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THE PAULICIAN MOVEMENT
AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE PRINCIPLE
OF
PURITANISM

By

BERNARD ASSADOUR KOUKOUZIAN

B. A., American University of Beirut
Dip. T., Near East School of Theology

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THE PAULICIAN MOVEMENT
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CHAPTER I
I N T R O D U C T I O N

A. The Subject

In the history of the Christian Church periodically certain groups have revolted against the organized church. The reason for the revolts has usually been the demand for reforms on the ground that the church has become formal, superstitious, lacking in spiritual freedom and loose in discipline. The established church has seen these groups as enemies and has wanted to suppress them by every means.

Although these sects have been suppressed for a time, the church has witnessed their recurrence all through its history.

This study will analyze a particular movement which began in Asia Minor in the eighth century. This movement known as the Paulicians succeeded in establishing many churches in the following four centuries. In opposition the Armenian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church persecuted, exiled and massacred them. They were denounced as heretics and children of Satan. But in spite of all these efforts they could not destroy them for centuries. The aim of this study will be to establish the fact that the Paulician Movement in its essence was an expression of

the principle of puritanism.

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

In the early church at the end of the second century a Phrygian presbyter by the name of Montanus protested against the established church on the ground that the church was morally loose in discipline. Montanus was particularly against the re-admission of those who had denied Christianity during persecution and now wanted to come back into the fold of the church. The most famous follower of Montanus was Tertullian of Carthage (160-225).

Cowan cites the following about him:

His Puritanism appears in his denunciation of flight from persecution, and his opposition to the restoration of the lapsed; in his condemnation of second marriage, and commendation of excessive fasting; in his warnings against female adornment, and depreciation of military service as incompatible with Christian fidelity.¹

In the third century Hippolytus, a bishop or presbyter in the vicinity of Rome, who was not a Montanist, protested against the loose discipline of the Roman bishops. This protest led to the Novatian schism in 251. Cowan says the following about these sects:

The Puritan principles of the Montanists and Novatianists have been frequently reproduced, in association sometimes with heresy, oftener with extreme orthodoxy; and they have exerted a onesided, yet, on the whole, salutary influence, as a needful counteractive to the stronger tendency towards undue laxity of discipline and life.²

In the centuries that followed, many similar movements

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1. Henry Cowan: Landmarks of Church History, p. 30.
2. Cowan, op. cit., p. 30.

were started and spread for a time and then the established church was able to suppress them, as the Donatists of the fourth century and in the Middle Ages. According to Warren, "Indeed one document speaks of no less than seventy-two. The largest of these were the Albigenses."¹ Wherever the conditions have favored these puritanic movements they have spread rapidly among the masses of the people.

Therefore an analysis of these so called heretical movements will show that many of them were revolts against the church.

A statement by McKee shows this clearly:

There have been times when the church for various reasons has lost its spiritual freedom and has become the servant of form, or dogma, or of rule of life. From the midst of such situation there has often come a reaction. Sometimes such a counter movement from a doctrinal standpoint has not been founded upon what the church holds to be orthodox faith, but from a practical and moral point of view they have been essentially puritan.²

2. The Subject Justified

The historian Gibbon has called the Paulician movement a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century:

"...their exile has scattered over the West the seeds of reformation."³

The cause of the Paulician revolt was basically religious. They wanted a purer and simpler way of worshipping God. This study

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1. Paul Christopher Warren: The Principle of Puritanism and The Significance of its Recurring Manifestations (A Thesis) p. 4.
2. Dean Greer McKee: A Study of the Albigenses in the Light of the Principle of Puritanism (A Thesis) p. 2.
3. Edward Gibbon: The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. VII, p. 47.

will endeavor to show that where there is corruption, formality and other abuses within the church a demand for reformation will ultimately develop. This was the basic cause for the Evangelical reformation which took place in the Orthodox Church in 1846. However, the Orthodox Church has held that the Armenian Evangelical Church was a result of the work of foreign missionaries. It is a fact that the missions brought the spark for the movement, yet the demand for reform was there long before the nineteenth century.

It is also interesting to note that the Armenian Communist writers have regarded the Paulician movement a class struggle. The historian Melik Pashgian says: "This movement was in its essence a class struggle against the ruling lords and the church."¹ We shall try to show that it was in its essence religious.

This analysis will have apologetic value also to the Armenian Evangelical Movement, not because Paulicians were Evangelicals but, like them, the Paulicians were yearning for a simple faith.

3. The Subject Delimited

The purpose of this analysis is not to study the spirit of Puritanism, nor give the analytical history of the origin and development of the Paulician sect. The history of the Paulicians will be developed only as far as it will help towards an under-

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1. Melik Pashgian: Paulician Movement in Armenia, p. 234.

standing of their desire for reform.

For this study Puritanism will mean as Warren has defined it:

Puritanism we hold to be that principle, native to the soul of man, which rises in protest against whatever causes spiritual bondage, and seeks out a way by which relationship with God may be attained and maintained. It finds expression whenever the forms of religion in any age thwart the free exercise of the souls outreach toward God and make difficult the realization of communion with Him.¹

So the Paulician Movement will be studied as a protest against the organized church.

B. The Method of Procedure

First of all there will be presented a study of three similar movements prior to the Paulicians. The similarities and differences will be pointed out as well as any influences.

Secondly, the history of the Paulicians will be studied to determine their motive in starting a new movement. Their history will be traced to the time when the remnant joined the Armenian Evangelical movement and by this fact showing how they were yearning for a puritanic way of life and worship.

Thirdly, their tenets and way of life will be considered to make clear how their belief was based on the New Testament as well as its reactionary nature.

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1. Warren, op. cit., p. 7.

C. Sources and Materials

In order to understand the authenticity of this analysis it is necessary to know what sources are available for such a study.

It is an unfortunate fact that any movement which had to face the opposition of the Greek Orthodox church or Roman Catholicism prior to and during the Middle Ages has undergone extreme opposition. This opposition has endeavored to liquidate these movements and their writings. It is natural that the Paulicians had their own literature but nearly all their writings were destroyed by the orthodox churches as being dangerous.

The second fact is that the political situation in those days was such that the Moslems destroyed the writings of the Paulicians and other sects along with the literature of the regular churches.

1. Direct Paulician Sources

There is one book which has been accepted as coming directly from the Paulicians. It is their book of tenets, The Key of Truth, translated into English by Conybeare in 1898. However, some historians doubt that this book is from a Paulician source. Conybeare on the other hand is certain that it is and makes the following statement:

This detailed agreement of the Key of Truth, on one hand with the Armenian writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and on the other hand with the Greek notices of an earlier date, is proof enough that in it we have recovered an early,

and authoritative exposition of Paulician tenets.¹

The story of the discovery of this book will be referred to within the thesis.

2. Writings of the Adversaries and Others

Most of the literature about the Paulicians comes from the adversaries of the sect who were very biased in their writings. The sources are mostly in Greek and in Armenian.

The three best known Greek sources are as follows: one by Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, published in volumes ci-civ Opera Omnia.²

The second important work dealing with the Paulicians is found in the works of Peter of Sicily: Historia Manichaeotum Seu Paulicianorum. It is noted in this book that Peter of Sicily in 868-869 was sent as an ambassador by Emperor Basil I and went to Tephrik the stronghold of the Paulicians. He wrote this book in 872.³

The third work is by Genesisius in the history Regna. In this work he gives information about the Paulicians and their wars with the Byzantine Empire.⁴

In the Armenian sources the well known works are the tract of John of Otzun who lived during the seventh and eighth

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1. Fred C. Gonybeare, op. cit., pp. 192.
2. Steven Runciman: The Medieval Manichee, p. 192.
3. Pashgian, op. cit., p. 19.
4. Runciman, op. cit., p. 191.

centuries. The tract refers to the Paulicians. Portions of it are found in the appendix of the Key of Truth by Conybeare.¹

The letter of Nerses Shnorhalli of the twelfth century refers to the Paulicians.²

Then there are two other letters, one by Gregory of Narek, a tenth century Armenian monk,³ and a second by Gregory Magistros,⁴ who was later made Duke of Mesopotamia and who lived in the eleventh century.

Aristarces of Lastivert⁵ who has written a history book devotes two chapters to the Thondraki sect. Aristarces was a monk who lived in the eleventh century.

Many primary and secondary sources will be listed in the Bibliography and in the Appendix of the thesis.

With the information available, it is possible to substantiate the thesis that the Paulician movement was an expression of the principle of Puritanism.

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., pp. 152-154.
2. Ibid., p. 192.
3. Ibid., pp. 125-130.
4. Ibid., pp. 141-151.
5. Ibid., pp. 131-140.

CHAPTER II

MOVEMENTS OF A SIMILAR CHARACTER

PRIOR TO THE PAULICIANS

A. INTRODUCTION

In the first and second centuries and immediately following, the Christian Church witnessed the rise and fall of many sects. There were three movements, the Montanists, the Manicheans, and the Messalians, which are thought to have been in one way or another responsible for the Paulician Movement coming into being.

