspeed, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948.
5. This is not only evident in the use of the perfect indicative, but the context suggests it as well; this contra Marsh, Word Book, p. 267, and Fulness of Time, fn., p. 32. His realized eschatological position leads him into the untenable explanation of this passage referred to above. There is no internal suggestion of the "overlap" of this and the next age in the passage.
6. Romans 16:25,26, (ARV). Also, II Timothy 1:9, Titus 1:2.

All of this was according to "the eternal purpose which he (God) has realized in Christ".¹

The use of *χρόνος* is not very extensive, but has added interest for the investigator in those places where it is used. As a term used to express temporal duration, Paul refers to the time of forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness,² and to the "times of ignorance"³ which God overlooked,

But now (*νῦν*) he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world...by a man whom he has appointed...raising him from the dead.⁴

Times of human ignorance have not antedated the activity of God nor His overarching purpose for acting crucially in these times. Neither have Christians been saved by their own short-lived initiative, but "in virtue of his (God's) own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago",⁵ or *πρὸ χρόνων δεινίων*, before the time spans of the ages.

The most important use of the term is where Paul says, -
and note well the relation of this thought with that expressed above:

..when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman...⁶

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1. Ephesians 3:11.
2. Acts 13:18.
3. Acts 17:30. It may be that in this plural reference and in the plural use of "ages", Paul is reflecting in some degree current Greek cyclical notions of the historic process, but referring to them always in a way which puts the Lord as One over all, and as One who is unmistakably working in a unique way in the time-process to redeem, and that this work will reach a definite historical goal. Cf. Cullman, op. cit., p. 46.
4. Acts 17:30, 31.
5. I Timothy 1:6, also Romans 16:25, and Titus 1:2. The use of in each of these passages is noteworthy.
6. Galatians 4:4.

The use of the Aorist emphasizes that the act of God was not some phase in a process which could have occurred anytime, anywhere. If the Hebrew mind was in fact so characteristically theological that it had no word for χρόνος,¹ then the mind of Paul perceived - not merely that

the passage of time, its chronological duration, could not be theologically irrelevant since God, so Christians believed, had acted in it.²

but that the antecedent linear extent of time, in or out of the sacred history, had reached an intended completion point consisting of the sending forth of the Son "so that we might receive adoption as sons."³

The context of the verse accents this interpretation. Paul has just established the faith-principle, historically, in Abraham's experience.⁴ He compares the condition of believers prior to faith as in immaturity "until the date [προθεσμία] set by the father", for them to be considered free and responsible; the bondage to sin obtained until "in fulness of time [χρόνου] God sent forth his Son, born of a woman".⁵ His stress on the historic reality of this chronological climax is thus evident. In the redemption which has just been procured, there has been established a sharp Before-After for the human race: "you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir";⁶

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1. Marsh, op. cit., p. 77.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

3. Galatians 4:5. And hence the Spirit has been sent into our hearts, constituting us as heirs. Our inheritance includes the future resurrection of the body.

4. Galatians 3:1-22.

5. Galatians 4:3-4.

6. Galatians 4:7.

formerly, when you did not know God, you were in bondage...; but now (νῦν)...you have come to know God..¹ Why do you desire to submit yourself to days, and months, and *καίρος*, and years?; he asks those who have been Judaized.² All are done away with because a certain pre-ordained point in time has been reached for the inaugural of the new *καίρος*,³ of salvation by faith.

Not only has this point been reached, but also passed. The significance of present time is seen in the references to the decisive opportunity now opened up in "this *καίρος*". Paul refers to God as having forgiven "former sins" in order to vindicate His righteousness "in our present period (νῦν *καίρῳ*)".⁴ As for the experience of "the sufferings of this present time (νῦν *καίρῳ*)" with Christ as fellow heirs with Him, he considers that they are small compared to the glory still to be revealed at the completed redemption.⁵ He also looks backward in time, comparing the present *καίρος* with the time of Elijah to whom God spoke telling him of the remnant which still remained faithful. "So too at the present time (νῦν *καίρῳ*) there is a remnant, chosen by grace," and this extends out among the Gentiles.⁶ This body, the Church, is to be alert and expectant

..in consideration of our times(*καίρον*), because the hour has struck for us to wake up, for our salvation is now nearer than when we became believers.⁷

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1. Galatians 4:8,¹⁰
2. Galatians 4:8.
3. The meaning of the term is a period of opportunity. The opportunity is given by God.
4. Romans 3:26 (Verkuy1).
5. Romans 8:18.
6. Romans 11:5 ff.
7. Romans 13:11 (Verkuy1).

Although the age is evil, as are its days, Christians are exhorted to "make the best possible use of their time".¹ Paul's stress on the significance of the present *καιρος* finds its core in the thought of this entreaty, reminiscent of his charge to Timothy to preach in and out of the times of opportunity,² and referring to the present fulfillment of divine promise:

Behold, now [*νυν*] is the acceptable time [*καιρος*]; behold, now [*νυν*] is the day of salvation.³

Each day is a decisive NOW - an 'acceptable opportunity' - for salvation. The urgency of Paul's thought is evident in the verses which follow, describing the hardships he underwent to bring this message to those who have not heard.

Perhaps more widely used than any other of the terms previously described is the word *νυν*. Its use is revelatory in a marked degree, of the cruciality of the present to Paul, as has just been seen in its use with *καιρος*. In Romans, the term is used exclusively of that which pertains to realized salvation in this time at the highpoint of history, and in present experience in the light of that realization. NOW - the righteousness of God has been revealed apart from the law;⁴ we are justified and have received the reconciliation;⁵ we have been made free from sin,⁶ and are ashamed of former practices.⁷ NOW - we are delivered from the law.⁸ There is "therefore now" no condemnation

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1. Ephesians 5:16 (Verkuyl), also Colossians 4:5.
2. II Timothy 4:2.
3. II Corinthians 6:2.
4. Romans 3:21,26.
5. Romans 5:9,11.
6. Romans 6:22.
7. Romans 6:21.
8. Romans 7:6.

for those who are "in Christ Jesus",¹ and suffering is not that of despair,² for the whole creation up until "now" has been longing for ultimate redemption³ which is "now" nearer than when we first believed.⁴

The way the present becomes the focal point for Paul is evident also in the consciousness of his own Before Christ - Now "in Christ" experience.⁵ The vividness of this in Pauline thought is traceable to his conversion. He refers to "my former (πότε) life in Judaism"⁶ and describes the amazing news which spread after his conversion:

He who once (πότε) persecuted us is now (νυν) preaching the faith he once (πότε) tried to destroy.⁷

Again and again Paul's thought returns to this polarity of "once" but "now", as will appear throughout the rest of this chapter.

