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THE CONCEPTION OF SIN IN SAINT PAUL

by

Charles Gabriel de Bodo

Ph.D. and Absolutoria, University of Budapest, Hungary.
Absolutorium, Academy of Commerce, Budapest, Hungary.
Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

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INTRODUCTION

THE CONCEPTION OF SIN IN ST.PAUL

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. Stated

St.Paul's personal sense of guilt - which was individual and therefore unique - underlies his whole conception of Sin. Any sense of guilt serves to frame and build up morality, not by way of contrast but by the inherent quality of man's nature. The realm of morality is the only one in which we are truly free. By freedom I mean the unlimited, the infinite set against the finite, the unconditioned against the conditioned, God's place in human life.

St.Paul's conception of Sin is in reality his point of contact with God Himself, his most personal and temporal theology "sub specie aeternitatis", - God revealed by Jesus Christ, the cradle of the Christian religion and of historic Chrsitianity.

In order to understand St.Paul's conception of Sin we shall attempt to share in his crises and experiences,

to hear his call from above on the road to Damascus and from the Macedonian in Troas.

St.Paul's conception of Sin is a synagogue in which the eternal worship services of the Triune God are performed in perfect holiness. Our imagination has no real freedom. It is always tied down to sensuous experiences even to the utmost limit of deterioration and demonic aberrations. Disparate concepts are never free concepts. They are tied up to contrariety so great that they cannot even reach contradiction. No free decision may ever be formed on fluttering imagination or disparate concepts. So free decision is only possible when we choose between good or evil, judging either - or, yes or no, holiness or sin.

2. Justified

The scope of the problem of this thesis can be measured only if my view is shared that the concept of sin by St.Paul is the basis of his theology. His emotional Christ-feeling underlies and undergirds Christianity as a whole and especially the creeds of the Reformation and influences all present theological tendencies and dogmatic works. Its crucial relevance to actuality for Christians and Christianity as a whole will never cease.

B. The Sources

Primary sources for this study are the Pauline Epistles, the New Testament as a whole, the Old Testament, certain apo-

cryphal works and other literature, - mostly listed in the bibliography, - with references to Judaism, theology, church-history, philosophy, and psychology.

C. The Method of Procedure

To see clearly the factors that determined the consciousness of sin by Paul I had to go back to the study of his life, his background in Judaism and the life in the synagogue, his conversion and his works, and omit as far as possible modern and historic theories and writings about St. Paul and his concepts of Sin, because only primary sources and scientific historical research give full guarantee against loosing oneself in often strange forms of interpretations as we experience most vividly in many ancient and recent commentaries about the Book of Revelation and many other parts of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER I

ST. PAUL'S JUDAISTIC BACKGROUND

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Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah are spiritually the immediate predecessors of Jesus. The chronological, as distinct from the spiritual, successors of the prophets were the Scribes. They made some further attempts to formulate the ethical teaching of the prophets. They, and no one else, enabled Judaism to live through the shock of the destruction of the Temple and to make the discovery that the Synagogue was an adequate substitute for the altars of the old cultus. On the one side Judaism has often been regarded by Christians as cold, hard, and unsympathetic, holding its adherents by the fear and not by the love of God. On the other side the modern liberal theology derived the religion of Paul from contemporary Judaism or from the paganism of the Greco-Roman world. What was the origin of the religion and the conception of sin of Paul? The most obvious answer to that question is that the religion of Paul was based upon Jesus. That is the answer which has always been given in the Church, and exactly the same answer was given by Paul himself. Paul regarded himself as a servant of Christ, and based his whole life upon what Christ had done and what

Christ was continuing to do. "It is no longer I that live", he says, "but Christ liveth in me."[1] Only on this basis can we see the real effect of the contemporary Judaism and Greco-Roman world in his theology and in his conception of sin.

In our question the more important is contemporary Judaism, because, on the one side

> "The Jewish nature and character was the strongest and the most fundamental part of Paul's endowment" 2

and

> "The early training of Paul was thoroughly Jewish and was fundamentally Palestinian, not Hellenistic." 3

and on the other side

> "A sense of sin is not to be found in early Greek literature. It is absent alike from the joyous sensuousness of Homer, the lofty morality of Aeschylus, and the ethical philosophising of Plato. I say 'sense of sin' and not of 'sins'. Of course the great Greek writers recognized the fact that man could fall into wickedness. And they were vividly alive to the certainty that crime must needs bring punishment from the Gods. The Erinnyes, the spirits who punish, ever follow like sleuth-hounds the track of those who are stained with wickedness until they overtake them. But this recognition does not carry with it the consciousness that men are apt by nature to come into that false relation towards the divine will which may be called a state of condition of sin.
>
> Even in the later literature of Greece, which in many ways comes nearer to modern life and thought, we do not find a consciousness of the sinful tendency of the human will." 4

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1. Gal. 2:20.
2. W.Ramsay, The Teaching of Paul; p.32.
3. J.G.Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion; p.113.
4. P.Gardener, The Religious Experience of St.Paul; p.23.

The background of Paul's concept of sin is not in the Greco-Roman world, but in Judaism.

According to Montefiore Paul was a rabbinical Jew and the Palestinian Judaism of the first Century was probably like the rabbinical Judaism of 500 A.D. But he acknowledges too that

> "It is .... somewhat precarious to attempt a picture of Rabbinic Judaism as it existed in men's minds and hearts and lives during, shall we say, the first half of the first century A.D. It is not even easy to say whether the Rabbinic Judaism of 30 was better or worse (according to the religious standards of to-day) than the Rabbinic Judaism of 300." [1]

Therefore we must accept the view, that the important Jewish books of the time give us of the religious situation of that day, and attempt a picture according to them.

The ground of religion is a divine law-giver. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will, and sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of, the law of God. Religion in ancient Israel was not a sphere apart, dividing life with the secular. National custom had not only social and jural, but religious obligation and sanction, and offenses in this sphere were constructively offenses against God himself as the guardian and vindicator of all good custom, and thus acquired the character of sin.

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1. Montefiore, Judaism and Saint Paul, p.15.

> "The extremity of sin is the deliberate and wilful rejection of the authority of God, the denial in word and deed of his right to rule over the defiant offender." [1]

This kind of a sinner is one who throws off the yoke of God. According to the Rabbis the most hateful man is he who denies his Creator, because no man denies the root (God, who gave them), and

> "no man goes and commits a transgression unless he has first denied him who laid the command upon him." [2]

The God of the whole world, so it is said, granted to Israel alone its law in order to give them the whole earth for their inheritance, provided they were faithful citizens under this law, so that all other people might accept the law of Israel and become its subjects.

> "The righteous man is not one who follows the suggestions of his individual conscience, nor one who conforms his conduct to the fluctuating and elastic standards of custom and public opinion, nor one who is guided by the principles of a rational ethics, but he alone who strives to regulate his whole life by the rules God has given in his twofold law." [3]

The Pharisees were the representatives of the Jewish law so truly that Wernle says of them:

> "The Pharisees are the incarnation of the Jewish law." [4]

> "The adverse associations which go with Pharisaism should not blind us to the fact that at the start it represented a doctrine of the law which in large part was the dictate of a praiseworthy zeal for righteousness, and that it always acknowledged many excellent points both in practical ethics and in religious doctrine." [5]

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1. G.F.Moore, Judaism, v.I. p.465.
2. Ibid. v.I. p.467.
3. Ibid. v.I. p.494.
4. P.Wernle, Beginnings of Christianity, p.15.
5. H.C.Sheldon, New Testament Theology, p.9.

But as time went on it became more and more difficult for men to live under the Law. It was not something that had been laid down once for all. It was constantly growing. Only one portion was commited to writing in the Thora. The greater part, the customary law, was handed down by oral tradition. As far as the law became unsufferable the Pharisees exhausted ingenuity in attempts at explanation, so that, though the Law could not be changed, it might at least be interpreted so as to be tolerable. Jesus says of his contemporary Pharisees: "They bind heavy burdens and grivous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers".[1] The fatal error of Pharisaism was stress upon the law which put life under bondage to positive rules, and left little place for a consideration of the demands of interior piety.

Man was the specific creation of God; God had intended him to be immortal, righteous, and happy, and man had disobeyed and been punished by being made mortal, sinful, and miserable. Adam was the first sinner. Only a single commandment - a prohibition - was laid upon him, and he transgressed it. That without sin there would be no death is a natural inference from the story of the fall in Genesis. As the son of Sirach says: "From a woman was the beginning of sin; and because of her we all die".[2] The sentence of death was pronounced on Adam and his descendents for the transgression of one commandment.

. . . . . .

1. Matthew 23:4.
2. Ecclus. 25:24.

From Adam all mankind are sinners.There is a Midrash, in which we find that

> "the righteous descendents of Adam upon whom death was decreed reproach Adam, saying, "Thou art the cause of our death". He replies, "I was guilty of one sin, but there is not a single one among you who is not guilty of many iniquities". [1]

This real sense of sin is to be found in the Fourth Book of Ezra, which struggles seriously with the general reign of evil in the lives of men,and can find no solution of the terrible problem. "many have been created, but few shall be saved". [2] The book connects the miserable condition of humanity with the fall of Adam; the fall was not Adam's alone but his descendants.

This, which prompt a man to do or say or think things contrary to the revealed will of God is comprehensively named "Yeser ha-ra". The expression comes from Gen. 8:21, and 6:5, where the Scripture declares man's native impulses to be evil; but it must be remarked that the impulses to which this title applies are not intrinsically evil, much less in themselves sin, but evil from their effect when man yields himself to be impelled by them to consciously unlawful acts. We say impulses, because we find the dctrine of two impulses early established. Man has good impulses as well as bad, and this also is of God's creation.