The first movement which will be considered is the Montanist sect. Although this sect was puritanic in essence, upon inquiry it will be shown that it was not the cause of the Paulician Movement.

Secondly, the Manicheans will be studied. Because the Paulicians have been accused by the Orthodox Church of being an offshoot of the Manicheans, it will be shown that this was not so.

Thirdly, the Messalians will be studied because the Paulicians have been also called Messalians. It will be made clear that Messalians could not have been identical or even related to the Paulicians in a direct way.

So after giving this information it will be possible to evaluate what is unique in the Paulician Movement and what

is due to the influences of the above-mentioned sects.

B. Montanism

A convert to Christianity from the pagan priesthood by the name of Epiphnius Montanus in 156 A.D. proclaimed himself to be a prophet in Phrygia. Also under him two prophetesses appeared, Priscilla and Maximilla.

Montanus emphasized the following in his teachings: prophecy and the second coming of Jesus Christ. This coming was expected to take place in a heavenly Jerusalem located in Phrygia. N. Bonwetsch says about this movement

The entire purpose, in fact, of the new prophecy was preparation for the approaching end, and expectation of this great event should determine the entire life of the Christian.¹

It is not surprising that Montanists could not remain within the fold of the established church for a long time. As their influence started to increase and the movement spread to Thrace and other parts of the Byzantian Empire, the church synods and leaders started to oppose them. Ultimately they were separated from the church along with their leader Montanus.

Montanism was condemned in Rome but it found a fertile ground in North Africa where its most distinguished adherent was Tertullian. Tertullian emphasized the advent of Christ. For

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1. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol. VII, p. 486.

that reason he believed that the church had to be truly prepared by establishing a rigid discipline, forcing its members away from the natural side of human life. Science, art, and gay life were considered worldly. He argued that these had been taken from paganism and they should not exist in the church. Other emphases of Tertullian were the glory of martyrdom, fasting and the desirability of abstaining from marriage. A second marriage was rejected. For him a definite membership comprised the church, so it was argued that the church is as holy as its members. The substance of the church was the Holy Spirit and not the episcopacy.

Following the death of Montanus he was succeeded by the prophetess Maximilla. They thought that the Holy Ghost inspired men and women alike. Consequently, no distinction was to be made between the sexes.

One of the most peculiar characteristics of this movement was the way the prophets identified themselves with God and Christ. Montanus called himself Christ. Runciman gives a quotation from him as follows:

'I am not an angel nor a messenger. I am the Lord God, the Almighty present to you in a man's form,' said Montanus. Or again 'I am the Father, the Son and the Paraclete.'¹

Such utterances were not shocking to the followers of Montanus. Runciman says that "Adaptionists were generally led to

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1. Runciman, op. cit., p. 18. Quoted from Epiphanius Adversus Haereses, II, I, sivi (ed. Oehler, p. 30).

the same conclusion, while Marcion and even Clement of Alexandria identified the perfect Christian with God".¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that we find the Paulicians accused of heretical utterances similar to those of the Montanists. The Paulician leader Sergius believed that he was the Paraclete. In contrast, however, to the Montanists the Paulicians excluded women from the prophetic role. This was due to the fact that the Paulicians had a great respect for St. Paul and his writings.

Sergius, a Paulician leader, in one of his letters writes:

For we being persuaded in our hearts, have written unto you, that I am the proper and the good shepherd and the leader of the body of Christ, and the light of the house of God, and I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. For even if I am away from you in body, yet I am with you in spirit.²

Sergius has written a letter to Leo, the Montanist, in which he exhorts Leo to receive the Paulician shepherds and leaders, even as he has received the apostles of the four prophets. So Sergius acknowledges the Montanists to be orthodox in their faith.³

It could be concluded that the Montanists had friendly relations with the Paulicians. Regarding this Conybeare says,

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1. Runciman, op. cit., p. 19. From Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereticos* I, 13, M.P.G. vol. VII, coll. 577 ff.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. lll.
3. Ibid.

"as there was a tendency for persecuted sects to coalesce against their persecutors, it is not unlikely that the remnants of the Montanist Church were absorbed into...Paulicians."¹

They surely were agreed in one major respect, namely, in their condemnation of the established church for its moral laxity, superstition, and additions untrue to Christianity. Runciman cites the following about the Montanists, "Montanus and his fellow-prophetesses were religious reactionaries, desiring to go back to the most primitive Christianity they could imagine."²

C. Manichaeism

It is believed that the Paulicians were either an offshoot of the Manichaeans or they were direct descendants of the Manichaeans. This will not be an exhaustive study of the Manichaeans.³

Mani, the founder of the movement, was born in 215 or 216 A.D. He was the son of a rich Persian nobleman who was a Zoroastrian. After he came to Babylonia he left the Zoroastrian

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. clxxxv.
2. Runciman, op. cit., p. 18.
3. For more detailed study refer to: Harnack: History of Dogma, Vol. III, pp. 316-336; Albert Henry Newman: Introductory Essay in the Manichaean Heresy, Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church first series, Vol. VIII, pp. 3-39; Encyclopedia Britannica, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

religion and associated himself with the Mughtasila sect.¹ So Mani was influenced by his father's religious background. When Mani was twelve years old he had a revelation of some kind telling him to go and preach. At the age of twenty he had another revelation from God which made him obey God and proclaim what had been revealed to him.

In his early ministry a few converts were won. Later he became a friend of the Persian King Shapur I. But this friendship did not last long. The opposition of the Magian priests of the Zoroastrian religion was so influential that the king was obliged to banish Mani from Persia. During his exile Mani visited India, China, and other oriental countries. After twenty years in exile Mani returned to Persia and once more endeavored to become the friend of the king. Instead of receiving him, King Bahram I condemned him, and he was hanged over the city gate in 277.

With the death of the founder his work did not stop but it continued to move into other countries. In Persia his disciples were persecuted and the preaching of Manichaeism was forbidden. Nevertheless, there were secret followers of Mani.

Mani's philosophy was dualistic and eclectic. In essence he taught that there were two opposing principles, both of which were non-contingent and eternal. For Mani, "The original

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1. A religious sect in Mesopotamia.

light was self-existent and was called 'the first (or original) excellence,' i.e., the source of the derived 'excellences' or eons,..."¹ These spiritual existences were formed of five elements. The five bodily elements were mildness, knowledge, understanding, secrecy and discernment; the five spiritual elements were love, faith, fidelity, generosity and wisdom.²

Satan came forth out of the eternal elements of darkness. He was pictured as having the head of a lion, the body of a dragon, the wings of a bird, the tail of a fish, and four feet. He moved in darkness and while moving he saw a gleam of light and got ready to attack it. The king of light put forward the "original Man" to fight the attack. In the outcome man was defeated, bound, and surrounded by the element of darkness. The king of light, with the help of other gods, rescued the original man and the power of darkness escaped.

The power of Satan and the princes of darkness continued in the lower realm of the world in spite of the fact that they were defeated by the God of light.

The origin of man was in the following way according to Mani. In order to keep power over the light which had been captured, the chief "archon" or ruler allied himself in marriage

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1. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Knowledge, Vol. VII, p. 155.
2. Ibid., p. 156.

with five evil feminine powers and begot Adam, the first man. Adam combined the nature of light and of darkness. His body belonged to the lower class, whereas in his soul he carried the element of light but in him the power of light was greater than darkness. As a result these two were at war within him. From the marriage of the ruler, Eve came forth, in whom the evil was greater than the light.

Adam and Eve being aware of this condition begged help from the gods, so Jesus came to instruct them. He taught Adam how to live in light and be released from darkness, and warned Adam not to have fellowship with Eve who would lead him into the material world.

At the end of the world all material things will be burned for 1,468 years.¹

There were two classes of Manichaeans, the "Adept" and the "hearer." The one who conquers his lust becomes an "adept" who is the real member, but the one who cannot remains a "hearer." The true Manichaean suppresses lust of every kind. He is forbidden heaping of riches, eating of flesh, drinking wine, witchcraft, hypocrisy and use of handicraft which exhibits the injurious effect of fire and water. The confession of every member contained four articles, which were the follows: Faith in God, in His light, in His might, and in His wisdom.

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1. Ibid., p. 156.

Mani's attitude to the Bible was very queer. He did not accept the disciples of Jesus as the author of the four Gospels, rather he developed the theory that the Jews were the author of them. Therefore, he wrote a new Gospel.

The Old Testament was treated severely. For him the God of the Old Testament was the prince of darkness and the prophets were liars and servants of the Devil.¹

In Augustine's time the Manichaeon church was in a flourishing state in North Africa with many followers and leaders. Augustine also became one of their adherents for a time but later, seeing their error, left them.