Always, the NOW of experience stands firmly in the context of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted..⁸

He is conscious that "we ourselves were once...led astray", but when God's lovingkindness appeared, "he saved us" so that we might become "heirs in hope of eternal life (ἑως αἰωνίου)."⁹ He tells Titus:

I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds..⁹

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1. Romans 8:1.
2. Romans 8:18.
3. Romans 8:22.
4. Romans 13:11.
5. Thus our conception of time in human history since the incarnation and redemption is not so and so many years After Christ, but Anno Domini 1956 - the year of our Lord 1956.
6. Galatians 1:13.
7. Galatians 1:23.
8. Titus 1:1-3. Hence Paul's "this-worldly" exhortation throughout.
9. Titus 3:3-8, *passim*.

Eternal (*αἰώνιος*) life, identity with the King of the *αἰώνων*, is the inheritance of the Christian in the gift of the Spirit.

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 life eternal [*ζωὴν αἰώνιον*].¹

Because God's Spirit dwells within, it is only self-deception to esteem oneself wise "in this age". "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God", for sin has reduced the pride of men to futility. Christians on the other hand participate in the sovereignty of God over the ages by being identified with God's eternal and specific purpose of reconciliation achieved in Christ.

So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether... the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's and Christ is God's.²

Eternal life is not suddenly to be acquired at death or the Day of judgment or the coming Aeon. Since it partakes of the nature of God it is not merely the absence of sin and death, for "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"³ which is to be received by belief in Him⁴ but to be experienced totally only in the future.⁵ For this the Spirit is a guarantee.⁶

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1. Galatians 5:8.
2. I Corinthians 3:16-23, passim.
3. Romans 6:18, 20-23.
4. I Timothy 1:16.
5. Every use of the term "eternal" by Paul has a distinct future connotation, e.g., Romans 2:7.. "he will give eternal life", 5:21... "so that grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life..", II Corinthians 4:17.. "affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison", I Timothy 6:19, etc.
6. II Corinthians 5:5.

2. The division of time - the centrality of Christ.

By the same evidence used to demonstrate the cruciality of time, the centrality of Christ is, mutatis mutandis, established, for the basic Event (in terms of which all history is best interpreted as to its ultimates in a structure which does not omit the moral issues) is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To say this is to take cognizance of the Event as a phase, methodologically speaking, in the basic (Biblical) historic process of promise - fulfillment.

This particular phase, one might say this fulfillment of promise, came into being in the time-process as a qualitatively unique fulfillment. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was, among its other effects, the prelude to the gift of "the Holy Spirit of promise" to anyone who believes. The promise of the Spirit became, at any point of the chronological succession, when the Spirit was received by faith, an experiential guarantee of a hope still to be vindicated, the hope of eternal life.

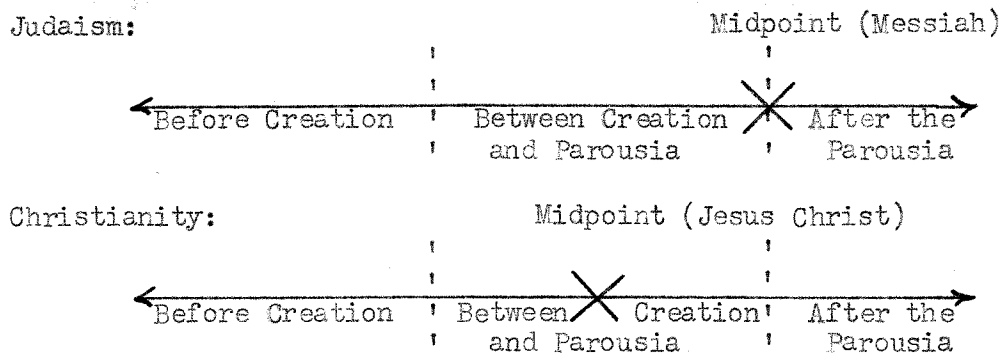
This phase also is unique in that, not only does it intensify the hope by endowing it with pivotal historical validity of the highest sort (the death of Jesus and His resurrection), but it also extends the opportunity for entry, from this center of (God's) purpose in history, into all chronological time subsequent, up until the receipt of the complete inheritance of eternal life at the end of history.

Oscar Cullman has drawn two diagrams¹ to illustrate the

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1. Cullman, op. cit., p. 82. In the one case the determinative event is future; in the other, just past.

difference between the Judaistic view of the time-process and the Christian view.



To these Marsh objects on the grounds that Cullman has imported modern chronological concepts of time into the Biblical concepts, although he¹ says

here more than anywhere else does it seem that his basic exegesis is right, although his schematization is...inadequate to articulate it..¹

Paul's view of time would begin with the fact "of first importance", the death and resurrection, and view what was previous and subsequent in that light. From the remotest reaches of the ages came this, their predetermined climax at a specific time-point, which opened up the NOW opportunity for participating in the redemption there achieved from the universal discontinuity of sin and death. This is the basis for regarding the time-process as significant. The post-resurrection

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1. Marsh, op. cit., p. 177. He regards Biblical history as being close to the linear view of history but "it would be misleading to call it linear, since its distinctive feature is that the end of the linear process has appeared in the middle of the line", (p. 169). With this we are unable to concur in the face of the reality of the future culmination to Paul, as well as the measurement of the present by the past Event of Christ in time.

gift of the Spirit, and the consequent decisive difference in one's own contemporaneous experience between the time before Christ and the time when one is "in Christ", would justify the inference that it was here that the significance of measuring all time first achieved pivotal value. The now of experience is understood and measured from reference to the NOW of history, and within the time of opportunity opened up by the One who has risen, and lives. In the consciousness that all time was at climax when He came and died and rose, our participation in Him by faith and experience makes us indeed fraught with the full weight of destiny. The ends of the ages have come to rest upon us in the full force of their fulfillment. The possibility and reality of this - it cannot be over-emphasized - inheres in the centrality of the fact that

It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.¹

Jesus who lived in Palestine is the Christ who lives inseparably from the believer in and through all contingencies.