> "When God looked upon the finished creation and saw that it was all very good (Gen. 1:31;),"

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1. Tanhuma ed. Buber, Hukkat 39; by Moore, Judaism.
2. II. Esdras 8:3.

the whole nature of man is included in this judgement, as R.Samuel ben Naham observes:

> "And behold it was very good. Is then the evil impulse good! Yet were it not for the evil impulse no man would build a house, nor marry a wife, nor beget children, nor engage in trade. Solomon said:"All labor and all excelling in work is a man's rivalry with his neighbor" (Eccles. 4:4). The appetites and passions are an essential element in the constitution of human nature, and necessary to the perpetuation of the race and to the existence of civilization. In this aspect they are therefore not to be eradicated or suppressed, but directed and controlled. Considered from the other side, as the tempter within that draws men away from the commandments and leads them into sin, the impulses are to be combated and subdued". [1]

The worst consequence of sin is its growing power over the sinner. This is the act of evil impulse. The opportunity or the invitation to sin may come from without, but it is the response of the evil impulse in man to it that converts into temptation.

> "It is thus primarily as the subjective origin of temptation, or more correctly as the temper within, that the Yeser ha-ra (drive, response of the evil impulse) is represented in Jewish literature". [2]

If a man has yielded to the evil impulse, there is still a remedy - repentance.

> "There is no malady in the world for which there is not a cure.What is the cure for evil impulse?Repentance". [3]

And the Rabbis taught that one moment of repentance will secure the Life of the World to Come just as surely as a long life of good deeds.

Of course the great advantage of Judaism is its moral character. Jahwe was not only the God of great deeds but the

. . . . . .

1. Pesikta ed. Buber f. 158 a (on Psalm 4,5); by G.F. Moore, Judaism, v.I. pp. 482, 483.
2. G.F.Moore, Judaism, v.I. p.482.
3. Ibid. p.520.

God of a lofty morality, who by his person was a pledge for the indissoluble connection between faith and life. But the Judaism of that time no longer stood on the height of belief in the gracious God. Judaism understood the relation of man to God as a mutual covenant relation from a judicial point of view. God gave his people the law and ritual, now it depended on man whether he would live according to the ordinances of God or not. God, it was thought, kept an account of every man according to the state of debit and credit we should expect in the course of life, and at its close God gave his decree which would either condemn man or reward his righteousness.

In this way Sin according to St.Paul will deal with the Law, - Flesh, - and Death, on the broad background of Judaism and some Hellenistic teachings, the services in the synagogue, - aiming at repentance, - and the unique experience of his conversion.

Our knowledge of St. Paul is founded on his epistles. Even the story of his life may be better gleaned from many priceless passages in his epistles (e.g. Galatians, II.Corinthians 11, etc.) On the other hand these epistles seem to me be based in a formal and structural way in their liturgical and scriptural content in their exhortative and edifying character, their lofty morality, universality,

and holy zeal on the service of the Synagogue, which accordingly had to be described at length.

CHAPTER II

THE SERVICE IN THE SYNAGOGUE AS BASIS OF PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF SIN

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THE SERVICE IN THE SYNAGOGUE

AS BASIS OF PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF SIN

In Karl Barth's magnum opus "The Doctrine of the Word of God" we find the following statement:

> "The knowledge that "I have sinned ... and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Luke 15:18f) is not the discovery of an abstract anthropology. Only the son who has already recalled to mind the father's house is aware that he is a lost son. We are first and only aware of being God's enemies, because God has actually established intercourse with us. But on the very assumption of the actuality of this happening we can regard this happening itself as nothing short of miraculous. The Word of God, the revelation of which is attested in Scripture, tells man that he is a rebel, who has wantonly abandoned the communion between himself as creature and God as Creator, and has placed himself in a situation in which this communion is impossible. It tells him that he wanted to be his own master, and thereby has betaken himself off to the sphere of the wrath of God, to the state of rejection by God and so of being closed against God. It tells him that his existence, contrary to what was determined at his creation, is a contradiction of God, a contradiction which excludes listening to God. It thus strangely tells him that he cannot hear it at all, this Word which tells him it; and he cannot hear it because he does not want to, because the fact of his life is disobedience, and thereby in practice, so far as concerns the use he makes of his life, is a refusal to listen to what God says to him. Nay more; this content of the Word of God spoken to man also makes it quite inconceivable, that man should succeed even only in hearing the Word of God, that God should turn to him and address him at all. His being closed to what God can say to him is merely an expression of the wrath of God which lies upon him. Must not this wrath of God, if it is serious - and the Word of God will tell us nothing else than that it is truly serious - consist above all and decisively in the fact that God has turned away His countenance from us and therefore does not converse with us, that for fallen man in the objective sense there is also not a Word of God at all? [1]

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1. Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, (God the Son, God as the Reconciler) pp.466, 467.

The concept of sin in the service of the synagogue was taken entirely from the Old Testament. In this service no extraneous material was ever used and in a world, where worship services were often used for prostitution and all kinds of abominations, the Jewish worship service, even in the spiritual services of the synagogue, were of the highest, austerest morality. Every consciousness is at least partly based on environment. Paul's environment was the synagogue. Every human concept is based on consciousness. Paul's concept of sin is based on the synagogue, the unfolding of its spirit in its service. For this cause we have to know this service, which played a conspicuous part in the 'preparatio evangelica', if we want to know more about Paul's conception of sin.

A consequence of the idea of revealed religion which was of the utmost moment in all the subsequent history of Judaism was to endeavor to educate the whole people in its religion. Such an undertaking has no parallel in the ancient Mediterranean world. The religion of the household in Egypt or Greece or Rome was a matter of domestic tradition, perpetuated by example rather than by instruction, and no attempt was ever made to systematize it and make it uniform, or even to fix it. The possession of a body of sacred Scripture, including the principles of their religion as well as its ritual and the observances of the household and the individual, of itself put the Jews in a different case. For with the Jewish conception of religion it was not to be imagined that a man or a people could be righteous without knowing God's holy character

and what was right in his eyes and what wrong.And if God had revealed these things, plainly revelation was the only place to go to learn them.It is not probable that the synagogue began with so definite a purpose. Its origin is unknown, but it may be reasonably surmised that it had its antecedents in spontaneous gatherings of Jews in Babylonia and other lands of their exile on the sabbaths and at the times of the old seasonal feasts or on fast days, to confirm one another in fidelity to their religion in the midst of heathenism, and encourage themselves in the hope of restoration. If the synagogue as we know it in New Testament times or from the Misnah is compared with the voluntary private assemblies which we have supposed to be its forerunners, two important differences appear: First, before the beginning of the Christian era it had become a public institution, commonly possessing an edifice for religious gatherings erected by the community or given to it by individuals - sometimes by pious Gentiles (Luke 7:5). It was no longer a surrogate for the worship in the temple among Jews who were deprived of participation in the cultus by the cessation of sacrifice or by their remoteness from Jerusalem, but had attained an independent position as the seat of a worship of different character, a rational worship without sacrifice or offering. And, second, regular l.c. instruction in religion had taken its place as an organic part of worship, and even as its most prominent feature.

The synagogues in prosperous communities were often fine edifices according to the taste of the time and place;

the community did not spare money on the decoration and furnishing. The essential parts of the synagogue furniture were a chest, or press, in which the rolls of the Scripture were kept, usually standing in an alcove or recess shut off by a curtain from the body of the synagogue; and a bema or platform, with a reading desk on which the roll of the Pentateuch or the Prophets were laid for the reading of the lessons. Lamps and candelabra also belonged to the furnishings of the synagogue.

It is quite clear from the sources we have about the services in the synagogue that at least ten persons were necessary to hold a service in the synagogue. The first part of the service was of liturgical character, the second part was more or less didactic. The essential parts of the synagogual services were: the recitation of the Shema and Tephillim, and Scripture lessons both from the Thora and the Prophets with a subsequent preaching.

The Shema is what may be called the Jewish confession of faith, usually named from its first word, the Shema:"Hear o Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut.6:4f), introduced and followed by sentences of ascription, called Berakot because they regularly begin, after the pattern of similar ascriptions in the Psalms, with the word "Blessed".

The recitation of the Shema is followed by the prayer Tefillah. In the oldest form in which it is known to us, it

consists of a series of "Benedictions", so called from the responses at the close of each ascriptions or petition:"Blessed art Thou, O Lord," etc. In an arrangement toward the end of the first century there were eighteen such prayers,whence the common name "The Eighteen",Shemoneh Esreh. The ordaining of the ascriptions and of the prayers in general was attributed to the Men of the Great Assembly, with whom so many other of the institutions of Judaism were reputed to have originated.

Some of these prayers were brought over into the service of the synagogue from the temple liturgy; others were perhaps originally framed for the private use of individuals; while others still, expressing feelings and desires of the community or the people seem to have their origin in the synagogue itself. There are, as we should expect, expressions which imply the destruction of Jerusalem and the cessation of the sacrificial cultus, but these seem to be engrafted on older petitions or to be modifications of them, rather then the substance of new ones. On the other hand the nucleus of the prayers is doubtless of greater antiquity.

The three prefatory benedictions bless the God of the Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Mighty God, who nourishes the living and revives the dead; the Holy God. Petitions follow for knowledge, repentance, forgiveness, deliverance from affliction, healing, for a bountiful year, the gathering of the dispersed of Israel, the restoration of good government, the destruction of heretics and apostates, for the elders of

the people and upright converts, for the rebuilding of the temple and the right of the Davidic dynasty, for the hearing of prayer, the restoration of sacrificial worship; closing with thanksgiving for God's goodness and loving kindness,and a final prayer for peace and the welfare of all God's people.