In Italy they gained a foothold, but were so persecuted by civil and ecclesiastical authorities that they could not flourish.²

Conybeare states the following about the relation of the Paulicians and the Manichaeans: "Mani was anathematized by the Paulician church along with the heretics of old time."³

St. Augustine makes the following statement about the Manichaeans:

In fact no Christian idea has been introduced into the system without being completely perverted. If Christian language is used it is utterly emptied of its meaning. If Christian practices are introduced, a completely different motive lies at the basis.⁴

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1. Ibid., p. 158.
2. Ibid.
3. Conybeare, op. cit., p. cxxxi.
4. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV., p. 24.

It is sufficient to note that the Paulicians were a Christian movement and to a certain extent they based their doctrine on the New Testament. However, the similarities come in their organization of membership. Both of them divided the members into two groups, but here also the Paulician "elect one" differed from the Manichean elect or "adept." Conybeare makes the following statement about the Manichaeans:

The Manichaeian elect one was an ascetic of an extreme and a Hindoo type, celibate, and living only on the herbs, which the auditores, must gather for him lest he should violate his holiness by taking the life even of a vegetable.¹

On the other hand the Paulician elect got married and worked, like St. Paul, to provide his living.

Faber is convinced that,

this single circumstance alone (their possession of the New Testament) independently of all other evidence, is amply sufficient to demonstrate the impossibility of their pretended Manichaeism.²

Therefore, the Paulicians could not be considered as Manichaeans.

D. The Messalians

This sect is known also as the Euchites, so they will be discussed under one topic. This Christian sect originated in Syrian Mesopotamia from the second half of the fourth century.

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. cxxxii.
2. McKee, op. cit., p. 12. Quoted from Faber, G.S., pp. 55-56.

It is unfortunate that the information about them is through their adversaries. Their literature was considered dangerous, therefore, it was destroyed by the established church.

The Patriarch of Antioch, Flavion, persecuted and condemned them. Due to this persecution they started to move towards Asia Minor, taking their teaching with them. Their teaching was that every man inherits an evil spirit from his birth and lives under the power of evil. The Church and the means of grace cannot deliver man from the power of evil. For this reason a man needs continual prayer.¹ They considered that Baptism was good for the forgiveness of past sins. "Baptism" said they

may, like shears, clip away, indeed, the earlier sins (procure forgiveness for past transgressions); but the root of the evil still remains behind, from which new sins, therefore, will continually spring up...²

They said that this sin could be conquered only by inward prayer.

A leader whose name is worthy to be mentioned is Sappa, who sold all his property and gave it to the poor in order that he might be considered perfect. He was such a fanatic that he castrated himself.

Messalians liked to go into ecstasy and for that reason were called Enthusiasts. They boasted of their ecstasies.³

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1. Augustus Neander: General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol. II, p. 276.
2. Neander, op. cit., p. 278.
3. Ibid., p. 277.

The Messalians argued that a man who has been united to God needs no longer ascetic practices nor instructions but assumes the divine nature. He does not even need to take communion for he can sin no more. As a result they became proud, looking with contempt on other Christians. At the end, however, they became morally loose. Neander says, "Thus too, the Euchites compared the spiritual marriage of the soul to its heavenly bridegroom in grossly sensual manner, with an earthly union."¹ The Messalians also, according to Neanders, "...were for living by alms and were the first mendicant friars."²

The Messalians were condemned by the council at Ephesus in 431. They spread into Armenia during the fifth century. In Armenia they had families and kept women servants. After the council of Shabivan in 431, where they were condemned, they were persecuted mercilessly.

The Messalians are thought by some to be the source of the Paulicians.³ On the other hand, Conybeare says the following about the relation of the Paulicians and the Messalians:

John the Philosopher who became Catholicos of Armenia in 719, uses the name Paulicians...he speaks of them as 'the dregs of the Messalianism of Paulicianism.' We need not suppose that they had anything in common with the Messalians or Euchites of a previous age. All that we know of the latter, who are rightly described by Neanders as the first mendicant friars, contradicts not only the self-portraiture of the Armenian Paulicians in the Key,

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1. Ibid., p. 279.
2. Ibid., p. 277.
3. Cf. Walter Adeney: Greek and Eastern Churches, p. 224.

but in an equal degree conflicts with all we know of them from the Greek sources. The Armenian word mtslneuthiun, which I render Messalianism, was a mere term of abuse in eighth century, and as such is again hurled by Gregory of Narek and Gregory Magistros.¹

So it could be concluded that the Paulicians may have had one thing in common with Messalians -- both were reactions against the established church.

E. Summary and Conclusion

It was pointed out that the Paulician Movement has been considered an offshoot of previous heresies. Therefore, three sects among the many prior movements similar in character were considered because of their connection with the Paulician Movement.

After analyzing the history of the Montanists it was observed that although the Paulicians were like the Montanists, a reactionary group, and that the Montanists had friendly relations with the Paulicians, yet they were not the cause of the Paulician Movement.

Secondly, the Manichaean Movement was analyzed and it was made clear that although the Paulicians have been condemned as of or Manichaean origin, the Paulicians anathematized the Manichaeans.

Thirdly, in the consideration of the Messalians it became evident that these two could not be the same group; but

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. lvii.

both were reactions to the established church.

Finally, it is safe to say that the Paulicians did not have a direct origin from any of the aforementioned sects.

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN AND SPREAD OF THE PAULICIAN MOVEMENT

A. Introduction

At the time of Emperor Gallienus (260-268) Christianity enjoyed peace and prosperity and was acknowledged as a "religio licita," a legal religion. Persecutions ceased between 260 and 303.

During the fourth century, Emperor Constantine the Great declared Christianity a state religion. At the time there was a mass movement into the Church. However, the influx of so many pagans into the church caused the church to lose its vigor. The church started to occupy herself with theological problems. It became so serious that in 325 Constantine called the Council of Nicea to find a solution to the problems the church was facing.

The church in the Byzantine Empire was particularly affected and it, too, lost its vigor. The Christians were satisfied by fasting, and prayed the usual prayers that were written down for them. The Christians were faithful to the priests and did what they were told, venerating the relics of the saints so that they became objects of worship. The same kind of practices were prevalent in a minor degree in Armenia.

Into this kind of existing condition a puritanic movement came, namely, the Paulicians. If the beliefs of the Paulicians are analyzed, it would be clear that they protested against the Church's superstitions and its externalism, which had corrupted the hearts of those who really

wanted to have a simpler worship.

The Armenian and the Greek writers have always stated that the Paulicians rejected the intercession of the saints, condemned the veneration of the cross, did not accept the miraculous powers, and protested against animal sacrifices. Gregory Magistros writes that they would say,

We are no worshippers of matter, but of God; we reckon the cross and the Church and the priestly robes and the sacrifice of mass all for nothing, and only lay stress on their inner sense. . . .¹

B. The Origin of the Name

Historians in the past, as well as in the modern times, have called this movement Paulician. It is hard and obscure to trace the origin of the name; but there are a few theories which have to be stated and considered.

1. Theories Cited

Petrus Siculus and Photius, the two main Greek historians, have the following hypothesis about the name of the Paulician, which Neander cites:

. . . that it took its origin from a woman, Callinice by name, who lived in the district of Samosata, somewhere about the fourth century, and whose two sons, Paul and John, were considered as the founders of the sect.²

Consequently, it is the opinion of some that the name Paulician was derived from the two names, Paul and John, both as *Παυλοιοιωνναις*.³

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 145.
2. Neander, op. cit., p. 244.
3. Ibid.

Neander concludes, however, "But we have strong reasons for doubting the truth of this whole account."¹ Gibbon, on the other hand, states that they were called Paulicians due to the great stress and importance they laid on the teachings of Paul.² Gregory Magistros, an eleventh century philosopher, wrote of them to the Catholics of Syria saying, "Here you see the Paulicians who got their poison from Paul of Samosata."³ Conybeare's conclusion is: "It is now evident to us that the name Paulician originally had reference not to St. Paul, but to the last great champion of Adoptionist Christianity in the Greek world, Paul of Samosata. . ."⁴ On the other hand, Neander rests with the following view:

And we may perhaps rest in the conclusion, that as this sect, like the earlier Marcionites, opposed St. Paul to St. Peter, and, attaching themselves to the former, were restoring the true Pauline Christianity, they were hence called Paulicians, as in truth we find it intimated by Photius himself.

There is another theory, which has not found a popular place in history, that it is after the name of an individual founder whose name was Paul.

2. The Probable Source

In the Paulician's statement of doctrine, the Key of Truth, they did not call themselves Paulicians, or Thondrake but the "Universal Apostolic Church."⁶ But by their adversaries, when they were called Paulicians, they were not ashamed of the name Paul. Their enemies

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 244.
2. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 48.
3. Arpee, op. cit., p. 78.
4. Conybeare, op. cit., p. cv.
5. Neander, op. cit., p. 247.
6. Conybeare, op. cit., pp. 1, 7, 19.

meant the name for scorn, yet the Paulicians took it to be that they were being identified by the name of the apostle Paul, and rather took pride in it.¹ It will be clear to us later that Paul was the Apostle whom they revered.