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.²

His presence gives the present its meaning and value and time its coherence and structure both historically and experientially, chronologically and normatively.

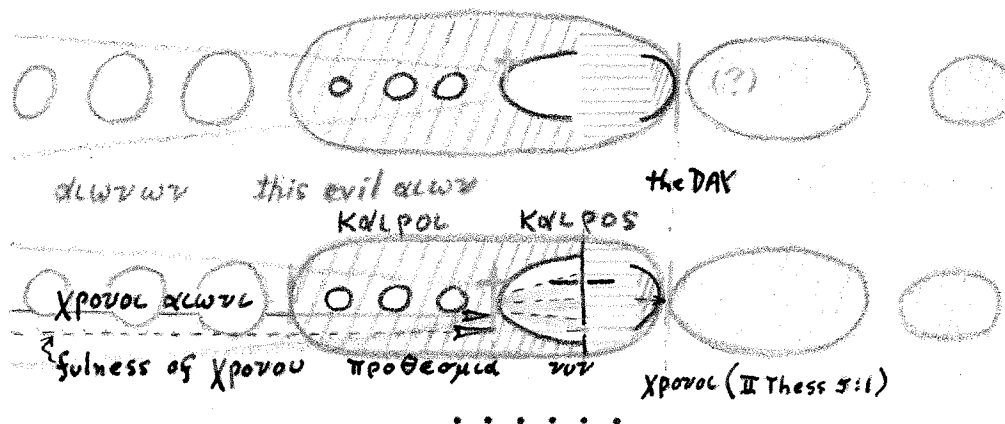
A diagram of the time-process as it is for Paul is worth proposing here despite the limitations of any descriptive figure of

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1. Romans 8:34.
2. Romans 8:37-39.

essentially one dimension. The significance of the time-process as a structure whose integrating center of meaning is in the Event of Christ is one which imparts (chronological) dimension to what would be either simply a fatalistic cycle or a particular local process in wistful hope of an ultimate vindication, for which one could only wait,¹ not knowing when the vindication might take place. Paul and the Christians knew in Jesus Christ the NOW of time which established a fix by which man's past course in history could find an ultimate point of reference, and by which he could change his heading to be directed toward a valid ultimate destination, with confidence. It is only with such a specific central frame of reference that chronology is seen as implicit in Paul's thinking in places where he is not explicit.

The diagrams below show the connection between the measurability of time with reference to The Event as compared to the indeterminacy of time, ultimately speaking, as in the Hebrew conception.² The first diagram uses Biblical terms, omitting chronology, common to both New and Old Testament, while the second includes the chronological sense (as Paul used it).³



1. This is to describe the Greek and Jewish views respectively.
2. Cf. Cullman, op. cit., p. 234.
3. It should be understood that Paul is not unique over other New Testament writers in this sense of chronology.

Thus it is true, as Marsh points out - although he does so in order to undermine Cullman's view of eternity as unlimited time - that whereas Biblical time could be regarded as "the occurrence of *καίρος* 'by the joining of which the redemptive line arises'"¹ (he quotes Cullman) this could not legitimately be regarded as a temporal line. Paul, in his thought as to the significance of the time-process, does not do this. It is his emphasis, however, which does actually create a linear view "of temporal successiveness", because at the empty cross he sees the length and breadth of the Love of God in Christ Jesus reaching unbroken back to the very beginning and radiating out to the ultimate consummation. In the most literal sense, time is CRUCIAL, because "now (*νῦν*) is the (*καίρος*) of salvation".²

C. The NEW in History, "Life-Giving Spirit".

In seeing the centrality of Christ for the estimate that time is crucial one also sees the introduction of the uniquely new into history. Herein lies the relational importance of the present to the rest of the time-process. In Paul's explanation of the resurrection of the dead, of which Christ is "the first-fruits", he makes this polar historical distinction:

As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.³

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1. Marsh, op. cit., p. 175.
2. II Corinthians 6:2.
3. I Corinthians 15:22.

and this,

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being";
the last (ἔσχατος) Adam became a life-giving spirit.¹

The principle of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made Paul free from the principle of Sin and Death.² The gift of the Spirit is for universal receipt by those who will believe, and in this fact is the opportunity for participation in God's redemptive purpose in history by all men. The age-long problem of sin has been resolved. The former status of Gentiles, at one time (κείνος), was that of being

separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.³

"But now (νῦν) in Christ Jesus" these have been included in Christ, made members of the household of God, and have access along with former Jews "in one Spirit" to the Father. Peace has been brought between Jew and Gentile in the reconciliation Christ obtained on the cross between man and man and between man and God. His intention was to "create in himself one new man in place of the two". In this fellowship of the saints, all are joined together in Christ Jesus, forming "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit".⁴

1. The Body of Christ.

The newly reconciled fellowship animated by the life of the Spirit is constituted by the faith that "Christ is Lord".⁵ "The Holy

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1. I Corinthians 15:45. For Paul, "The Adam-concept was under the control of the Christ-concept...and never the reverse", Bowman, op. cit., p. 245.
2. Romans 8:2,10,14.
3. Ephesians 2:12.
4. Ephesians 2:13-22.
5. Philippians 2:11.

Spirit is operative in the present, as the power of the resurrection".¹ This is the new corporate unit in history, the Church, which is included and takes part in the "divine Lordship over time"² since its life is that of the resurrected Christ, the life of the Holy Spirit who signifies the anticipation of the completed redemption. Herein is the phrase "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"³ meaningful. The Church, as the Body of Christ with which one may be united, is seen to be an organic personality with a history with which one must identify oneself in order to find ultimate value in the present, which ultimate value is represented in the life in Christ who defeated death.