The reading of the Scripture was, as has been said a characteristic feature of the synagogue service, and probably goes back in some form or other to the beginnings of the institutions. Moses is said to have ordained that portion of the Law should be read on sabbaths, holy days, new moons and intermediate days of the festivals; while Ezra is said to heve prescribed the reading on market days (Monday and Thursday) and at the afternoon service on the Sabbath. It would be most natural that at the festal seasons passages from the Pentateuch in which the feast is appointed and its rites prescribed should be studied in the schools and read and expounded in the synagogues, and that among several possible selections of this kind one should become customary. This is the case in the oldest list of appointed lessons which includes not only readings for the great festivals, but other readings too. It is intrinsically probable that when readings on ordinary sabbaths first came to be customary, a passage from the Pentateuch was freely selected by the head of the synagogue or by the reader, as long continued to be the case with the Prophets. Ultimately the Pentateuch was divided into sections (sedarim) of such lengths as to complete the cycle at the completion of a definite time. In the Babylonian Talmud it is

noted that the Jews in the West read the Pentateuch through once in three years, at variance with the Balylonian Jews, who at that time were accustomed to finish it in one year.

The reading at certain services in the synagogue of a selection from the Prophets as a close to the lesson from the Pentateuch is mentioned in the Mishnah as a familiar custom, but without any regulations concerning it further than that a legal congregation (ten men) must be present.

In the choice of the selection from the Prophets appropriateness to the preceding reading from the Pentateuch is very important, though the assigning of a particular lesson from the Prophets as a pendant to every lesson from the Pentateuch must be later than the division of the Pentateuch into sections of definite lenght and the establishment of the custom of reading not only in course but in cycle.

In the Palestinian synagogue the lessons were read in Hebrew, and an interpreter standing beside the reader translated them into Aramaic. In earlier times the practice was probably simpler and more elastic. The translation was supposed to be extempore; the object of the translation was not to turn the Scripture word for word into another language, but to give the hearers an understanding of the sense; it was in intention, therefore, a free interpretation rather than a literal reproduction, and it is hardly to be questioned that the early interpreters in some cases exercised considerable freedom in Paraphrase. It is even possible that in the first age of the institution translation and homily were not

yet differentiated, and the interpreter was also the expository preacher. How early the homily became an independant part of the synagogue service is not known. It was so in the times of Jesus; it was so in the Hellenistic synagogues of which Philo writes, and Paul later in his missionary expeditions habitually used the opportunity that the discourse gave to introduce his gospel to Jews and proselytes, and Gentiles frequenting the synagogue. Preaching in the synagogue was not the prerogative of any class, nor was any individual regularly appointed to conduct this part of the service; but it was only natural that those whose life study had been the Scriptures and the religion of their people should be found more profitable for instruction, than unschooled men.

The homily was in the nature of the case the climax and most variable part of the service, and its fashion changed greatly with changing times and circumstances.

The preacher closed his homily with a brief prayer in the language of the discourse itself,upon which followed the ascription "May His great name be blessed forever and ever" and if we recall how many times Paul used this ascription in his salutations, greetings, blessings, and prayers as introductions to exaltations of Christ, we may better understand how the essence of the service of the synagogue prepared him for his conversion.

The central teachings in the synagogues were the Lordship of God and the Wrath of God. Between these blossomed the sense of human guilt and rose Paul's conception of sin.

CHAPTER III

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF SIN

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The most important event in Paul's life is his conversion. This was the decisive factor in his theology. Henceforward his estimate of things was an entirely different one. All that had before seemed to him great and important, was now of little worth, because it was the knowledge of Jesus on the contrary, which dictated to him the shape and fashion of all his presuppositions. We have to engage ourselves with this, because according to Paul and many different theologians this experience was that on which his theology was entirely founded. So the entire Pauline theology contains a very strong personal note. This can only be understood as the theoretical result of the conversion of the apostle. The religious experience which Paul had before Damascus radically changed many religious and theological tenets which, till then, seemed to him immovable. In his mind the world of belief had to adjust itself anew.

Of Paul, we know very little directly concerning his youth, his parentage, and his relations. Only from single passages in the letters and Acts we can reconstruct the facts of Paul's life. Luke the author of the Acts places

the following statement in Paul's mouth:

> "I am a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, brought up in the city, trained at the feet of Gamaliel in the strict system of our ancestral law." [1]

His parents were ardent Pharisees [2] and taught their children the "ancestral traditions" [3]. Why or when they went to live at Tarsus, we have no means of knowing. According to Jerome the parents ~~would~~ might have been escaped to Tarsus from Gischala in North Galilee when the Romans sacked the latter. It is significant that they chose Gamaliel as his teacher in Jerusalem.

> "Paul possessed a very keen intellect, which was developed in this school in a definite direction. The art of dissecting maxims, drawing conclusions from premisses, following up whole chains of inference, rebutting objections, all this he had learned in Jerusalem; and with it, of course, the art of subtle polemic." 4

Nevertheless it was by no means an insignificant fact that he grew up amid Greek surroundings. He gained so much from them that he was able to become to the Greeks a Greek. He must have been brought up to speak Aramaic [5] and Greek equally at home. He read his Old Testament both in the Hebrew and in the Greek Septuagint, if we may judge from the quotations in his Epistle. His style was remarkable.

> "Amid all its laboured movement and palpable inaccuracy there may often be perceived a sense of rhetorical form, and especially of rhythm in the articulation and rounding of his sentences, such as he could hardly have acquired without stylistic instruction and practice. Let the reader recall only, as one instance, the construction of that supremely beautiful hymn of love." [6]

. . . . . .

1. Acts 22:3
2. Acts 23:6; Phil. 3:5,6.
3. Gal. 1:14 (Moffat).
4. W.Wrede, Paul, p.5.
5. Acts 22:2.
6. I.Cor. 13; W.Wrede, Paul, p.4.

Still, in the main, the culture of Paul is the culture of the Rabbis. He was strongly Jewish. He says of himself:

> "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." 1

He was accordingly brought up on the Jewish view of the Law and of sin as transgression of a definite command of God. Years after he had abandoned the Jewish point of view he could write:

> "I had not known sin, except through the Law." 2

To the Greek mind the gods were essentially immanent - here on earth near us and very like human beings on a magnified scale. The Jew began at the other end; and since the eighth century before Christ God was to him the transcendent ruler, the all-holy and all-high, who gave his Law to his people.

Paul became a Pharisee. But when we hear this word Pharisee we remember Jesus' words on the Pharisees. Was Paul like one of the Pharisees:

> "Doubtless His (Jesus) strong words cannot justly be applied in all their lenght and breadth to every man who was enrolled among the Pharisees." 3

Paul:

> "clearly was a supporter not only of Pharisean pietism, but, within that extraordinarily active and precise body, of the most fanatical enthusiasts." 4

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1. Phil. 3:5,6.
2. Rom. 7:7.
3. H.C.Sheldon, New Testament Theology, p.9.
4. A.Deissmann, Paul, p.94.

God to the young Saul, was not a personal friend but a majestic Ruler. Drilled as he had been in the thousand rules for life laid down by the Pharisees he became obsessed with the weight of it all. The Pharisees did not move them with one of their fingers. So Saul's conscience knew no peace: there was no rest from the fear of breaking some commandment. No one can doubt that this was born of a genuine, deep devotion and ever-flowing enthusiasm. Comparing himself with those of his own age who used to sit beside him in the classroom memorizing the Rabbinic traditions, he could justifiably speak of himself as being

> "more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers".1

> "On the other hand, his clear and sincere eye was not blind to the contrast, which while constantly showing itself in his own life in the opposition between willing and doing [2] was present as everywhere in the world, in his surroundings, as a contradiction between external piety and inner depravity." [3]

We can imagine with what horror and revulsion a man occupied with such expectations would hear the Christian message that Christ had already come and been manifested in the flesh, and had been crucified at Jerusalem by the Roman Governor. Faye - a French writer - says of him:

> "Aussi quand il entendait les chrétiens soutenir que Jésus-Christ crucifié était ce Messie, il ne pouvait contenir son indignation. C'était un scandale à la fois pour son intelligence et pour sa piété." [4]

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1. Gal. 1:14.
2. Rom. 7:15 ff.
3. A.Deissmann, Paul, p.94.
4. E.de Faye, Saint Paul, p.9.

There was a verse in Deuteronomy[1] which came to his mind with crushing force:"He that is hanged is accursed of God".

And Saul the Rabbi, as he sat in the council -gathered to try Stephen - and gnashed his teeth with fury, little dreamed that this was the message which he peculiarly among Christian Apostles was to develop and preach in many lands.[2] But certainly it was unforgettable when he heard the dying man's prayer for his judges and executioners. Many an evil man has gone to his death courageously: but this was more than courage, it was sublime love for his enemies.

> "With what deep pain did the apostle in later life look back on this period of his experience! when the vehemence of his nature, united with all he thought holy, burst out into the flame of a fanaticism which shrank from no means of violence.[3] But then he thought it was a red-letter day in his life when he saw the bleeding body of a Christian lying at his feet, mangled by the stone-throwing mob."[4]

God prepared Saul for the way of Damascus, and the career of the Pharisaic zealot came to a swift and sudden end. Suddenly, is his own word about it, as often as he tells us again and again the ever-fresh story of his conversion. He feels the contrast of his present life with the past so strongly that he constructs no bridge between the past and present. As existence and non existence, as life and death, his Christian and pre-Christian periods of life separate one from the other.