C. Its Founder

1. Theories Considered

According to some historians, the Paulician movement was originated and founded by the Marcionites. Concerning this theory Neander says:

We might be allowed to suppose, then, that an effort at reform, awakened among these degenerate Marcionites by some special cause or other, and, particularly directed, by the spirit of Marcionitism, to the restoration of primitive Christianity as taught in the epistles of St. Paul, had preceded the Paulician sect.

There is also the theory that the study of the New Testament might possibly give rise to a sect similar to that of Marcionitism.³

As it was pointed out⁴ the Greek sources give this information that a woman by the name of Callinice, who was a follower of Manicheanism, came with her two sons, Paul and John, and propagated their ideas.⁵ Neander brushes this idea away by saying ". . . we have every reason to regard it as no better than a fiction."⁶

Some suppose that it could be founded by an Armenian whose name

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1. Cf. Neander, op. cit., p. 247.
2. Ibid., p. 246.
3. Ibid., Cf. also The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia.
4. Ante, p. 24.
5. Neander, op. cit., p. 246.
6. Ibid.

was Paul; this idea could not be correct because there was a teacher by the name of Paul, but not the founder of the sect.¹

2. The Solution

It became clear that none of the theories mentioned above could be given with finality as to the probable founders of the Paulicians. Unless a new source is found where the name of the founder would be specifically named, our ideas about the founder would be pure supposition. However, it is clear that the first leader who is mentioned is a man named Constantine. He lived in the latter half of the seventh century and could be considered to be the founder of the Paulician Movement.

D. The Development of the Paulician Church

1. The Early Years

The name of the first leader of the Paulicians which has reached us is Constantine. He was an Armenian from the village of Mananali.

A deacon who was once a captive of the Saracens in Syria was the guest of Constantine for a few days. The deacon was so affected by the kindness and piety of Constantine that in return for the hospitality he had enjoyed he presented Constantine two volumes, one containing the gospels and the other St. Paul's epistles.

Constantine read these gospels with such interest that he was filled with enthusiasm and missionary zeal.²

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 246.

2. Cf. Conybeare, op. cit., p. lxiii.

He was so much influenced by St. Paul's letters that he adopted the name of Silvanus, Paul's companion, and started a missionary tour preaching the gospel about 657. He continued this work for twenty-seven years. Later he carried this message into Asia Minor. In Asia Minor he was able to establish many churches. He gave these churches the same names as Paul had given to the churches that he had established. The church in Gibossa was called the Macedonian Church; the church in Mananali was called Achea. Concerning this matter of names Neander says,

To designate his profession, as an apostolic reformer, Constantine took the name of Silvanus; and so it became the custom afterwards for the more distinguished teachers of this sect to call themselves by the names of the several companions of St. Paul.¹

Constantine labored from 657-684 and with a great zeal established many churches. As the sect started to increase in number Constantine Pogonatus, the Byzantine Emperor, sent an officer in 684 by the name of Simeon, giving him the authority to punish with death the leaders of the sect and bring their followers to the bishops to be instructed in the doctrines of the church.

It is related that Constantine was stoned to death at the order of Simeon.²

Many of those Paulicians who were handed over to be taught the right doctrines of the Orthodox Church resisted the bishops. Simeon undertook to instruct them. Instead of teaching them, Simeon was

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 248.
2. Ibid., p. 247.

greatly impressed by the Paulicians. Neander says about Simeon:

But as he was a layman, and therefore somewhat at a loss for arguments, as well as more unprejudiced, he was struck with the remarkable appearance of Christian sincerity in their behavior, and more and more attracted by the principles of the Paulician sect.¹

Simeon was so much affected by the manner in which Constantine was killed and the testimony of the Paulicians that after returning to Constantinople he saw he could not conceal his real convictions any more. Three years after the death of Constantine he joined the Paulicians and secretly came to Cibossa, Armenia, and in a short time became their leader. He took on him the name of Titus, the disciple of St. Paul.

The Emperor Justinian II directed a new inquiry in the year 690, and as a result many with Titus (Simeon) were put to death.

After the death of Simeon Paul became the leader, in turn appointing his son, Gegnoesius, giving him the name Timothy. During the leadership of Timothy the group was divided into two groups. Timothy was the victor and ruled the Paulicians for thirty-three years. On one occasion he was called to Constantinople to appear before the patriarch. Timothy was able to convince him that he was an Orthodox believer. After this incident Timothy received from Leo the Isaurian, the Emperor, a letter of protection against persecution. About this incident Neander says,

We might readily conjecture, that the emperor Leo, that determined enemy of images, was disposed to befriend the Paulicians; and that the issue at this trial, which was so

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 248.

favorable to their cause, was brought about by his influence; for a certain affinity existed between the spiritual tendency of the Paulicians and that of the iconoclasts.¹

The Paulicians were against pictures, and by this attitude they were able to lead many away from the established church.

After the death of Timothy, his son, Zacharias, succeeded him. During the time of Zacharias the movement was divided into two groups. The opposing party was headed by Joseph. Joseph left for Antioch in Pisidia and from there his ideas were carried to Asia Minor and to the boundaries of Armenia. Joseph was succeeded by Baanes, who lived a filthy life, and his followers at this time had a very bad reputation. The group did not live under this condition very long. A reformer by the name of Sergius succeeded Baanes and under his leadership the work was organized and developed new vitality. Sergius thought himself to be a vehicle of the Holy Spirit and that he was inspired and sent by God to teach the way, the truth and the life. He has written some epistles but, unfortunately, they have been lost; some fragments have been left in the writings of the adversaries who have quoted from him. In one of them he has said, "I have run from East and West and from North to South, preaching the Gospel of Christ until my knees were weary."²

The conversion of Sergius to Paulicianism is very interesting. Sergius met a Paulician woman who belonged to this sect and she, by asking him questions about the scriptures, found out that Sergius did

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1.Meander, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

2.Conybeare, op. cit., p. iii. (Quoted from Petrus of Sicilus, p. 36.)

not know much about the scriptures. This served as an impetus for him to read the scriptures. He read with great interest the letters of Paul and found what was vital to Christianity.¹ He started to work under the name of Tychicus. During thirty-four years under his leadership many joined the sect. Due to the success that he had and the new vitality that was noticed in the group, it came to the attention of the Church. Due to the triumph of the Image-Worshippers, persecution started once more. Runciman says:

Constantine V transplanted colonies of them to Thrace, partly as a protection to his frontier and partly as a counterbalance against the obstinate iconodules.²

Irene the Empress was pious, yet she neglected persecution. The Empress who followed her, Nicephorous, favored the Paulicians.

Michael Phangabe and Leo V persecuted the Paulicians so ruthlessly that it drove them to seek the Moslem protection. The greatest persecutor of the Paulician Church was Empress-Regent Theodora (842-857). About her Runciman writes:

Heartened by her success in re-establishing Image-worship, she hoped to gain equal merit by the conversion of the Paulicians. But the Paulicians would not yield to peaceful persuasion; and the officers sent out by the Empress. . . , found the sword the better argument. With a ferocious thoroughness they fell upon the heretic churches, till, according to the chroniclers, a hundred thousand victims perished.³

2. The Decline

Many of the Paulicians fled to Moslem territory. They found a

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 251.
2. Runciman, op. cit., p. 39. (Quoted from Theophanes Chronographia, p. 429.)
3. Ibid., p. 40.

leader in a Roman officer by the name of Carbeas, whose father was put to death during the Paulician Persecution. As a retaliation Carbeas, with five thousand soldiers, passed to the Arab side, fortified a city Devrik or Tephrik, and started to raid the Empire. They overran Asia Minor, destroyed many cities, came to Ephesus and destroyed images and relics of the Greek saints and turned the Cathedral of Ephesus into a horse stable.

In 783 the Byzantine forces defeated the stronghold of the Paulicians at Tephrik. As a result the military glory of the Paulicians passed away and their able leader died, too. After this event the Paulicians remained a persecuted and oppressed sect.

They reappeared once more under a different name, as Thondrakli.

E. The Paulicians in Europe

The Paulicians were transplanted to Europe for the following reasons. Some of the sympathetic Emperors followed a middle course. The Paulicians were dangerous to the Byzantine Empire when they joined hands with the Arabs on the Eastern borders; but the Paulicians could be employed as a bulwark against the enemies of the Byzantine Empire in the West.¹

The Patriarch Theodoros of Antioch, in the eighth century, requested from Emperor Constantine Copronymus to transplant the heretics from Erzroum and Malatia to Thrace and Bulgaria. Emperor John Tzimiscees

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1. Runciman, op. cit., p. 44.

in 975 moved as many Paulicians as he could collect and settled them in Thrace near the fortress of Philoppopolis. They remained there for centuries.¹ Runciman says, "Pious Emperors yearned for their conversion."² Alexius Comenus (1081-1118) tried hard to convert them. He was a theologian himself and according to Anna, the daughter of the Emperor, the Paulicians were converted one hundred a day.³ These endeavors considerably reduced the number of the Paulicians.