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... For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.⁴

For this reason, Christians are to consider themselves to be "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus".⁵

Fellowship with God in Christ is the primary relationship established in the Body. Christ is the Head,⁷ and from the present fact of His life the present existence of the Church derives as a growing and maturing organism. Paul's use of "in Christ" is significant here⁶ to reveal Paul's interest in the contemporaneous NOW as it relates to the historically determining NOW of the Event of Christ, in

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1. Cullman, op. cit., p. 236.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

3. Romans 7:23.

4. Romans 6:5-11, passim.

5. Romans 6:12.

6. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 311. "All his readers knew well enough what to be *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ* meant for the apostle. That is the central note of his theology, the pivot on which everything hinges".

7. Ephesians 4:15.

connection with the concept of Christ as constitutive of the NEW in history.

..if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.¹

It is on these grounds that he says "now is the day of salvation".²

The reconciliation is one which also includes others in the same Body of Christ.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.³

The multiplicity of individual abilities are not denied. Rather each has an indispensable place, and all are interdependent.⁴ In this fellowship, the essential bond and expression of it is love⁵ under which all individualism is subsumed.⁶ All whose duration is limited, all which is incomplete and so transient, is contrasted with love, which "never ends".⁷

The temporal reference of love is not unimportant. Here the relational importance of the contemporary present to the meaning of history is established. Paul connects his own history with that of

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1. II Corinthians 5:17-18.
2. II Corinthians 6:2.
3. I Corinthians 12:12,13.
4. I Corinthians 12:14-26.
5. Colossians 2:2.
6. I Corinthians 13:1-3.
7. I Corinthians 13:8-10.

Christ by faith based on the definitive expression of love which took place at the NOW of all time:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.¹

Paul refers back to this Event of Christ, who "loved the church";² to "God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace";³ and to the permanency of "the love of Christ",⁴ "the love of God"⁵ toward "us" once having been established in him. The Church is composed of those who "love our Lord with love undying",⁶ for those who - with Paul - have "kept the faith". To these the Lord, the righteous judge, will award the crown of righteousness "on that Day" - to "all who have loved his appearing".⁷

The time-reference of love is most clearly seen as that which represents value in the present by way of empirical evidence of the reality of God's redemptive activity in the time-process and His sovereignty over its vicissitudes. Thus, Paul speaks of the peace with God which is obtained through Jesus Christ our Lord, based on justification by faith, and of rejoicing in suffering because

suffering produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.⁸

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1. Galatians 2:20.
2. Ephesians 5:25.
3. II Thessalonians 2:16. Cf. Ephesians 2:4 ff.
4. Romans 8:35.
5. Romans 8:39.
6. Ephesians 6:24.
7. II Timothy 4:7,8. In the next verse, as though in contrast, Paul refers to Demas who had deserted him, "in love with this present world."
8. Romans 5:1-5.

It is the immanence, "by the washing of regeneration and renewal",¹ of the Spirit which introduces this new, creative value into the contemporary NOW. Paul, writing to the Corinthian Church about problems of disunity and strife, tells them to live in agreement and peace, "and the God of love and peace will be with you".² The benedictions show this with clear reference to the Church; e.g., "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all".³

The total significance of the Church in the scope of history, and its NEW life, in the immediacy and urgency of the NOW of experience, is presented in the letter to the Ephesians. Paul describes the ultimate unity and sovereignty which is in Christ,⁴ the historic experience of the believers in the definitive transition from death to life "out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses",⁵ and the socially unifying effect of the new life "in Christ".⁶ He compares the whole of the redemptive history to a structure of fellowship of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.⁷ He emphasizes the pivotal importance of the present in alluding to "the mystery of Christ...not previously made known...as it has now been...by the Spirit",⁸ so that "through the church the manifold wisdom

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1. Titus 3:5.
2. II Corinthians 13:11.
3. II Corinthians 13:14. Also, Romans 15:30.
4. Ephesians 1.
5. Ephesians 2:1-6.
6. Ephesians 2:11-17.
7. Ephesians 2:19-22.
8. Ephesians 3:4,5.

of God might now be made known" in the spiritual realm. This in fact represents the realized "eternal purpose" of God, achieved "in Jesus Christ".¹ "For this reason", Paul earnestly prays that there might be granted to them the Spirit's strength, the indwelling of Christ by faith, in order that by so "being rooted and grounded in love" they might have the ability to grasp

with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²

The very presence of the eternal God provides the ability for achievements of unanticipated scope.³ Here Paul shifts to the new life which the new man is to live precisely because the purpose in all of time is at focus in the Christian Church and because at this point the role of Christians is to measure up to their calling "to lead a life worthy", to be

forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴

There is also a goal still to attain; unity of faith, by the "building up of the body of Christ", until growth leads to maturity.⁵

This destiny is given a standard and an ultimate dimension in "the stature of the fulness of Christ",⁶ the process of growth toward which is dependent on the corporate fellowship as its individual

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1. Ephesians 3:10-12.
2. Ephesians 3:14-19.
3. Ephesians 3:20.
4. Ephesians 4:2,3.
5. Ephesians 4:13.
6. Ephesians 4:13.

members speak the truth in love. At the same time, the growth of the whole draws its life from the

Head- Christ, out of whom the entire body is harmoniously fitted together and closely united by every contributing ligament, with proportionate power for each single part to effect the development of the body for its upbuilding in love.¹

2. The "newness" of life.

The logical consequence, and the intended product of the present experience of the new life in Christ, the life at whose heart is the expression of God's love to men, is necessarily a new quality of living here and now. This is the leavening effect of love in human relations which springs from the Spirit. It is the visible expression of faith and the immediate reflection of hope. For this reason it is also the grounds for a conditional optimism in that it is indispensable to the determination of the historic destiny of the man who would identify himself by faith with the center of the stream of purpose in history, that of reconciliation leading toward an ultimate resolution of all in Christ.²

Paul makes these things apparent in various ways. The correspondence of present ethical imperatives with the historic Event of Christ and His ultimate return is an essential one. He tells the Colossians that

you who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard.³

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1. Ephesians 4:16. (Verkuy1)
2. Ephesians 1:10, also Colossians 1:19,20.
3. Colossians 1:21-23.