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1. Deut. 21:23.
2. Acts 26:16.
3. Gal. 5:11; I.Cor. 1:23.
4. H.Weinel, St.Paul, p.67.

"The old is departed; behold it has become new".[1] The man as a whole was no longer the same. All his faculties and passions received, as it were, a new soul, were seized and transfused by the new conviction, and rendered serviceable for new tasks. But we must note what some scholars say:

> "The great change which the apparition wrought in Paul did not lie in the moral region. As a Pharisee he had served God with passionate devotion and deep sincerity, and lived for his will. He needed not, like other converts, converts from a life of sin, to turn away from sensual pleasure and love of the world that he might be thenceforward a penitent and holy man."[2]

> "It is not any special sin or bad habit of his own of which Paul is thinking when he proclaims the fallen state of man and his need of salvation from above; but it is an unregenerate state of the will, which makes a division between man and God and forms a barrier against the stream of divine grace."[3]

That Paul led a sinful life in the pre-Christian period of his life, and was only freed from the chains of this life by his conversion is out of the question.

What was the result of his conversion?

The apostle described his experience before Damascus as a revelation of the heavenly Christ. He saw Christ as a heavenly form surrounded by divine splendor. It were much too little to say that he simply understood that this Jesus so bitterly persecuted by him is, nevertheless, the Messiah. The heavenly Christ, in that hour, drew Paul into

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1. II.Cor. 5:17.
2. W.Wrede, Paul, p.10.
3. P.Gardner, The Religious Experience of St.Paul, p.22,23.

life communion with himself. And ~~since~~ from ~~the~~ that hour before Damascus, it became alive in him that Christ - and no other - had called him into his service and made him his apostle. A transcendent power, the Spirit of God, had seized him and in the power of the Spirit he knows that the flesh and an opposing potency is now abolished, for the Spirit is the new ruling principle of his life. It clearly appears from some striking passages in the Epistles that St.Paul regarded his reception into the Christian Church, the body of Christ, as an escape from servitude into liberty. Inseparably bound up with this sense of new freedom is the consciousness that he owes all to grace. He himself can claim no share in his own transformation, not even the slightest. It is the effect of a miracle, wrought by grace. In that hour every false zeal was killed in him, the grace of God dawned upon him. Now the grace of God is to him the guiding star of all religious life. He is filled with new impulses and powers, is raised above the limits of the earthly; freed from the temporal; detached from the world; exempt from the power and guilt of sin. The love of God filled his heart. But this is a phrase of ambiguous meaning; it may mean the love of God to man, or it may mean the love of man to God. We may see in some passages of St.Paul Epistles that in his belief the love of God to man came to him first, and stirred up in the depth of his soul a return of passion. St.Paul seems to be thinking of his own conversion when he writes:

"God proves His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." 1

He felt a stress of divine love flowing in his heart, acquired what had been the most ardent desire of his heart, that is, to become an heir and citizen of the Messianic kingdom and to be in harmony with God.

These are the basal elements in the religious changing of Saul. Saul disappeared and Paul - the newborn in Christ - rose up, and with this rebirth came to him a new conception of sin and a new view of its remedies in the Atonment and Grace of Christ and man's response in faith and complete self-surrender to the triune God.

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1. Rom. 5:8

CHAPTER IV

CONCEPTS RELATED TO SIN IN ST.PAUL

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A. LAW

1. Meaning

In Hebrew the word "Torah" means primarily "direction" given to another. It is of frequent occurence in Old Testament signifying: 1.Direction instruction concerning a specific matter such as offerings, etc., 2.Ethical and religious instruction, 3.A definitely formulated body of statutes, or ordinances, whether ethical, religious, or civil, but in general in accordance with the Hebrew conception of the origin of the law, conceived of as divinely authorized.

The Greek word νόμος (from νέμω) means properly, "that which is distributed, apportioned, appointed". From rhis primary meaning to the meaning which it came later to have "law" very much in the present, technical sense of the English word "statute", "ordinance", or a "body or code of statutes". The word first appears in Greek literature in Hesiod. From Hesiod down to New Testament times at least, the general idea underlying all its uses in extant non-biblical literature seems to be that of the expression of the thought or will of one mind or group of minds intended or tending to control the thought or action of others. It may refer to a single rule, the authority issuing it and enforcing it being conceived of as divine or conceived

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to be of human origin.

In New Testament as in classical writers, Old Testament, and Apocr., νόμος is employed in the imperative not in the declarative sense. It is not the formula expressing a general fact, but a principle or statute, or body of instruction, which calls for obedience.

Paul makes difference between the two expressions ἄνομος and νόμος. By the term ὁ νόμος he generally means the Mosaic system. When νόμος has the article the reference is to the Mosaic law specifically; where the article is omitted, he still refers to that law but contemplates it more generically, as the expression of the divine will. It becomes evident that the view sometime held, that ὁ νόμος denotes the Mosaic law, and νόμος moral or divine law in general, is not strictly correct. No difference in kind exists between ὁ νόμος and νόμος, but at most a difference at emphasis; a difference in form of thought not in substance or content. The Mosaic law is for Paul the embodiment of the divine law in general; that by νόμος he should denote anything different from that law would be quite contrary to his view of its nature and purpose.[1]

There is another distinction too that some scholars have made in the notion of law. This is the division of the law into moral and ceremonial portions. It is easy for us to trace and estimate the relation of its several parts,

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1. Rom. 2:12-15.

and to distinguish what is spiritual and permanent in it, from what is ceremonial and temporary. But Paul never made such a division, it is a modern classification.[1] That view, that the ritual portions of the system did not, according to Paul, belong to the substance of the law, is destitute of all evidence, and wholly improbable in itself.

2. Relation to Sin

The sin presupposes a law. "Where no law is, there is no transgression",[2] The Jewish people possessed in its sacred writings the Revelation of God regarding His nature, and also a written law, which placed before its eyes the will of God in immoveable objectivity. This law was given through Moses,[3] and was written down by him in the Pentateuch; but the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures was also a revelation of the divine will,[4] and the tenor of this Revelation is that the human will can only find its happiness in harmony with the divine. The law is a representation of the truth from which they learned to know the will of God and to prove the difference between good and evil.[5] It was an advantage to the Jews to have a written law as an objective revelation. Even the Jews were conscious of

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1. "It was pursued" - first - "by Catholic and gnostic teachers of the second century,who distinguished the eternal law of nature,from the transitory law of ritual." P.Wernle, Beginnings of Christianity, v.I. p.293.
2. Rom. 4:15.
3. I.Cor. 9:9. II.Cor. 3:15. Rom.5:14.
4. I.Cor.14:21. Rom.3:19.
5. Rom. 2:18-20.

this as a great advantage, they gloried in it,[1] on the ground of it they assumed the place of teachers and judges of the Gentiles. Although the Gentiles possessed a law in a certain sense also. Paul starts from the assumption that the Gentiles have originally had the knowledge of God,[2] and that, too, in consequence of a revelation of Him, which has manifested unto them that which was knowable by them, that which they from their own standpoint should have known of His nature. It is true the Gentiles had not also the positive Mosaic law; in this sense they are ἄνομοι[3], they sin ἄνομος[4]. But the very fact that they have, nevertheless individual virtues, through which they, from natural inclination, and without the impulse of a positive law, fulfil individual requirements of this law, shows that they are a law unto themselves and that the work which is commanded by the positive law is written in their heart as a work which is demanded by God. God had done His part to lead them to the knowledge of Him, so that they might be without excuse if they, ~~nevertheless,~~ did not attain to it.[5] And they did not attain it. Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.[6]

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1. Rom. 2:23.
2. Rom. 1:21.
3. I.Cor. 9:21.
4. Rom. 2:12.
5. B.Weiss, The Religion of the New Testament, p.232.
6. Rom. 1:21. Eph. 4:18.

The Jews are on the same ground. They also did not fulfil the law. The great idea of Hebrew mind beside the law was righteousness. They are always together and they were essentially correlated, and the one can only be understood in connection with the other. So soon as we touch the sphere of Revelation we come prominently within the range of moral law; we find ourselves in face of a divine will, and of human wills rightfully subject to it.

> "The harmony of the Divine and human is righteousness; and the key-note of the Old Testament through all its pages is, that righteousness alone is blessedness." 1

> "Blessed are they that keep judgement, and he that doeth righteousness at all times."[2]

The mind of the Jew was impregnated by the idea of law, It was the law which made his religion. The two terms, or the two ideas, had become coordinate with him. He rested in the law, and made his boast of God as its Author. It was to him a vast system, all equally of divine authorship. It was the mean and way of righteousness and salvation. The law is the highest good, the source of life and illumination, it has a sanctifying and consoling power and preserves men from death.