In 1717 Lady Wortley Montagu passed at Philippopolis on her way to Constantinople, and she gives the following information:

I found at Philippopolis a sect of Christians that called themselves Paulines. They show an old church where they say St. Paul preached, and he is their favorite saint, after the same manner that St. Peter is at Rome; nor do they forget to give him preference over the rest of the apostles.⁴

Runciman adds, "These words show that the Paulicians had long since forgotten their original doctrines."⁵ If this were all, it would be a sad ending; but it is generally accepted by the historians that the Paulicians planted the seed of Reformation into Europe. Levon Arpee says,

There, while the Paulician soldiers guarded the line of the Danube against the barbarians, the Paulician missionary laid the foundations of the Bogomile church of the Bulgarians and scattered in Europe the seeds of reformation which bore its full fruitage in a later age.

Another effect of these persecutions and transplantations of the Paulicians was that it caused the downfall of the Byzantine Empire.⁷

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1. Runciman, op. cit., p. 44.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 45. (Quoted from Lady Mary Wortley Montague, letter dated Adrianapole, 1 April 1717.)
5. Runciman, op. cit., p. 45.
6. Arpee, op. cit., p. 65.
7. Pashgian, op. cit., p. 175.

The Paulician warriors, instead of protecting the Eastern borders of the Empire against Islam, fought against the Byzantines.

By ending our survey in Europe we once more come to study the Paulician Movement under a different name.

E. Second Phase of Paulician History

1. Under a New Leader

After the destruction of the stronghold Tephrik, in 785 the Paulician Movement emerged with a different name, Thondraki.

According to Armenian sources, the new reformer's name was Smbat. Conybeare thinks that this Smbat was none other than Smbat Bagradouni the Confessor. Gregory Magistros, in his letter to the Syrian Catholics writes about Smbat:

All in the single brew of their heresy, when they consented to that enemy of God, that hedge-breaker, diabolical madman, Smbat, giving them their laws, and quitting the path of illumination, entered a blind alley. . . .¹

Smbat Bagradouni was a general in chief of the Bagradouny dynasty who later established a kingdom by the recognition of the Arab skakif of Baghdad.² Vardan the Chronicler, who died in the thirteenth century, writes as follows:

Smbat Sparabet, having been removed about 855 by the Emir Bouha to Baghdad, died a martyr's death, refusing to abjure his faith. Bouha offered repeatedly to restore to him his kingdom of Armenia, but Smbat's answer was always the same: 'I cannot leave Christ. I cannot quit the Christian faith, which by the grace of the font I have received.' He was tortured and slain. Some of his fellow-prisoners who were

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 148.
2. Ibid., p. lxiv.

Christians asked his body of Khalif; and, according to John Catholicos (who heard it from an eye-witness), they took it to Babylon and laid it in the shrine erected on the site of the lion's den into which Daniel the prophet had been thrown. Smbat was known by the Armenians after his death as the confessor.¹

In the tenth century many rich people and nobles were included in this Thondraki movement.² Priests and monks were also accused of being Thondraki. At this time in the tenth century the most respected saint of the Armenian church, whose book of devotions, "Marek," is in the hands of most Armenian families, was accused of belonging to this heretical movement. But after being questioned he was acquitted. One of the official publications of the Armenian Gregorian Church gives the following explanation:

Gregory the Narekatzy wanted and worked with zeal to reform the church which had lost its harmony, therefore a few jealous people accused him to the ecclesiastical leaders and princes, and called him heretical.

Aristaces Lastivert writes about a prince whose name was Verver who had built a convent on his own estate. He was a very pious prince who was converted to the Thondraki movement and became a very zealous worker for their cause. The Thondraki movement became so powerful in the eleventh century and included so many princes that the the council of bishops was afraid of it.⁴

After the twelfth century a blank of six centuries follows. The Armenian sources make no mention of Thondraki. But the Thondraki

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., pp. lxx-lxxvi.
2. This word means the people who are living in the region of Thondrak, which was a mountainous region.
3. Yeghia Kassouni, Lousashvigh, p. 4.
4. Arsen Gorguizian, The Paulician Thondraki Movement in the Armenian Church, p. 29.

movement continued because an Armenian, Paul W. Meherian, while travelling in the beginning of the nineteenth century, met Thondraki believers and writes that there was a vigorous church between Erzouroum and Mush.¹

After the death of Smbat, although there is a definite silence, Gregory Magistros names seven leaders covering from 170-200 years. However, nothing is mentioned of their activities.

The last persecution of the Thondraki was during the reign of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1043-1054) which was carried on by Gregory Magistros, an Armenian governor of Mesopotamia and Duke of Vaspourakan and Daron. He persecuted them without mercy.² The Thondraki movement was not wiped out altogether but it continued to exist without being able to get the previous consideration and power.

2. In the Nineteenth Century

At the end of Russo-Turkish war in 1828-1829, a group of Turkish Armenians under the leadership of their Bishop Garabed settled in Russian Armenia between Akhazika and Erivan. Bishop Garabed warned the Synod of Edjmiazin that in the village of Arkaveli in the province of Shirak twenty-five families belonged to the Thondraki sect, and complained that they were leading astray the simple-minded ones in his flock. He writes, "Some of our villagers, inform us how they openly, in the presence of the simple-minded, deny that the saints help us, deny the use of fasting and the benefits of prayer."³ Consequently

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1. This Manuscript is kept in the Library of San Lazar Venice.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 146.
3. Gorguizian, op. cit., p. 34.

the Synod made an effort and tried to suppress the movement, both in Turkish Armenia and in the Russian Armenia.

Rev. Simon Davidian in 1853 writes that in Khnus he had found many small Thondraki groups. Through his preaching, Armenian Evangelical churches were started in three villages.¹ Arpee concludes:

And who can tell how much Protestant missions in Armenia have been feeding on Paulician soil? Khnus and Tchevirme, those ancient strongholds of Armenian Paulicians, were not only places where Paulicians became a feeder to modern Protestantism. Eritzian states that in 1880 of the one hundred and thirty-seven Protestant households of Valarshebad (Neapolis), in the vicinity of Etschmiadzin, nearly three-quarters were originally Thondrakian. The same writer further states that the Thondrakians were numerous at that date in the provinces of Shirak, Galzwan, Pambak, New Bayezid, Erivan, and Etschmiadzin, associating in some places with Russian heretics like the Molokans, and in others with Protestants. A careful investigation on the ground will doubtless reveal a very close connection between this ancient heresy and modern Protestantism in Armenia.²

G. The Contribution of the Paulicians to the Armenian Evangelical Movement

1. As a Puritanic Movement

As a puritanic movement the Paulicians kept the aspiration of the people for a simpler faith. According to some historians they were the ones who kept the spirit of puritanism alive until the time of the Protestant Reformation.

Many Hungarians going on pilgrimages to Jerusalem had to follow the course of the Danube river. The Paulicians, being missionary

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1. Kassouni, op. cit., p. 103.
2. Arpee, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

minded, most probably accompanied them on their journey. In this way they disseminated their ideas into Hungary and adjacent countries.

Gibbon says, "In peace and war they freely conversed with strangers and natives and their opinions were silently propagated in Rome, Milan, and the kingdoms beyond the Alps."¹

Although they were persecuted they kept a free and independent spirit. Of this Gibbon states:

But the invincible spirit which they had kindled still lived and breathed in the Western world. In state, in the church, and even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the disciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed from all the visions of the Gnostic Theology.²

Consequently, the Paulicians had a share in preparing the soil for the Protestant Reformation. Then in turn it influenced the Reformation in the Armenian Orthodox Church in 1846.

However, in the nineteenth century the Thondraki movement, having only a few adherents, joined the Armenian Evangelical Church and some of them became very ardent Evangelists.³

2. Their Apologetic Contribution

A rapid growth of great religious movements is due to the fact that they are meeting a need of the people. The Paulician movement with its Puritanism was filling the gap in the hearts of the people. It was not their theology which was attracting them but their simplicity. The Paulicians at first were not successful in propagating their form of

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1. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 57.
2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Cf. Kassouni, op. cit., p. 104.

worship in Thrace and Bulgaria, but later they were successful. Of this Runciman says,

But the propaganda was not at first very successful. When St. Clement, the first Slavonic bishop of Bulgarian Church, died in Macedonia in 916, Paulicianism had made no headway. But as the century advanced conditions favoured the spread of heresy.¹

The advance of Paulicianism was possible because the ground was ready for such a movement. The Armenian Evangelical movement in the nineteenth century found the ground ready and it spread in spite of persecution. It was not a theological movement at the start but a reforming demand. The association of the Paulicians in Armenian Church history shows that there was a need to purify the church from later additions untrue to New Testament Christianity. Protestantism was demanding the same thing. So in this respect both Paulicianism and Protestantism were similar and contributing influences behind the Armenian Reformation in 1846.