He brings this conditional optimism to bear in exhorting Christians to live the ethically NEW life,¹ which is not one based on law:

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations..

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is...²

The NOW of contemporary experience is an ethical connection, with the NOW of history. It is expressed as "newness of life".³ This means putting to death elements of the old nature, "seeing that you have put off the old... and have put on the new nature which is being renewed" in the image of the Creator.⁴ The process includes an exercise of free will in putting off former practices and attitudes, and putting on new ones,

And above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were called in the one body.⁵

Thus the NOW, as a component of history, achieves relational value to the antecedent and succeeding vectors of the time-process as man is bound to man in the self-giving love communicated through Christ, and reenacted in daily living.

The transforming impulse in the present exercise of free will is due in part⁶ to the reality of the immanent life-giving spirit, Christ. It is also due to the consciousness (from this fact) that the

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1. Romans 7:6. "...the new life of the Spirit".
2. Colossians 2:20, 3:1.
3. Romans 6:4.
4. Colossians 3:9,10, also Ephesians 4:21-24..."be renewed...put on the new nature created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness".
5. Colossians 3:14, also Ephesians 5:2..."walk in love, as Christ loved us"..
6. II Corinthians 3:17,18.

NOW determines the future up until the end, for redemption or against it, rather than being subject to some process of emergence to which it is victim.

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.¹

Therefore Paul considers anyone in Christ to be a new creation to whom has been committed the message of reconciliation,² as a worker "together with him".³ Thus also he is able to urge Christians to "redeem the time",⁴ and says - telling them to be what they are.-

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God.⁵

The "incentive of love" in Christ, and the participation in the Spirit rightly lead to being of "the same mind, having the same love" within the fellowship.⁶ Here is the contemporaneous basis for ethical practice. Paul makes this dependent upon the Event of Christ.

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men...he humbled himself and became obedient unto death...on a cross.⁷

God exalted Him for that reason.⁸

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1. II Corinthians 5:14,15.
2. II Corinthians 5:16-20.
3. II Corinthians 6:1.
4. Ephesians 5:16, Colossians 4:5.
5. Romans 12:2.
6. Philippians 2:1,2.
7. Philippians 2:5-8.
8. Philippians 2:10.

The present experience of the Christian is to be and to do,
to feel

not that I have already obtained... but I press on to make it my own... forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on... only let us hold true to what we have attained.¹

The expression of the newness of life is characteristically present, as is implicit in the foregoing, and as is explicit in all of Paul's exhortation relating to ethical matters, which material bulks large in his writings.² When he sums up the decalogue by the second half of the 'great commandment', omitting the first half entirely, and says "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law",³ it is clear that to Paul this is the central expression of a man justified from sin by faith.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.⁴

Christian freedom is a freedom from sin's enslavement to free will, to which believers are "called". There is the obligation, however, not to deny the very principle of freedom by using it as an "opportunity for the flesh"; rather, there is the present imperative that believers should "through love be servants of one another".⁵ To do this, one must "walk by the Spirit".⁶ Paul freely put himself in bondage to all men, becoming "all things to all men", that I might by all means save some".⁷

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1. Philippians 3:12-16.
2. In the book of Romans, for instance, the historico-theological first part of the letter provides an historical basis for the 12-16 chapters, which consists of ethical teaching in the imperative mood dominantly.
3. Romans 13:10.
4. Galatians 5:6.
5. Galatians 5:1, 13-15. Here again he summarizes the law in terms of the neighbor.
6. Galatians 5:16.
7. I Corinthians 10:19-23.

Here the question of consistency, raised before with respect to God and his purpose in history, both in the past and in the future, which is answered by faith and a living hope respectively, is addressed to the believer as to his free practice of the NEW life which is his. Paul's affirmation is, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit"¹ and "walk in love, as Christ loved us".²

3. The Sacraments.

The life of the Church bears witness in the sacraments to the significance of the time-process as a single moral continuum, shown to be such by the Event of Christ, which is ultimately under the sovereignty of God.

The Jesus of history, the Christ of experience and the Lord who is to come are not three, but one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.³

These sacraments, if rightly practiced, also express the present importance of the past redemptive history and the future culmination of it with reference to the eternally decisive NOW at the midpoint of history. The baptism of the old Israel under the divinely appointed leadership of Moses did not prevent God from destroying them in the wilderness due to their disobedience.⁴ Our baptism is into Jesus Christ, and is a baptism into His death and resurrection

so that [*iva*] as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.⁵

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1. Galatians 5:25.
2. Ephesians 5:2.
3. Marsh, op. cit., p. 137.
4. I Corinthians 10:1-5.
5. Romans 6:4.

A present 'ethical resurrection' is the chief intent of this baptism since the very nature of the new life consists in being "dead to sin" and "alive to God in Christ". Inseparable from this is the certainty of a future physical resurrection,¹ based on the unique "once-for-all" death and resurrection² at the pinnacle of history. From the NOW of the experience of baptism, the new member of the Body of Christ has participated in the past and, by the Spirit, in the "redemptive occurrence of the present and the future".³ Therefore Christians are to be actively engaged "as men who have been brought from death to life", in the practice of righteousness,⁴ so as to "bear fruit for God...in the new life of the Spirit".⁵

The baptism, in its proper significance, marks an open identification with the living Lord, and is the turning point in the individual history of the member who has been reconciled to God "in Christ". The Lord's Supper is the participation by all the members, Qua Body, in the sovereignty of God in His-Story; that is, in His redemptive integrating purpose which is operative throughout the time-process but presently and locally expressed in the social organism whose life is "eternal", whose Head is Christ.