3. Relation to Christ

Paul could not accept this conception of the law. Christ was in the center of his thoughts and he saw clearly that a God-pleasing righteousness is not attainable through

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1. J.Tulloch, The Christian Doctrine of Sin, p.138.
2. Psalm 106:3.

the keeping of the law. His argument in the Epistle to the Galatians against his Jewish Christian opponents, and also many things in the Epistle to the Romans, are only to be fully explained from the necessity of the critical position against Judaism. Paul is fully convinced that no man can, by a mere effort of will, turn from evil to good. It is only by putting on Christ, by being buried with him, and rising again, that a man can reach the better life. No Gentile by mere practice of morality, no Jew by mere adherence to the law, could escape from the slough. It was "a ministration of death".[1] It could not secure its own ideal end, because it was not a spiritual power. It could punish disobedience, induce to outward conformity, and even by motives and promises induce to obedience, but these combined results did not constitute a perfect righteousness, and could not, therefore, fulfil the conditions of a justification to be received on the basis of debt, not of grace. And here appears the greatest obstacle of all to the securing of righteousness by the law. It was powerless against the sinful, fleshly nature of man.[2] As an outward letter and as elementary it was weak through the flesh, that is, unable to cope with the power of sinful desire. Two reasons appear to have led him to this view, one theoretical, and the outcome of reflection on the meaning of Christ's death; the other prac-

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1. II.Cor. 3:7.
2. Rom. 8:3.

tical, and based on the contrast between the weakness of humanity and the stern uncompromising character of the law, which merely forbids certain actions and threatens punishment for the non-fulfilment of the opposite actions, but offers no assistance to man in his struggle to fulfil its requirements, no inward motive to inspire him in his seeking after righteousness. Above all the death of Christ was a vicarious suffering endured to set us free.

> "One passage in the law pronounces every one that is hanged is accursed of God. Therefore he that is hanged is accounted a transgressor or accursed. Therefore, He became a curse for us, and our transgression has received its due punishment in His death. Thereby we have been set free from the law." 1

Thereby Paul destroyed the idea that the legal system of the Jewish people was true religion. If righteousness were attainable by deeds of the law, there could not be another way of salvation, and the way of the cross would be rendered unnecessary and useless.[2] But this is impossible. The way by the law must therefore be shut and the way by the cross is the only path of life. Paul even employs a historical and exegetical argument founded upon the relation of the law to the promise given to Abraham,[3] in which it is shown that the principle on which Abraham was justified was that of faith. The testimony of the Old Testament was that Abraham believed God, and his faith was reckoned to him for righteous-

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1. P.Wernle, Beginnings of Christianity, v.I. p.298.
2. Gal. 2:21; 5:4.
3. Gal. 3; Rom. 4.

ness. On the basis of this testimony Paul asserts that the promise to Abraham did not guarantee its blessings to him and to his seed on the ground of a legal obedience, but on the ground of a righteousness which is by faith.[1] He therefore concludes that the way to acceptance with God is the way of faith, and that the validity of the promises made of old rests upon this principle.[2] When we speak of the destruction of the law we must remember the words of Méndégoz:

> "La négation de la justice par la loi n'est que l'expression, sous une autre forme, de la foi en la valeur absolue de l'oeuvre rédemptrice du Christ." 3

Then if the law is destroyed, has it any aim? Yes. But on another ground.

> "It must be a system subordinate to the principle which existed before the law, and for the more complete revelation and realization of which the law was given." 4

Until Christ the function of the law is to show what we ought to do and what is sin. Paul says, in Rom. 7:7 : "I had not known lust except the law has said: Thou shalt not covet". Only when the law of God confines the natural impulses within those limitations that must be set for them, in order that the use of the good things of the world that have been created for us may not conduce to our destruction; man becomes conscious of the

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1. Rom. 4:13.
2. Rom. 4:16. Gal. 3:21;22.
3. E.Méndégoz, Le péché et la rédemption, p.110.
4. G.B.Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p.369.

possibility of a selfdetermination that may set itself up against the recognized will of God. Paul had an experience that he regarded as typical of the experience of all, namely that this consciousness leads to sin. Only when the prohibition came did sin become actual in him; the latter took advantage of the opportunity in order to influence the will through the Law to seek that which was forbidden.[1] We are thus led to the conclusion that the purpose of the law was to quicken the consciousness and intensify the power of sin. The first step in the development of sin by the law is seen in the fact that "by the law is the knowledge of sin".[2] By the revelation of sin in its true character the law becomes a "ministration of death".[3] By revealing sin as transgression of divine right it "works wrath"[4] to the disobedient. Men see themselves in the mirror of divine law as guilty. It did not conduct men to peace:

> "It was Paul's own experience of dissatisfaction and unrest of soul as a Pharisee which formed the basis of his characteristic doctrine that the law was given to make transgression abound, in order that men might be led by a consciousness of sin and a sense of their inability to overcome it, to resort to the grace of of God in Christ through which alone they could find deliverance. It was the hopelessness of success in the effort to attain peace by deeds of legal obedience,

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1. Rom. 7:8.
2. Rom. 3:20.
3. II.Cor. 3:7.
4. Rom. 4:15

> which he had himself experienced, that led Paul to deny that such peace was attainable by the legal method." 1

The state into which the law brought him was miserable. And in every case law makes men distressed.

But if the law intensify the sin and makes men distressed, is it good? Yes. There are people who say they cannot tell what sin is; they are not conscious of it, and they may count themselves happy in this unconsciousness. Not so the apostle. There was great misery to him in the consciousness of sin; but there was something still more dreadful in its unconsciousness. This was to have sunk out of the sphere of moral experience altogether, into a mere animal or fleshly sphere; to have lost not merely the Divine, but so to speak, the capacity of it, - any trace of it upon which the higher power could take hold, and draw the sinner to itself. This was the worst of all states to him - a state in which he had found himself when "without the law sin was dead".[2] The state into which the law brought him was miserable enough, but its misery was better than insensibility.

> "Better to feel the wretchedness of having come short of a moral ideal, than not to have such an ideal at all."[3]

In his elaborate argument showing the relation of the law to sin, Paul is careful to guard against the misconcep-

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1. G.B.Stevens, The Pauline Theology, p.174.
2. Rom. 7:8.
3. J.Tulloch, The Christian Doctrine of Sin, p.157.

tion that the sinfulness which the law quickens and occasions is due to any moral defect in the law itself: "Is the law sin? God forbid!"[1] Paul asserts in the strongest terms that the law is divine in its origin, and in its nature, "holy, just, and good".[2] It was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator";[3] it is "spiritual,"[4] that is, of divine origin. So also in his argument showing the inadequacy of the legal dispensation to the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, he is careful to urge that there is no opposition between the legal system and the gospel of faith preached beforehand to him:"Is the law then against the promises of God?God forbid!"[5] In the redemptive work of Christ, the law finds its fulfilment. The law aims at life by pointing at Christ ,who alone can give it. Therefore the true relation of the law to the gospel is that of a subordinate position and preparatory office. The two come into collision only when this position and office of the law are misunderstood, and the law is regarded as a means of salvation, which in itself it never was and never can be.

> "So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor."[6]

The law was designed to train the people in the knowledge of their own sinfulness, and by its severe discipline

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1. Rom. 7:7.
2. Rom. 7:12
3. Gal. 3:19.
4. Rom. 7:14.
5. Gal. 3:21.
6. Gal. 3:24;25.

"to humble the proud to desire Christ's aid" (Luther)

"For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth." 1

4. Law as formal term

Paul sometimes used the word "law" as a formal term denoting a principle, force, or order of working. In Gal.6:2 "the law of Christ" means evidently that the principle which Christ commanded and illustrated in his life requires his disciples to share the cares and troubles of others. In Romans are found many similar examples:

"Where, then, is boasting? It has been excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith." 2

In this general sense of the word there is a law of faith, - a principle or order of faith, as opposed to that of works. The most striking example of this usage is found in the description of the conflict between the better self, the "inner-man", and sin in Rom. 7:7 sq., especially in verse 23:

"But I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which is in my members".

This "other law" or "law of sin", is the binding power of evil, the reign of sin which has established itself in the flesh, and which antagonizes the "law of God" 3 with which

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1. Rom. 10:4.
2. Rom. 3:27
3. Rom. 3:22.

the "law of the mind",[1] the order and authority of reason and judgement, is in harmony.

B. Flesh

1. Meaning

Σάρξ bears throughout Greek literature the meaning "flesh", but is sometimes used by metonymy for the whole body. In the LXX it takes over from the Hebrew certain other derived meanings, e.g., "kindred", and "a corporeal living creature." In the New Testament certain further developments of meaning appear, and the word becomes one of the most important for the purposes of interpretation, especially of the Pauline Epistles. Paul's doctrine of human sinfulness cannot be understood without determining the meaning of the term, with which he constantly associates sin, and which he regards as sin's seat and sphere of manifestation. In the Old Testament beside this term we often find "spirit", denoting that God-given element of man's personality which is akin to the Divine Spirit. Thus the terms set in contrast two phases of human nature, - its merely natural impulses on the one side, and its affinities with God on the other. It has been commonly supposed that Paul founds his own doctrine upon this Old Testament basis. But many attempts have been made too, to show that at this

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1. Rom. 3:23.

point he deserts the Old Testaments ethical dualism, and constructs his view in accord with the natural and essential dualism of Hellenic philosophy.

How should this word - flesh - be understood, when it occurs in the Pauline epistles? We know what - at Paul's time - Philo and the author of the Book of Wisdom, and the Greeks from whom they drew their inspiration, thought on that subject. They deemed matter generally, and especially the fleshly part of human nature to be inherently and incurably evil.

2. Relation to Evil

The animated matter which we call our bodies was in their view necessarily, inevitably, universally a source of evil impulse; the problem of the spirit being to trample its unworthy companion under foot, and its hope to get finally rid of it by death. This view is accepted and deeply seated in the mystic religions of Oriental type, that the flesh is essentially and intrinsically evil, a foul prison wherin the spirits of men are immured. We can see this view was transferred upon Jesus, and John writes against it in his epistle:

> "Every man that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is a deceiver and an anti-Christ." 1

Did Paul accept this view? And according to him was the flesh, the material body intrinsically evil? It seemed

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1. II.John 7.

so in some passages of his epistles.