F. Summary and Conclusion

It was pointed out that the Paulicians called themselves the Universal Apostolic Church. The Paulicians, due to the respect they had for the Apostle Paul, did not resent the name given to them by their adversaries.

The founder of the sect was Constantine who, after reading the New Testament, was deeply moved and wanted to establish a New Testament Church. Because he was voicing the desire of many people, very soon he

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1. Runciman, op. cit., p. 66.

succeeded in establishing many churches.

The Paulician church had a developmental period, starting with Constantine until the destruction of Tephrik in 783, whereupon they lost their influence and power. Then they appeared under a new leader, Smbat, with a different name, Thondraki. It was pointed out that after Smbat we hear little about them until the nineteenth century, when once more the Orthodox Church started to persecute them.

Then the Paulician movement in Europe was discussed. It was seen that they were deported and transplanted to Thrace and Bulgaria by the Byzantine Emperors, and that through their preaching the Bogomile movement in Bulgaria was started; in turn other movements were started in Europe, basically puritanic in outlook.

Their contribution to the Armenian Reformation was on this same line, namely, keeping awake the puritanic spirit.

Their apologetic value was that all through history there has been a demand for reform in the Armenian Apostolic Church. Consequently, the Armenian Evangelical Movement once more confronted the church with a demand for reform.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the Paulician movement advocating Puritanic worship was an underlying influence both in European and Armenian Reformation.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHING AND THEOLOGY OF
THE
PAULICIAN MOVEMENT IN THE
LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PURITANISM

A. Introduction

The Synod of Edjmiatzin¹ in 1837 was warned that among the refugees who had settled near Erivan² following the Russo-Turkish War, there were about twenty-five families who were Thondraki and were giving their heretical ideas to the simple village folks.

The bishop, who had warned the Synod, was asking them to send a learned priest to lead these into the right way and prevent the spread of their heresy. Two priests were sent to investigate the heresy and turn the wayward Christians. The aid of the Russian governor was asked also in destroying this heresy. When the governor asked what the heresy consisted of, the reply was:

They rejected the intercession of the saints and spurned their images, denied the value of fasts and the benefit of prayer, disbelieved the immaculateness of the holy

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1. A city where the Catholicos of Armenia still has his seat.
2. The Capital City of Armenia.

Virgin, Mother of God, repudiated the sacrament of baptism, and the rest.¹

One of the inhabitants of Giumri named Garabed Mgrditchian fell ill. He called the Orthodox priest and confessed that he and some six families had been converted to the Thondraki sect. He wrote a confession which was sent to Erivan, as follows:

In 1837, at the feast of the Transfiguration in the month of June, Kirakos of Giumri...preached to me Karaper that Christ is not God. Through the preaching of...we took oath one with another not to disclose our secret to any. They in particular told me to inform no man of it. They

1. convinced me that Christ is not God;
2. made me blaspheme the cross, as being nothing.
3. told me that the baptism and the holy oil of the Armenians is false; and that
4. we must rebaptize all of us on whose foreheads the sacred oil of the wild beast is laid.
5. the mother of God is not believed to be a virgin, but to have lost her virginity.
6. we reject her intercession; and also
7. whatever saints there be, they reject their intercession.
8. they reject the mass and the communion and the confession, but say instead (i.e. to the orthodox); 'Confess to your stocks and stones, and leave God alone.'
9. Moreover, those who choose to communicate eat the morsel and drink the wine upon it.
10. They say that we are the only true Christians on earth, whereas Armenians, Russians, Georgians, and others, are false Christians and idolators.
11. On our faces we make no sign of the cross.
12. Genuflexions are false, if made superstitiously.
13. During fasts they eat.
14. They canon-lore of the holy patriarch they reject, and say that the councils of the patriarchs were false, and that their canons were written by the devil.²

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxiv.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

With this confession three other men made confessions on similar lines. As a result, a fresh inquiry was started by the Edjmiatzin Synod. They asked the cooperation of the civil authorities to put down the heresy. The heresy was indeed put down, some of its followers being sent to Siberia.¹

At this time in 1837 with one of the believers a book was found which was called the Key of Truth. This book proved to be the tenets of the Thondraki.²

This copy was written in Taron in 1782. Thirty-eight out of one hundred and fifty leaves were lost. It seems that the owner of the book destroyed these pages as to be dangerous to the Orthodox Church. This copy is made out of previous copy which might be as old as the ninth century. Because of its literary form and style, one cannot doubt but that it is from that period.³

Concerning the authorship of the book, Conybeare says,

If we may take the words of Magistros to imply that Smbat left writings regulating the faith and rites of his church, what more natural than to see in The Key of Truth one of these writings?...But after all we here are moving in a realm of surmise only, and we cannot assume as a fact, but only suggest as a hypothesis, that this Smbat was the author of the Key of Truth.⁴

As far as the content goes Arpee says:

One fails to find in this book that type of doctrine which

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1. Kasouni, op. cit., p. 104.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxix.
3. Ibid., p. xxix.
4. Ibid., p. xxxii.

was the product of Greek speculation, and originated in the councils and controversies of the Orthodox church. The Key's idea of a Christian is a Characteristic-not a man who has the orthodox doctrine, but simply one who knows the Lord Jesus and keeps his commandments. This fact should be born in mind especially in examining the Key's ideas of the deity and of the person of Christ.¹

In this chapter the puritanic mode of worship and theological beliefs which is stated in the Key of Truth will be discussed.

B. Practice of Worship

I. Puritanic Worship

The Thondraki refuted the mass and everything that was in a symbolic nature in the Orthodox Church such as statues, pictures and relics. The Paulician worship was very simple in contrast to that of the Armenian Orthodox Church. Vahan Mirakentz, a contemporary writer, tells of an incident which occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the village of Khnus four men heard that a missionary had come and was preaching some odd things. These four villagers went and listened to this missionary and after the service was over, they came and asked the missionary:

How is it that our church and yours are much alike to each other. With their simplicity they said, 'either we have taken it from you or you from us, but how and when?' The missionary was surprised also. He went to their village and established an Armenian Evangelical Church.²

These men were Thondraki.

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1. Arpee, op. cit., p. 77.

2. Vahan Mirakentz: Baïkar, (p. 8. (A yearly publication)

About the Paulician worship there is very little information, but what is known shows simplicity. Neander says:

They strove to follow the pattern of apostolic simplicity in all their ordinances, and carefully avoided everything that approached to a resemblance of Jewish or pagan rites. Hence, they never called their places of assembly temples which suggested the image of Jewish or pagan temples—but gave them the more unpretending name of oratories, from which too we may gather, that with them prayer constituted the most essential part of divine worship. Among other corruptions of the Christian element, they certainly counted also the Christian priesthood, founded on the pattern of the Old Testament.¹

The Paulicians did not put a distinction between laity and clergy. They had men who were designated for certain purposes and yet were looked upon as any other member of the community. These preachers or leaders were not distinguished from the others by any sort of outward dress. They had four types of leaders designated for special purposes.

The leaders who were most respected were the teachers or reformers, as Constantine and Sergius, and were given the title of prophets.

The pastors or teachers were the means for the communication of the spirit which proceeded from them.

The copyists were those who transcribed the scriptures.

The travelling missionary was often persecuted, yet never discouraged from preaching their teaching.²

Their churches were gathering places of worship. Hymn

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 264.

2. Ibid.

singing and scripture reading, especially the New Testament and the letters of Paul in particular, took a very prominent place in their worship.¹

Most of the time, because they were a persecuted sect, their meetings were held secretly and this gave rise to many kinds of misinterpretations. Gibbon says:

In the practice, or at least in the theory, of the sacraments, the Paulicians were inclined to abolish all visible objects of worship, and the words of the Gospel were, in their judgment, the baptism and communion of the faithful.²

2. Rules and Regulations of Conduct

The Paulicians have been accused of being immoral by their adversaries. John of Otzun tells about them that they gave themselves to lusts and incestuous connections. He adds that the Paulicians took a child and passed him from hand to hand till the baby died, and the one in whose hand the baby died they made their leader. Also they would ferment bread with the blood of children.³

But we see that these accusations could not be true. Even the Christians were accused of the same evil practices by the heathen. However, Neander says of these accusations:

It is obvious to remark, however, that little reliance can be placed on such accusations coming from the mouths of excited adversaries. Such bad reports concerning the religious meetings of sects accounted heretical are to

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1. Ibid., p. 268.
2. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 49.
3. Pashgian, op. cit., pp. 225-226.

be met with in every age of the church.¹

It was true that for a time during the leadership of Bannes the Paulicians became morally degraded but with Sergius there was a reformation. Again Neander points out: "Certain it is that Paulician doctrines, as a whole, not only required, but were calculated to foster a spirit of sober and strict morality..."² Consequently because of their reverence for the letters of St. Paul they might have been leading an ascetic life. However, they did not keep fasting days and disliked ceremonial laws.