Paul attaches great significance to the words of Jesus in the institution of the Supper, Both the partaking of the bread, and the partaking of the cup are to be done "in remembrance of me".⁶ The

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1. Romans 6:5-11.
2. Romans 6:10.
3. Cullman, op. cit., p. 221.
4. Romans 6:12-14.
5. Romans 7:4,6.
6. I Corinthians 12:24,25.

bread is represented as the body of Jesus "broken for you". The cup is "the new covenant" in His blood. The memory of the Event of the cross and resurrection, anticipated in this last supper of the Lord Jesus and the disciples, is not sufficient by itself. Faith does not stand alone; its individualistic tendency is balanced in the communion of the Church particularly as expressed in the Lord's Supper which commemorates the expression of love in Christ "who loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragment offering and sacrifice to God".¹ His purpose in that expression of love was to create a church in which "life is constantly transformed because it is always under the divine word"² so that she might "be holy and without blemish"³ when finally presented before Him. Because of this, the Lord's Supper is an affirmation of the ethical NEWness of life introduced "in Christ". The historical consciousness explicit in this act is evident in Paul's summary of its significance

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.⁴

That is why there must be no derogation of the historic affirmation intrinsic to the Lord's Supper by making it into an individualistic and gastronomic gathering.⁵ Such particularism profanes "the body and blood of the Lord", prevents the discernment of the integrality of the Body in its present expression and of the unity of faith and hope which she entertains.⁶

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1. Ephesians 5:2.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr, Faith and History, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1949, p. 242.
3. Ephesians 5:2.
4. I Corinthians 11:26.
5. I Corinthians 11:20-22.
6. I Corinthians 11:29,33,34.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.¹

In the Lord's Supper, the Church "places itself ever anew in the redemptive history of past, present, and future",² and proclaims history's significance and value "in Christ". This enables the members to re-view, in perspective, the totality of the redemptive experience of which they are participants, and to motivate them to express eternal life at its immediate and future-determining locus, the present.

D. Summary and Conclusion

Paul would not maintain that we are living in the aftermath of the climax of history. He would rather find the present, which is post-death and post-resurrection of Christ to be the point at which the redemptive history is in focus, full of value and of opportunity.³ The capacity to see this derives by faith from the decisive NOW of all time when the Event of the Cross and Resurrection took place, establishing B.C. and A.D. in sharpest contrast as ways of grasping the meaning and connection of past and future. The forward-moving NOW of experience is measured directly from and is understood by this midpoint in history, achieving its ultimate value only in the presence of the "life-giving" spirit!.

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1. Ephesians 4:4-7.
2. Cullman, op. cit., p. 221.
3. Thus Paul differs from Marsh, op. cit., p. 137, 138, who leans toward centering all past, contemporary present, and future, upon the "one great fulfillment at Calvary and through the tomb."

NEWness of life, thus, is a present fact stemming from the resurrection of Christ. As it is manifested by the corporate Body of Christ in "faith working through love", it is the expression of free will in accord with the purpose in history of reconciliation. It is optimistic in that the renewing of the Spirit is both the fulfillment of past redemptive history, and the guarantee of future culmination of the reconciliation. The One who acted in history at its crux is NOW the living Head of the communion of the saints.

INTERPRETATION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

INTERPRETATION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

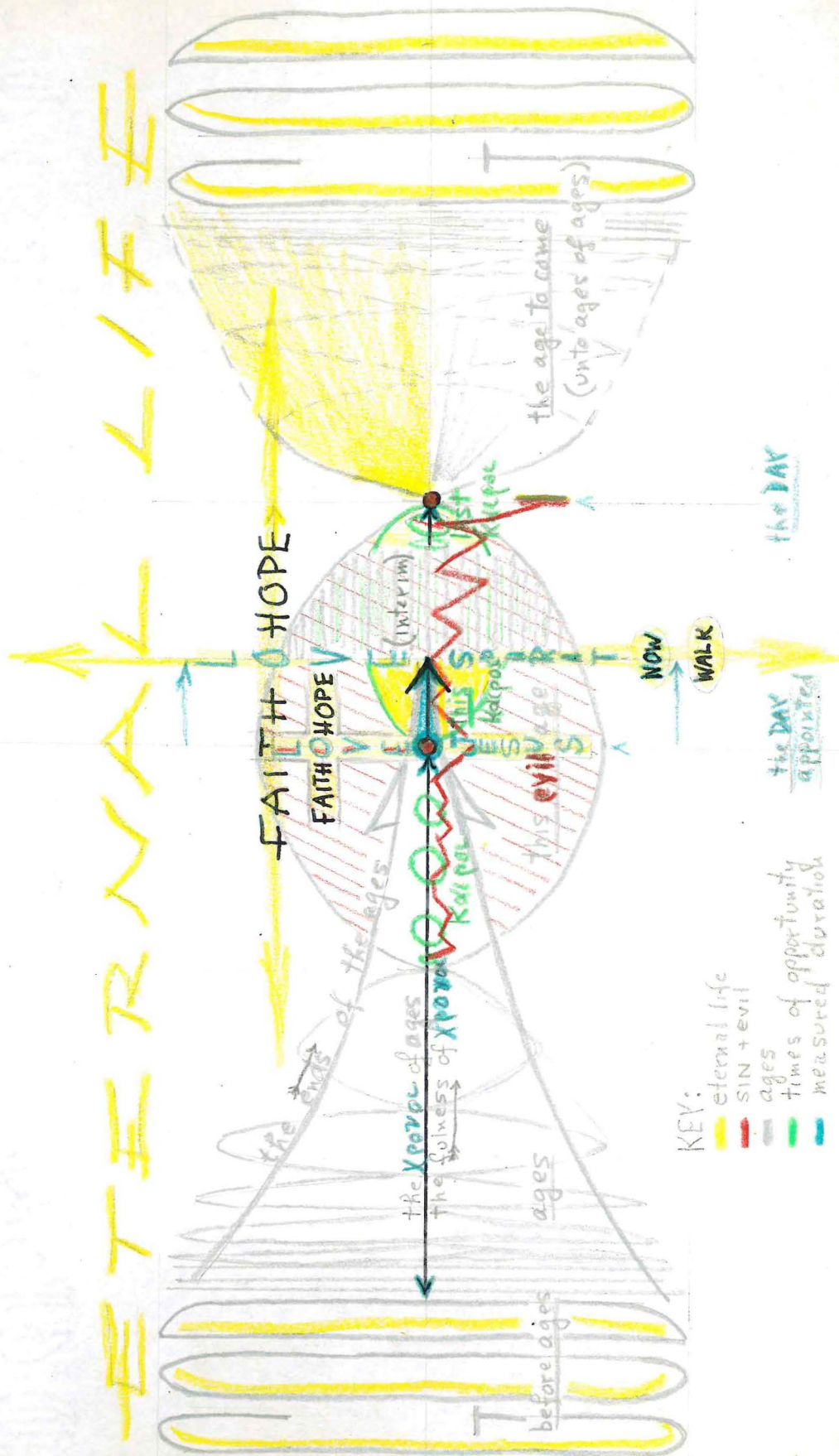
Paul was vitally concerned with history as an interpreter of it from the unique Event of the resurrection.