> "I know that in me, (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing",[1]

And when he goes so far as to say:

> "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," [2]

he appears to take the flesh as the principle of sin and sensuality, just as matter is the seat of evil for the Greeks. When he writes that the mind of the flesh [3] is at enmity against God, and that those who live after the flesh must die, he seems to regard the flesh as inherently evil. His passionate exclamation,

> "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" [4]

would express the very principle of Oriental ascetism. But for all Paul does not turn into a Greek. There is an effective barrier: the firm hold which he has, as a Jew, of the belief in the creation, which suffers no second principle to exist by the side of God, but derives the flesh as well as everything else from the Creator of the universe. It can only be an misunderstanding when it is maintained that Paul in a dualistic sense considers the flesh with its impulses as in itself sinful; or the supremacy which the former sensuous impulse in its more powerful development has gained over the spiritual life in man as the cause of sin. In both cases sin is made the product of God, who has created man

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1. Rom. 7:18.
2. Gal. 5:17.
3. Rom. 8:6, 7, 8.
4. Rom. 7:24.

as a carnal being and has ordained the laws of the development of his life. The image of God in man has found its expression in his carnal nature. The impulses that grow out of his God-like nature determine him only in agreemnet with the divine will. There is besides this a second barrier: his belief as a Christian that the world and all that is in it - the flesh therefore included - belong to God and those that are His, and that it is just the flesh in which the Spirit is predestined to lodge. Paul carefully distinguishes sin from the flesh. Sin dwells in the flesh, takes occasion of its impulses and passions, and makes it the sphere of its manifestation. But the flesh is never identified with sin or described as inherently and necessarily sinful.[1] It is clearer when we see that sin entered in the world by an act of disobedience and not by the flesh.

> "In Rom. 5:12 the apostle does not make sin adhere to the first man in virtue of his fleshly nature, but makes him fall into sin through disobedience and transgression, that is through an act of will, and thus sin comes first into the wolrd. In the same way, if the apostle had held the sensuous to be in itself the evil, he must have developed in his teaching an ascetic morality. But, as is well known, he does the very opposite; no man can in principle occupy a freer position with regard to the use of natural things than he, But even the concepts themselves, πνεῦμα and σάρξ, as used by him refuse to have that platonizing sense thrust on them. Paul, ascribed to man a pneuma related to God; but this pneuma, in which the divine is only a capacity to be developed, that is a capacity that may also be suppressed, is by no means conceived as good and holy in itself, but

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1. E.Méndégoz, Le péché et la rédemption, p. 38.

as is shown in I.Cor. 5:5; 7:34; II.Cor. 7:1. it is capable of pollution and even of destruction. And on the other hand, although he calls the σάρξ in its actual condition a σάρξ ἁμαρτίας [1], he does not by any means consider it as evil in itself, but distinguished it from the sin that dwelleth in us." [2]

3. Relation to Christ

Even Jesus (God) "was manifested in the flesh"[3] and "he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin" [4] It is said, and said correctly, that Paul traces back to the not merely sins of sensuality, such as unchastity, intemperance, and covetousness, but, as Gal. 5:19-21 especially illustrates, even the more spiritual sins, such as wrath, contention, malice and pride, and therfore he cannot have traced back human sinfulness merely to the preponderance of our sensuous nature over the spiritual. Paul expressly characterizes sin as selfishness, as living for self.[5] All natural and purely sensuous life is in its nature selfish; it desires and seeks nothing else than itself, its self-assertion and satisfaction. That is not a sinful selfishness, for where there is no moral nature there is also no immoral. Plants and beasts do not sin when they carelessly follow only the impulse of self-assertion and self-satisfaction. But where natural joins with supernatural in order to serve it as a support

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2. W. Beyschlag, New Testament Theology, v.I. p.40.
1. Rom. 8:3.
3. I.Tim. 3:16. Rom. 1:3.
4. II.Cor. 5:21.
5. Rom. 14:7. II.Cor. 5:15.

and as the instrument of its develpoment, if the natural throws off this servitude and becomes its own object, then the innocent natural selfishness becomes the immoral. According to the Greek view the flesh ought to be insanctifiable. It is not so regarded in the Pauline Epistles. Sometimes, indeed, it might seem as if the apostle did look at the flesh, or the body, as incurably evil, but if the flesh in itself were sinful then the body could not, before the transformation of its substance, belong to God as the temple of God.[1] The natural inference is that by flesh he meant more than the mere instrument of the sensuous life. The connection in which the phrase, "our old man", is used are such as to show that its meaning is substantially equivalent to that assigned to the flesh.[2] We have accordingly a plain hint that the latter term connotes something beyond the sensuous nature proper. The apostle refers to Christians as those who can appropriately be reckoned as being no longer in the flesh.[3] This is as much as indicating that flesh is not a name for an intrinsically evil substance.

> "In the light of these considerations we see to what extent they are right who suppose σάρξ to be used in the Greek sense. Metaphysically considered, the flesh is neutral; empirically considered it is sinful. Matter as such is not evil, nor is it the source of evil; but the body, as animated by a soul capable of feelings and appetites, is a source of temptation and a seat of evil. But since by a perversion of will sin entered the world, it has made the body its slave, and has subjected it to vanity and corruption."[4]

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1. I.Cor. 6:13,15,19.
2. Rom. 6:6. Eph. 4:22. Col. 3:9.
3. Rom. 7:5. 8:9.
4. G.B.Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, p.347.

Our sensuous nature, on the one hand, was to bring us impulses from without which, subject to the inner tribunal of conscience, should give occasion to moral acts of obedience, and so develop the moral personality; on the other hand, it was to be the instrument by which these inward acts of the will should be made outward acts; it was to be the organ by which the personality should act upon the world. In a word, the σάρξ was to serve and to be the instrument, and the πνεῦμα was to rule in man and to unfold itself in ruling, and in that to find its proper object.

4. Relation to the Spirit.

In the contrast between flesh and spirit we have to do, not with a metaphysical dualism based upon the inherent evil of matter and derived from the Greco-Alexandrian speculation, but with a view of man which has its basis in the Old Testament.

5. Several Interpretations

G.B.Stevens gives a very interesting distinction of the meaning of the flesh:

> "We may distinguish three shades of meaning in the Pauline use of the term: 1) the physical, in which is the body or members considered as the dwelling-place of sin; 2) the semi-ethical, in which the flesh as the seat of evil impulses is treated as an anti-spiritual power; 3) the ethical, in which the flesh denotes unregenerate human nature." [1]

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G.B.Stevens, The Pauline Theology, p.146.

He acknowledges in his other book:

> "From the review of the passages it seems evident to me that no definition of the σάρξ can be given which will be equally applicable to all the uses which Paul makes of this word." [1]

According to Ménégoz [2] there was an unfinished linguistical evolution in the meaning of these two words flesh and spirit to become synonymes of sin and sanctity. But I think further more, Paul did not find any good words for the different notions which were getting in use by Christianity and he uses in different senses the best word which he found: flesh. These different meanings should be the following according to Ernest De Witt Burton:[3]

> "1) Flesh: the soft, muscular parts of an animal body, living or once living. (I.Cor.15:39.)
> 2) Body: the whole material part of a living being. (II.Cor.12:7; Rom. 2:28; I.Cor.5:5; II.Cor.4:11.)
> 3) By metonymy: the basis or result of natural generation. (Rom.4:1; 9:3;5,8; I.Cor.10:18; Gal.4:23.)
> 4) A corporeally conditioned living being (as against the 'unconditioned' or the spiritually conditioned ones). (Rom. 1:3; 3:20; I.Cor. 1:29; 6:16; Gal. 1:16; 2:16.)
> 5) By metonymy: the creature side, the corporeally conditioned aspect of life, the external as distinguished from the internal and real, (reminding on the terminology of essence and existence), or the secular as distinguished from the strictly religious.(I.Cor.1:26; 7:28; Col.3:22.)
> 6) The product of natural generation apart from the morally transforming power of the Spirit of God(the spiritually regenerated); all that come to a man by inheritance rather than from the operation of the Divine Spirit. The term as thus used does not exclude, may even specifically include, whatever excellent power, privileges, etc., come by heredity, but whatever is thus derived is regarded as inadequate to enable man th achieve the highest good. (Rom.7:5; Phil.3:3,4.) (Difference between predestination and genius.)

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1. G.B.Stevens,The Theology of the New Testament,p.346.
2. E.Ménégoz, Le péché et la rédemption, p.56,57.
3. E.DeWitt Burton,Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, p.492, 493.

7) That element in man's nature which is opposed to goodness, that which makes evil; sometimes thought of as an element of himself, sometimes objectified as a force distinct from him ...(Rom. 8:6; Gal.5:13.)

C. Death

1. Relation to Sin

"The wages of sin is death"[1] writes the apostle. On the sin, the universal bondage, lies a judgement of God as universal: that is death. The relation between sin and death is the relation of cause and effect.

"For if by the trespass of the one the many died"[2]

and especially:

"Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin."[3]

And once again:

"Since by man came death ... for as in Adam all die."[4]

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of all this.Death as we know it, is the penalty, the consequence of sin.