According to many sources it seems the Paulicians believed in denying their faith, yet at heart remaining the same. This is seen among the early Paulicians as well as the latter Thondraki period. In 1837 Avos Marturoslan confessed to the village priest that he had become a member of Thondraki sect. He says that he was told:

Always go to church not that our kind considers it real; but externally ye shall perform everything, and keep yourselves concealed, until we find an opportunity; and then, if we can, we will all return to this faith of ours. And we swear, even if they cut us to pieces, that we will not reveal it.³

From many accounts about this phase of their life in which they pretended that they were not Thondraki, we may conclude that for them this was not considered sinful. They justi-

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1. Neander, op. cit., p. 265.
2. Neander, op. cit., p. 266.
3. Conybeare, op. cit., p. XXVII.

fied falsehood when employed for a good end. The Paulicians were quite austere and led a simple life, but they did not practice the formalities of the established church such as fasting and sacrifice. These they hated and the Orthodox church even considered the Armenian Evangelical church Satanic. The Patriarch Matthews of Constantinople wrote about a leader in the reforming movement in 1836, Vertanes:

A wretched and unworthy priest who, following his carnal lust, leaves the church and his sacred office, and, like a vagabond, going about through the metropolid and Nicomedia, babbles our errors...¹

But to the Evangelicals he was a saintly person who was filled with the spirit of Evangelism.²

C. Theology and Beliefs

The theology and beliefs of the Paulicians have come to us through their adversaries and many of the writers have assumed that they were Manichean. Thus even if the Paulicians had other views, the writers would give a false color to their theology.

Usually the writers have pointed out what the Paulicians rejected rather than what they believed. But generally it is thought that the Paulicians were dualistic and Gnostic in their views.

On the other hand, Conybeare, judging on the basis of

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1. Arpee, op. cit., p. 117.
2. Kascuni, op. cit., p. 38.

the Key of Truth, has the following to say concerning this problem:

The Paulicians are not dualists in any other sense than the New Testament is itself dualistic. Satan is simply the adversary of man and God, and owing to the fall of Adam held all, even patriarchs and prophets, in his bonds before the advent of Christ. It is possible there were Pauline sects who were dualistic.¹

Having these views as background, their theology may be examined to determine their true nature.

1. God

According to their adversaries, the Paulicians were dualistic. The Demiurge as the principle of evil was at enmity with the kingdom of the supreme God. The supreme and the perfect God, who created angels, is the ruler not of this world but of the world to come.

The Demiurge is the ruler of this world and its lord; on the other hand, the Supreme God is ruler of the world to come.

The Paulicians ascribed the creation of the world to the God of evil, or Satan, who formed the world out of matter. From perfect God nothing proceeds but the spiritual world who cannot reveal himself in the world of sense.²

The Paulicians understood heaven to be the visible firmament in the Kingdom of the Demiurge in opposition to the

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxvi.
2. Neander, op. cit., pp. 256-457.

Kingdom of God. But the spiritual heaven was the creation of the perfect God. Although matter is evil, being the work of the Demiurge, on the other hand the soul of man is of divine origin, a germ of life like the essence of the perfect God.¹ So man is composed of body and soul, a body which is opposed to the divine soul. Consequently, according to these statements they were like the Manicheans and were dualistic. But if we take the Key of Truth as the basis for their belief, all that was said is doubtful because in the Key of Truth they are not dualistic more than the New Testament sense.²

Gibbon's view is that they did not hold to Gnostic theology.³

2. Christology

The Paulician concept of Jesus was that He was created, therefore, not co-eternal with the Father. They were adoptionist in that they believed that Jesus was born as a man, of the virgin Mary, but he was a new man. Because he was so righteous and faithful in all the requirements, he was baptized by John the Baptist. By this obedience he received the Lordship in heaven and on earth. During the time of his baptism he heard the voice, "this is my beloved son" and after this experience he was endowed with the divine powers. He was anointed and became the Messiah and was elected to

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1. Ibid.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxvi.
3. Gibbon, op. cit., p. 58.

be the eternal only-born Son Mediator of God and man, and intercessor.¹

The Key of Truth clearly shows the important emphasis that the Paulicians laid on the Baptism of Christ:

Then accordingly it was that he was invited by the Spirit of God to converse with the heavenly Father; yea, then also was he ordained king of beings in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and all else (besides) all this in due order the Father gave to his only born Son; -even as he himself, being appointed our mediator and intercessor, saith to his holy, universal, and apostolic church, Matt. xxviii.18: And Jesus came and spake unto them and said: 'There hath been given unto me all authority in heaven and on earth. As the Father sent me, so do I send you,' and what follows. Thus also the Lord, having learned from the Father, proceeded to teach us to perform holy baptism and all his other commands at an age of full growth..., and at no other time.²

The Paulicians accepted that Jesus was born without sin. In the catechism of the Paulicians there is a question and an answer concerning this problem:

- Q. Wherefore then did not God Almighty make one of the patriarchs king and head of all? Did they not also fast those days?
- A. Although they fasted, yet they were not...³as was our Lord Jesus Christ. But they were conceived in original sin, they had original sin and operative. But our Mediator Christ was not conceived in original sin and had not original sin or operative like them as St. John the Evangelist made clear saying, ch. 1:13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us.⁴

Christ for the Paulicians was only a creature and obtained the

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid.
3. One or two words effaced in MS.
4. Conybearne, op. cit., p. 119.

title of Christ the Son of God because God by way of grace gave it to him. Jesus had fulfilled all the commands of God.¹ It may be concluded according to the Key of Truth that the Paulicians believed Jesus was man and not God incarnate but adopted to sonship at his baptism. To this effect Gregory Magistros writes, "Here then you see the Paulicians who got their poison from Paul of Samosata."² Arpee says:

Paul of Samosata. Was the chief exponent of what is known as Dynamic Monarchianism. They did not believe that Christ was a distinct person within the Godhead, but a mere man in whom Logos rested and in whom it dwelt through his ministry. Orthodox writers believed in the deity of Christ, and took God to be in the infant Jesus.³

The Key of Truth lays the emphasis on the humanity of Christ. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born as the new Adam free from original sin. He was man created not creator.

3. The Church

According to the Key of Truth the Paulicians did not call themselves by the name "Paulician" but "Holy and Apostolic Church,"⁴ founded by Christ and His Apostles. In this same manner Gregory Magistros says:

They want to teach us, and so enumerate the groups of heretics one after the other, and say: 'we do not belong to these; those have long ago broken connection with the Church, and have been excluded.'⁵

In 1837 one of the confessors, Kirakos Goshababayan of Gumri, says:

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1. Gorguizian, op. cit., p. 45.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 148.
3. Arpee, op. cit., p. 79.
4. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxiii.
5. Ibid., p. 147.

"They say that we are the only true Christians on earth, whereas Armenians, Russians, Gergeians, and others, are false Christians and idolators!"¹

The Paulicians did not consider the stone or the wooden building to be the church. For them the Church consisted of all those who were believers and were baptized, and preserved the apostolic tradition which Christ revealed to the apostles and they to the church and which has been handed down by unbroken transmission from the first.²

In its polity, the Paulician church seems to be Presbyterian. The final responsibility for the ordination of a candidate is made to rest with the people and their rulers. By the writings of the Armenian Orthodox writers about the Paulicians we have "their -conferred contemptible priesthood"³, and Gregory Magistros speaks of their "priest-makings without high priest, of their obscure ordination..."⁴ It seems that the Paulician ruler was an ordained presbyter or the elect one.

And Arpee's conclusion is:

Taking these different facts together, we may affirm with fair degree of confidence, that the Paulician ruler was a lay elder and, therefore, that the polity of the Paulician church was some form of presbyterianism.⁵

As a conclusion the "Church" for the Paulicians was the invisible union in one body of the faithful.⁶

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1. Ibid., p. xxv.
2. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxiii.
3. Gorguizian, op. cit., p. 66.
4. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 114.
5. Arpee, op. cit., p. 90.
6. Conybeare, op. cit., p. clxiv.

4. The Scriptures and their Canon

It is most probable that the Paulicians accepted the whole of the New Testament, except for the Book of Revelation, because in the Key of Truth there is no citation from the latter. All through their history they have had an unsurpassed admiration for Paul and his writings and have quoted him often. On the other hand, the general view was that the Paulicians rejected the writings of St. Peter. But after the discovery of the Key of Truth this view could not be accepted any longer because it is definitely made clear that Peter is an apostle. It is written:

The head of all is the Lord Jesus, Whom the Holy Paul doth confess, And the head of Christ is God and Light. (the names of the twelve apostles are cited, after all the names, this phrase is added). Also Paul, the vessel of Election. These are the Church Universal, nor is Peter alone.¹

Moreover, in the election service the bishop asks the Elect:

What is thy name, my little son beloved? and he makes answer and says:- The name of thy servant is Peter. But the apostle shall change his name in accordance with the Gospel, and after changing the name of the supplicant, he then gives him authority, saying as follows: Take to thyself authority of binding and loosing the sons of men in heaven and on earth, Matt. xviii.18, and John xx.23.²

Therefore, Peter's position was granted to all the apostles and not to him alone.