A. Interpretation

Whereas for Toynbee the basic pattern in history is that of challenge - response,¹ man's role thus being defined, Paul's view could be described as promise - fulfillment, a description of God's sovereign role in history. To Paul, the compromising factor inhibiting the fulfillment is human Sin, not failure to meet the challenge nor ignorance. For Paul, God's purpose in history is consistent, That is disclosed to man by the supra-national faith-principle by which it is to be grasped, and by which God thereby is to be known. This rests on the Hebrew regard for history as a series of theological acts, rather than a chronological continuum.² The experience of Abraham in its valid historical interpretation is applicable to men in relation to Jesus Christ by way of disclosing beneficial purpose in history. The history of Israel is that of redemption from Egypt to the promised land. The history of man is that of redemption from sin to fulness of life. Faith in God as sovereign in historic fulfillment of His purpose is a

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1. Arnold J. Toynbee, Pieter Geyl, and Pitrim A. Sorokin, The Pattern of the Past: Can We Determine It?, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949, p. 9.
2. Marsh, op. cit., p. 28



FOR FROM (EK) HIM

AND THROUGH (S.A.) HIM

AND UNTO (EIS) HIM

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- Rom 11:36

characteristic of the remnant. A convergence of the historic antitheses (God's sovereignty and yet the presence of sin) and the unfulfilled purpose of promise (that there would come a blessing to the nations through Abraham) takes place in history up to the redemptive and revelatory climax in Christ. Here the problem of Sin is resolved and the promise is fulfilled at a point in time by a man who was murdered and raised from the dead by the Spirit of the living God. In this pattern of promise - fulfillment is the only way by which coherence of meaning¹ can be found in history inclusive of its past and future.

The alternative to tacit or real despair in the face of the presence of sin and suffering in the world, is hope. Recent history has witnessed the funeral to the false hope that man and all things were inevitably progressing upward toward heaven on earth in the actuality of the hell on earth unleashed by the mind of man in injustice and in war. Paul bases his understanding of the future on a living hope, that of ultimate "eternal life". He entertains hope because to him there is an ultimacy in the movements of history such as to vindicate the claims which the atonement and reconciliation in Christ make. These claims are now held by faith. Hope is the expression of this faith with respect to human destiny. Hence Paul's concern is not upon the vicissitudes which seem to defy the literality of the achieved fulfillment of (God's) purpose in history but rather with the transit through these contingencies to an ultimate vindication on the part of

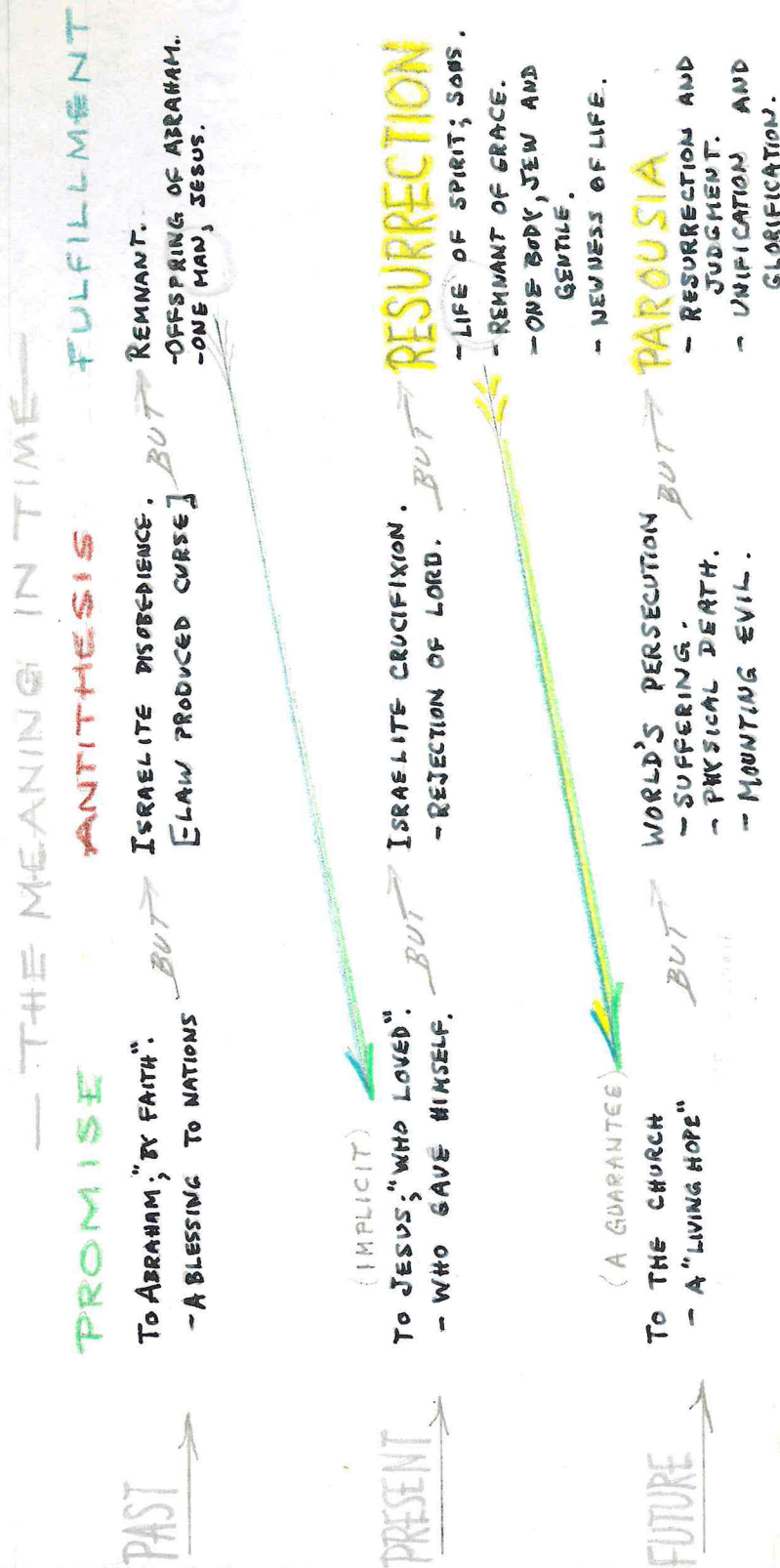
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1. Marsh, op. cit., p. 142.