"Le grand châtiment du péché, celui qui comprend tous les autres, c'est la mort."[5]

This statement is not an explanation of death, but it presupposes the apostle's peculiar idea of death, and explains it as the result of sin. He had diverse conception of death, and applied now the one and now the other. He takes a pro-

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1. Rom. 6:23.
2. Rom. 5:15.
3. Rom. 5:12.
4. I.Cor. 15:21,22.
5. Ménégoz, Le péché et la rédemption, p.75.

founder and more comprehensive view of death than we do; death is to him something that refers not merely to the body, but also to the soul; and not merely to the moment when soul and body are separated, and the soul set free perhaps to rise to a higher existence; it is a state and course of life in contradiction with that communion of body and soul which God intended, which begins long before the moment of separation, but is completed and revealed in that moment in order to remain permanent for body and soul - unless a higher power interposes.

2. Relation to Soul and Body

Death to the apostle is the sword of the eternal Judge, which pierces through soul and body, the effectual judgement of God which is felt beforehand in the soul,as a sense of guilt, as an inward sentence of death, and is felt in the body as weakness, as a feeling of perishableness long before it is consummated in the bodily death; death is manifest not merely in the failure of the body, but also in the soul, which, with all the deceptions of the lust of the world of sense gone from it, is confronted openly and inevitably with God's judgement.

3. Relation to the Fall

No doubt Paul, like other writers of the New Testament, got this conception of θάνατος from the Old Testament account of the Fall: for when it is said there:

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"[1] and Adam did not die bodily for centuries afterwards, the idea is suggested of a death which began in germ when Adam forfeited access to the tree of life, and so even in not dying immediately still became a child of death. The proof of this is the universal prevalence of death. Indubitably death reigns over all. But death, it is assumed, is the wages of sin; there had been no death among man had there been no sin; therefore all must be in some sense and to some extent sinners simply because all die. Death has swept away all the generations of mankind therefore all men in all generations have sinned.

4. As Natural Fact

What is meant by death? To the modern mind death is a purely natural fact. It comes in course of time as a natural issue of all organism, which by its very life spends itself, and hastens toward dissolution as an inevitable end. We cannot conceive any individual life perpetuated under the existing laws of the external world. Continued life is only possible through death; and new organisms can only spring from the decay of the old. The apostle looks on death as a law of nature; but in its application to man it is not an original, it is not merely a law of nature, but, as it affects the soul and rests on moral grounds, it is a penal law of the moral order of the world.

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1. Gen. 2:17.

The final shadow on human life because this life has turned itself away from God, and chosen the evil rather than the good.

5. As Consequence of Sin

But if the apostle's view of the consequences of sin included death as an external fact, a special meaning of the fact for him was spiritual. It was the spiritual which included the literal, and gave its deepest stamp, to the word, and not the reverse. Conceived in this spiritual sense, death may be a passive or active state. To be dead in sin is to be as yet in the mere natural fleshly state in which the higher life has not emerged, or the law been revealed - the state to which we formerly adverted as the worst of all in the apostle's view, without God and without hope in the world. This is spiritual death in its extreme form, in which the moral nature has been so injured, depressed, and weakened, that it is not conscious of its injury. There is no struggle, therefore; all is stillness of death. In this sense death, in so far as it is spiritual, is subjective. It is a state that is to say, in man, whether realized by him or not. But the word seems to point to the objective relation which all sin bears to God, as when it is said that death

"passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" [1]

The special name given to it is the "wrath of God".

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1. Rom. 5:12.

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrigheousness of man." [1]

"Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."[2]

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." [3]

These and many other passages speak of our sin as not merely misery to ourselves, but as offensive to God and the object of His judicial punishment. The special idea conveyed is - disobedience in us necessarily provokes judgement in God. There can be no other relation between human sin and divine righteousness but one of condemnation - of vindictive punishment. Sin deserves the sentence of death.

Let us now inquire from what sin does death inevitably follow in each individual? It is manifest that it cannot be the consequence of each one's actual sin, nor of the sinful state of each which is produced thereby. Death rules over man not only from the moment when he becomes capable of sinning, but from his very birth, yea, during his existence in the womb. If, therefore, death be at all the result of sin, it (together with what precedes and follows it) must be caused by a sin interwoven into

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1. Rom. 1:18.
2. Eph. 5:6:"For which things sake cometh the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."; Col.3:6.
3. Eph. 2:3.

our very nature, so that the universality of death is a weighty witness to the depravity of human nature. The apostle confirms this when he states as the destiny of human life that"in Adam all die",[1] and that "death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned,"[2] It could not be said that all died because all consciously and individually sinned, because millions of infants have died who have not sinned. If human life derives this sad fate of mortality from Adam, it must cleave to human nature as conditioned or tainted by sin.

6. Salvation in Christ

We were speaking of the death, but we must remember that Paul never tells us only of the death and sin. The center of his attention is Christ and he

> "determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." [3]

The relation of Christ to the fact of salvation is the single thought, and that one idea determines the passages throughout. The practical religious motive for urging the universality of sin and death is to magnify the universal destination of the grace of God in salvation. Christ's relation to salvation is the only point under consideration, so the relation of Adam to human sin is of importance only for the purpose of illustration. It is the universality of

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1. I.Cor. 15:22.
2. Rom. 5:12.
3. I.Cor. 2:2.

of sin and death as connected with Adam's transgression which serves to illustrate the universality of the purpose of grace in Christ. And we know Christ died for us. He who knew not sin by his death changed the horror of death. After Christ, as Paul exactly described death for the Christians: "to die is gain."[1] It is simply the door to the larger, the real life.

> "For I am in a strait ... having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better."[2]

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1. Phil. 1:21.
2. Phil. 1:23.

CHAPTER V

SIN ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL

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1. The Word Sin

ἁμαρτία and ἁμαρτάνω are derived etymologically from α and μέρος , the primary significance of the verb being therefore "to have no part in," but more commonly in usage, "to miss the mark," "to fall to attain." But it had also acquired as early as Homer and retained throughout the classical period a distinct ethical sense, "to do wrong, to err, to sin." The noun ἁμαρτία first appears in Aeschylus and ἁμάρτημα in his contemporary Sophocles. Neither word seems to have been employed in a physical sense, but both are used of non-moral defects and of sin in the strictly ethical sense. By its termination ἁμαρτία would naturally mean the quality of an act or person, "defectiveness," "sinfulness."

In New Testament both verb and noun are used in the ethical sense only. The influence of the etymology of the word is to be seen in the fact that there is still in the background of the conception the idea of a standard to which action ought to but does not confirm. The standard

is usually conceived of as set by God, rarely by the civil power.

2. Meaning of Sin by St.Paul

In his writings the apostle Paul emphasized the internal, yet not to the exclusion of the external. Under the conception of sin he included outward acts and inward thoughts and feelings: on the one side murder, fornication, drunkenness, and on the other envy, malice, jealousies, wraths, etc. Sin is non-conformity to the divine standard of character and conduct, and, whatever the influence contributing to it, involves individual guilt, whenever its non-conformity to the standard of right is perceived by the wrong-doer.

The Pauline ἁμαρτία differs from the yeser ha-ra in that the latter designates not the doing of sin, but a force operative in the conscious life and impelling one to evil conduct, while with Paul ἁμαρτία is primarily the doing of sin, and when used by metonymy denotes the impulse, tendency, or habit which is dormant till roused to life by the commandment.

3. Original Sin

St.Paul is the last expression of the consciousness of original sin in the Bible. Within the sphere of Revelation we do not reach any further development of the doctrine. We can find in his epistles everythings, which are

the consequences of the Fall, but in the apostolic age St.Paul is the writer amongst all the Christian teachers, who most clearly mentions the origin of sin; and attributes its entrance to the transgression of Adam and Eve; in the Garden of Eden Adam disobeyed God's command and sin has in some mysterious manner descended until the whole human race is contaminated.

There are two important texts where he mentions clearly the origin of sin. In the chapter on the resurrection St.Paul says:

> "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."[1]

And in the Epistle to the Romans[2] he mentions that sin and death entered through the transgression of Adam and that grace came through Jesus Christ. The story of the Fall is used to illustrate sin and grace. St.Paul traced the origin of human sin to the Fall. The "wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."[3] There can be no other relation between our unrighteousness and the righteousness of God but a relation of condemnation.(Basis of Kirkegaard's existential theology). And this relation is passed over to men by the Fall. "And so death has passed upon all men, for that (ἐφ' ᾧ) all have sinned." Augustine was the first who explained in

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1. I.Cor. 15:22.
2. Rom. 5:12.
3. Rom. 1:18.

this meaning the Rom. 5:12-; Augustine translated these words "in whom all have sinned" and this translation has passed into the Vulgate. His version of this phrase is found abundantly as elsewhere in his treatise "De peccatorum meritis and remissione," which, he says (Retract 2:23), he was compelled to write against the new heresy of Pelagius.

Dealing with his own translation - in quo omnes peccaverunt - he applies the "quo" sometimes to "peccatum" and sometimes to Adam - "ille unus homo" - forgetful, apparently, that ἐφ' ᾧ could not agree with ἁμαρτία. Some modern scholars - as for instance G.A.Barton[1] - say on this passage:

> "As to the first of them it has been customary since the time of St.Augustine to say that St.Paul believed that all men sinned in Adam, but this opinion is based upon a mistranslation of a Greek idiomatic phrase in the Old Latin translation which St.Augustine employed. The phrase occurs in Rom. 5:12- "As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, because all sinned." It so happens that in this passage St.Paul, instead of using the ordinary Greek word for "because" ( ), employed a somewhat infrequent idiom, ἐφ' ᾧ , which the Revised Version renders "for that". This phrase the translators of the Old Latin misunderstood and so rendered it literally by in eo, "in him". Naturally, therefore, St.Augustine understood St.Paul to say that all men sinned in Adam, whereas St.Paul says nothing of the sort."