The second misconception was that they did not accept

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 93.
2. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

the Old Testament. But in the Key of Truth we have many quotations from the Old Testament, but not as much as the Gospels or the letters of St. Paul. They called the Bible (Astousashouch), which translated would be "The Breath of God."¹

One of the confessors in 1837 by the name of Avos Marturossian of Giunri says he was told to believe: "Ye shall keep the ten commandments which God gave to Moses."² The Key also includes the Fall of Adam.³ They believed that the Scriptures had to be given into the hands of the people: "The Scriptures and a knowledge of the divine truth are not to remain the exclusive possession of the orthodox priests!"⁴ Paulician converts were won through the means of the Scriptures. Constantine the founder, as well as Sergius the reformer, was won through the reading of the Scriptures.

5. The Sacraments

In the Key of Truth there are three sacraments which the Paulicians recognized: repentance, baptism and the communion of the body and blood of Christ.⁵

The Paulicians strongly refuted the other sacraments that the established church accepted: marriage, ordination,

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1. Ibid., p. xxxvii.
2. Ibid., p. xxvi.
3. Ibid., p. 53.
4. Ibid., p. xxix.
5. Ibid., p. xxxiii.

confirmation and extreme unction.

The rite of baptism was the most important sacrament which had to be preceded by repentance and faith. In their catechism, Instruction of a Christian, after acquiring the orthodox faith, it says: "And then he shall go and ask for holy baptism, and the precious body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ shall he eat."

The Paulicians believed that a person had to be baptized after reaching the age of maturity.¹ They called the baptism of children devilish and said: "These are they who ever and always oppose the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ...baptizing those who are irrational."²

The candidate had to be baptized with humility and tears. As a result of repentance and baptism God adopts them as his children and fills them with the Holy Spirit. The holy baptism was performed by the elect or ordained member of the Paulician church.³

The method of baptism was that the penitent came to his knees into the midst of the water and then the elect one instantly took the water into his hands and looking up to heaven emptied the water over the head of the person saying: "In the name of the Father...in the name of the Son and in the Name of the Holy Spirit..."⁴
The person would be a baptized member of the Paulician Church.

The third sacrament is the communion of the body and blood

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid., p. 76.
3. Ibid., p. 31.
4. Ibid., p. 97.

of Jesus Christ. The meaning of this sacrament could be discovered in the catechism section of the Key of Truth where it says:

"In the Eucharist the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ through the blessing invoked."¹ They believed that Jesus prayed that the bread might be changed into his body, and it became so, and Jesus thanked the heavenly Father for it.

There are reactionary statements about the orthodox priests and their way of handling the sacraments:

The false priests (of orthodox churches) either deceive the simple-minded with mere bread, or - what is worse - they change the elements into their own sinful bodies when they say 'this is my body,' instead of changing them into Christ's.²

Also, thinking that the disciples of Christ ate from one loaf of bread, they took it as a rule that one unleavened loaf and wine are to be offered in the eucharistic sacrifice.³

6. Mariology

The Paulicians rejected the adoration of the Virgin Mary and refused to believe that in any way she could intercede for the believer. They said that she could not intercede for any one because Christ was the only intercessor.⁴ And Peter the Sicillian says, "They were so spiteful against Mary, as not to allow her a place among the good and the virtuous."⁵ Also they argued that Mary bore other children besides Jesus. They took her to be only a means, she served as a tube.

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxvii.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
5. Neander, op. cit., p. 262.

They opposed the intercession of the quick and the dead. They believed also that confessions should be made publicly before God in front of the faithful, not the priests. The Paulicians hated images, paintings, statues, holy crosses, incense, candles, and monks. They said that the devil's favorite disguise is that of a monk. These were condemned as idolatrous, unnecessary, and alien to the teachings of Christ.¹

D. Summary and Conclusion

It was pointed out by a particular incident which had taken in 1837 that the Thondrakl were propagating their faith in Armenia and with one of them a book was found which is thought to have been written in the ninth century.

Although the historians have accused the Paulicians of being dualistic what we gather from this book shows us that they were not. They believed in Satan in the same way as the New Testament has it. The theology that was discussed was mainly taken from the book the Key of Truth. Their practice of worship was so simple that they could not differentiate it from a protestant one. They were very reactionary against everything which reminded them of the Orthodox church.

The Paulicians were accused of being lusty and morally degraded. But this was not true because their whole system demanded a higher form of morality. For the Orthodox church, the founders of the Armenian Evangelical movement were Satanic and lusty, whereas, accord-

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1. Conybeare, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

ing to the information we have, they led such saintly lives that many were influenced by their lives. Their theology is quite simple. They had scripture passages for their beliefs. God was the creator; Jesus was created. The church was the community of baptized believers. Their canon was the Old and the New Testaments except for the book of Revelation. But the New Testament had more prominent place in the formation of their beliefs than the Old Testament. They had three sacraments: baptism which had to be preceded by repentance, and communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

They were against Mary being the intercessor for the faithful and they said that she was only a tube through which Jesus passed. They disliked everything that reminded them of Jewish or pagan customs.

The Paulicians had a simple way of worshipping God. They read the Scriptures, sang hymns, and wanted to give their message to the rest of the Christians who belonged to the established churches, Armenian and Greek.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study began by stating that in the history of the Christian Church conditions have developed from time to time where the Church has become formal, superstitious, and wanting in a spiritual freedom. Out of such conditions reform movements have arisen that have been puritanistic in nature. The Paulician movement was shown to be such a movement without settling all of the problems of its orthodoxy or heterodoxy.

In the second chapter three movements prior to the Paulicians were discussed because the Paulicians have been regarded by many as a descendant of Montanism, Manicheanism, or Messalianism.

On looking at this possibility, it was made clear that none of these was directly responsible for the formation of the Paulician movement. However, it was shown that Montanism, being a puritanic movement itself, might have had an effect on the Paulicians.

For Manicheanism, the result of the study showed that the Paulicians were not Manichean at all; they existed side by side. Paulicians were a Christian sect, whereas the Manicheans were not.

The Messalians were also considered and no evidence of any direct relationship was found.

In the third chapter the history of the Paulicians was studied. The movement was basically a demand for reform. Constantine the founder was motivated by the reading of the gospels and letters of St. Paul.

According to their adversaries their theology was dualistic, but after the Key of Truth was found, it is doubtful whether this was true of their teaching. Their belief in Satan is like that implicit in the New Testament.

In their Christology, they believed Christ was a creature, but unique, born without original sin, adopted as a son after His baptism. The Church for them was the company of the baptized believers. Their Canon was composed of the Old and New Testaments except for the book of Revelation. They had three sacraments: Repentance, Baptism, and the Communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

They did not believe in Mary as an intercessor, and hated relics of saints, crosses, priests, and monks.

As a result of this study it may be concluded that the Paulicians have made valuable contributions along the following lines:

They upheld the authority of the scriptures and refuted ecclesiastical authority.

They inspired others with whom they came into contact to look into the spiritual aspects of worship and the Christian life.

Because they believed in the priesthood of all the believers in an age when the authority of the bishop was a little less than that of the Emperor, they may very well be cited as the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, both in Europe and in Armenia.

The Paulicians succeeded because they sowed their word on fertile soil. The dissatisfaction was everywhere; these conditions favored their growth. The political forces of the Byzantine Empire destroyed their stronghold, Tephrik. The Paulicians were transplanted into Europe where they were influential in introducing their puritanic worship. The second phase of their history was discussed under a different name, Thondraki, whose leader was Smbat. The orthodox Church historians do not speak much about Thondraki until 1837. About that time a fresh inquiry started in Armenia proper, and some of them were sent to Siberia. Many of the Thondraki joined the Armenian Protestant Church, both in Russian Armenia and in Turkish Armenia. So the history of the Paulicians came to a culmination.

In the fourth chapter, the Paulicians had apologetical value to the Armenian Protestants. The Orthodox Church needed a reformation. The existence of this puritanic group showed that there was always a demand for reformation. Armenian Protestantism was a similar movement, voicing the dissatisfaction of many souls who were yearning for a purer form of worship.

In 1837 the Key of Truth was found, in which the tenets show that they were Adoptionist Christians.

Their form of worship was very simple; prayer, scripture reading, hymn singing, and preaching were the essence of it. Their rule of life and conduct was austere and puritanistic in nature.

Therefore, it must be concluded that the Paulicians exerted an important influence on the Protestant movement among the Armenians. As Armenian Protestantism made headway the Paulicians joined it and by their numerical additions gave a further impetus to the Reformation in Armenia.

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