those who have faith. It is the hostility to the Gospel in fact which seems to Paul to presage its ultimate vindication. It will be an historically terminal vindication and may be anticipated with confident hope because Jesus, the object of faith as being Lord, will be revealed openly as such. Then the full dimensions of the Eternal will be experienced since man will be completely reconciled to HIM, and the time-vector will appear as merely one durative element in Him who "fills the universe".

Paul sees the time-process - from the breadth of the ages, down to the immediacy of this day - only by reference to God's purpose to redeem and to reconcile all things to Himself. There is no other purpose which exists, unless God be considered as subject to the time-process, rather than sovereign over it, and the universe pluralistic. This is not Paul. The cruciality of the time-process is evident not in the past theological events comprising the *καιρος* or times of opportunity. These stand in a succession of anticipatory hope, from one to the next, looking to the ultimate future and depending upon it for vindication. Nevertheless the time-process is marked by a series of unrepeatable events, where God acted.

The cruciality of the time-process is evident in broad significance when the entire fact of duration has come to its fulfillment, for this is inclusive of the *καιρος* and of the whole time-process, "sacred" and "secular" history taken together; their significance is made apparent only in the reality of an integrating center of ultimate meaning. This is seen in the person of Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. Toward him the God of the ages has directed the



This stands in contradistinction to Hegel's Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis wherein the antithesis actually qualifies the Thesis itself and modifies it in the Synthesis. History does not follow the zig-zag pattern set up by that hypothesis according to Paul's Biblical view. Rather, both in the micro-cosm of personal experience and the macro-cosm of human history, its path is linear because God's Promise is fulfilled through and in spite of the antithesis of human sin. This fulfillment in turn carries in itself NEW promise whose reliability is based on the fact of fulfillment in the past and in present experience.

preparation fulfilled in him, for God is not of the process but before it and determining it.

The center of meaning has an historical cruciality as the criterion for a before-after whose interpretive value becomes evident if the words death-life were substituted for before-after respectively and if death were seen in a causal connection with sin, and life in a causal connection with Spirit of God. It is therefore the hinge on which history turns. There is a vital sense in which each successive NOW point in time has that same potential value because "now is the day of salvation". The absolute value of the contemporary NOW depends entirely on the "life-giving spirit" Who teaches men to love one another, making possible "newness of life". To become a Christian is to identify one's own history with that of Christ Jesus and thereby to become a member of the Body of Christ, regnant with resurrection power, able to determine the future by a will free to act in accord with the ultimate purpose of history. The sure goal of history will simply be the culmination of the reconciliation accomplished at the cross and in the resurrection. Of this the Christian is sure because of the immediate ethical love which the Spirit enables him as a "new creature" to express in present experience. The relational value of the present with past and future is inherent therefore in the social bond of love, continuously being expressed.

In the communion of the Church, the totality of God's sovereignty over sin in the time-process is affirmed in the unity of Christ's Body. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper as it is practiced in contemporary history is a present affirmation of faith and hope

both in the demonstration of love by the Father who sent His Son in the historic Event of redemption, and in the "life-giving spirit" of the living Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a proclamation of the final reconciliation of all things under the Lordship of Christ including the moral dichotomies of history.

B. Summary

That Paul had a definite time-consciousness is indisputable, and that this was essential for his philosophy of history is now clear. What has seemed less obvious is the basic orientation with which he viewed the component parts of this process. Some recent Christian thinkers, such as Bultmann, have been led to an extreme apocalypticism while others, such as Marsh and Bowman, have been in varying degree either backward looking or this-worldly. Fundamentalism has tended to be either apocalyptic or antiquarian. It is not necessary to appeal to what Toynbee calls "futurism", or apocalyptic, with Bultmann and others, nor a this-worldly 'realistic' belittlement of the end-times in order to cope with the very present reality of sin, suffering, and death. Neither is there room for so static of view of the time-process as would have the future being fulfilled at the Cross as well as the past; this diminishes considerably, by a form of "archaism", that which the Cross itself would establish, namely the newness of life in contemporary experience and the urgency of this ever-present 'hour of decision'. The regenerating Spirit is NOW at work.

This study of Paul's view has disclosed a triune grasp of

of the time process. Memory, anticipation, and creative living are expressed as Faith, Hope, and Love. Faith is the lesson which Paul draws from and applies to the redemptive work of God in the past. Hope is the means for understanding the future on the grounds of the key historic event of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.¹ Love is the immediate expression in life of the imparted life "in Christ", a social bond of ethical growth; it establishes ultimate value in the present. These attitudes or responses are with reference to the Sovereignty of God in and over the time-process.

C. Conclusion

To Paul, each element of the time-process is integrally related to the other two. It is illuminating at this point to note the way in which Paul groups faith, hope, and love together. An example is this:

We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.²

Yet for Paul, the present in its full value, as has been demonstrated, is of greater relative importance than faith - oriented to the past, or hope - oriented to the future:

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.³

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1. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 4, makes emphatic this point.
2. I Thessalonians 1:2. The other similar reference, I Thessalonians 5:6.
3. I Corinthians 13:13. Faith and love are specified without direct reference to hope in the following: I Timothy 1:14, 2:15, 6:11, II Timothy 1:13, 2:22, 3:10, Titus 2:2, Philemon 5. I Thessalonians 3:6, Ephesians 6:23, Galatians 5:6.

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