No modern scholar can be said to advocate this translation. But it is not necessary, because we can find the real meaning of this text without making some question

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1. G.A.Barton, Studies in the New Testament Christianity, p. 72.

of the translation. In this passage sin and death are represented as the ruling power in the world. Adam is the source through which they have entered into the world, Through his one act of sin, Adam not only fell himself, but the line of spiritual integrity was broken in him. The flaw extended to the race.

> "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."[1]

In other words, sin passed to us from Adam, and death from sin. This is the simple meaning of the words as they stand in our version.

4. Jews and Gentiles

As for the rest, the Apostle especially in this epistle begins with a regular process of proof, that all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under sin. Until this fact is admitted and acknowledged, there is no place for and no need of the Gospel, which is God's method of saving sinners. Paul therefore begins by asserting God's purpose to punish all sin. He then shows that the Gentiles are universally chargeable with the sin of impiety; that although knowing God, they neither worshiped him as God, nor are thankful. With the Jews, he tells us, the case was no better. They had more correct knowledge of God and of his law, and many institutions of divine appointment, so that their advantages were great every way. Ne-

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1. Rom. 5:12.

vertheless they were as truly and as universally sinful as the Gentiles. Their own Scripture, which of course were addressed to them, expressly declare, There is none righteous no not one.

Concerning the I.Cor. 15:22, we can see that Paul looks at man not from the outside, but from the inside, and sees the race everywhere bound together by inward links. The unity of the human race is with St.Paul no mere natural unity, or unity of external conditions. When he speaks of man, even on the lower or earthly side of his being, as represented by Adam, he thinks of him as a being under moral conditions and responsibilities. The transmission of sin, therefore, is with him not a mere accumulation of evil disposition and tendencies, but an injury in the will or moral power. This injury is characterized by him as death. He had stated that sin was introduced into the world by one man, or by Adam's transgression of the divine law, and that death had followed sin, and passed upon all.

5. Justice

Justice was a common term in the later Judaism especially concerning God and his relation to men. God's relation to men is often represented according to legal analogies. For Paul these legal analogies disappeared after his conversion but the ground of these did not

disappear. For him it is closely connected with the notion of sin. God is just and pure who hates sin. Justice is the essence of the divine life and it is the condition of the eternal life for man. As the life of righteousness was the realization of the divine Will for man, so the life of unrighteousness and moral disorder was the reverse of this, and therefore hateful to God. As the one was the object of divine complacency, the other was the object of divine wrath. The sin is the absence of justice. The apostle tells

> "when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" [1]

and

> "know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." [2]

The Jews conceived justice and justification as a result of human achievement; Paul conceived it as a free gift of God's grace.

For the Jews the way of righteousness was the law. But they could not fulfil it. They transgressed it. It is the positive side of the unrighteousness.

The source of sin in the Gentile world was the obscuration of the idea of God. Man having sunk away from God, necessarily sank away from the life of righteousness which was only to be found in the knowledge of the divine character, and conformity to the divine will. Always if

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1. Rom. 6:20.
2. I.Cor. 6:9.

man separates himself from the eternal source of his life in order to be his own master and to obtain satisfaction by living to himself, he incurs the contradiction of losing himself amid the things of this world. There was a divine voice which made itself heard through all, passing judgement on such things; and the worst that could be said of the Gentiles was that they

> "knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them, that do them."[1]

6. Idolatry

The form in which the power of sin most clearly manifested itself in the Pauline world was idolatry. This he hated with all the strength of his nature, not merely because idolatry was a philosophical error regarding the nature of God, but because through this error it started mankind on the wrong course towards bad and harmful ends, and became thus the cause of numberless errors and sins. In idolatry the false conception of the Divine nature has become active and misleading, and makes itself a terrible power among men.

Sin is a force acting on man's nature, which expresses itself in the deterioration of the individual, and which steadily becomes stranger and more dominant in him. At every step that man takes backwards towards degradation and death, he becomes weaker and less fitted

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1. Rom. 1:32.

to resist the power of sin that rules him. His nature grows more and more corrupt. His will loses tone and becomes enslaved to the passions or caprices of the moment.

It is involved in Paul's view, and this was his inheritance from the ancient and characteristic Hebrew conception, that man degenerate through error; and that man's earliest religion ideas are not so wrong and false as his later conceptions. Backsliding goes on steadily, when it has once set in. In other words, tha savage man of the present day is not the primitive man, but an advanced stage of degradation, and idolatry in the Greek or the Egyptian or other pagan forms is the result also of degradation from an earlier simplicity, which had not been so far removed from the truth as the modern savage is. The history of paganism, therefore, always becomes a racial degeneration; because paganism is in its nature human and erroneous, and does not seek after the ideal of the true God.

7. Jesus and Love

Jesus summed up all righteous action under the single term "love"; and observing that in all the things which He calls sin there is an element of selfishness, in the sense of grasping things for one's self regardless of the welfare of others, or excessive self-assertion,

this may be understood to be the characteristic quality of sin, viz., isolation of one's self from the world in which one lives, refusal to live in reciprocally beneficial relation to the community of which one is an integral part. Paul does not state the matter thus. But when he points to Christ as our pattern, declares that "even Christ pleased not himself",[1] And in several sayings of the apostle Paul, the great turning point between the old life, under the prevailing principle of sin, and the new life originated by the divine Spirit, is described as a man's ceasing to live to himself, to seek his own to love a worldly selfish life;[2] in a word that the power of selfishness must be crushed and broken in the man. Now what is to be broken down and crushed in a man when true holiness begins must be the real principle of sin.

The peculiar way in which sin bears upon him who commits it is embodied in the conception of guilt. The conception of guilt implies first, that the sin in question must be attributed to the man in whom it is, as its author.

St.Paul, in Rom. 14:23 teaches that whatever is disapproved by the inward moral testimony of man's own conscience(faith)must be imputed to him as sin if he commits it; and according to the Pauline view the imputa-

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1. Rom. 15:3.
2. Rom. 14:7,8; Gal. 2:20; II. Cor. 5:15.

tion of guilt depends solely upon the subjective witness of the man himself as to whether the act be right or wrong. Of course a man's moral conviction, though erroneous, possesses the power of bringing him to a sense of his duty, but it has not the power to free him from the authority of the truth and to set itself up in its place. It is the curse of moral error that it condemns a man when he acts in opposition to his subjective convictions but yet does not justify him, if in following them he does what is wrong.

8. The Christian Hope

One there is among the sons of men who is perfectly free from evil, and He gives this His freedom to all who are united to Him by justifying faith, As yet they have this freedom not in themselves, but in Him only; their union with Him is not as yet a perfect union with self, they are not as yet themselves perfectly pure and holy, and therefore every realization of union with Him is blended with a new self-surrender. Christian hope looks forward to a day when all will be elected to be delivered from sin, and will have complete victory over sin. Deliverance from and victory over sin are free gifts of God obtained only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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We have seen, then, in our first chapter, what the religious background was like in which St.Paul's conception of sin originated. The lofty spirituality of the prophets had been watered down and codified by the Scribes. There was,at the time of St.Paul, a body of the Law, regulating life to its minutest details. Since God was honored as the supreme Law-Giver, it had become evident that whosoever transgressed any injunction of the Law thereby denied the authority of God. There was, then, in Judaism, a real sense of sin, sharply contrasted with tha relative optimism of Hellenistic philosophy. It is hard to tell how much this sense of sin had deepened during the centuries immediately preceding the era of our Lord. The strictness of the Law was such that learned rabbis did their best, if not to change it, at least to make it practicable. Furthermore, there was always the possibility of repentance for the transgressor, but there the shallowness of Phariseeism revealed itself, because it made much less of the act of repentance that it did of the observance of specific rules.

St.Paul's conception of sin originated in contemporary Judaism but rose above it when the apostle acknowledged in his conversion that no amount of abiding by the Law could ever free Man from the sin laid upon him by the transgression of Adam. The "yeser-ha-ra", the innate impulse to evil put

man in a fallen state where he needed Grace more than works.

In our second chapter we endeavored to trace the conception of sin in St.Paul to his experience in the worship services of the synagogue.

The educated Jews did not stand alone in having a revealed religion, but they did pioneer in trying to educate their whole nation in its sacred teachings. The synagogue, which originated in the Babylonian exile as a meeting of the faithful in a heathen land, became the institution through which the tenets of the faith were taught to all. Articles of belief as well as very practical matters connected with the observance of the Law were taught in the synagogue. Instruction became an organic part of Jewish worship, the first part of the service being more liturgical, the second more didactic. Much of St.Paul's passion of instructing and making things plain to his readers and listeners may be derived from his early experiences in the synagogue. Certain of his phrases, like the oft-used benediction, "may His great name be blessed forever and ever", are plainly traceable to the worship services of the synagogue.

The basic teachings of the synagogue were the Lordship of God and the Wrath of God. From these stemmed the sense of human guilt which was so influential in bringing about St.Paul's conception of sin.

Our third chapter concerned itself with the central event of St.Paul's life: his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Paul's whole theology is strongly personal. It is really a theoretical elaboration of his own experience in which conviction of sin was followed by conversion. He was very Jewish in both upbringing and thinking, even though his superior education enabled him to be "Greek to the Greeks". He was brought up to think of sin as the transgression of some specific command of God. However, his Pharisaic piety was of such a high type that he found no peace in trying to live up to the letter of Law, knowing that no matter how hard he tried he would still fall short of its highest requirements. His passion for the Law made him a furious persecutor of those Christians who blasphemed God by proclaiming their belief in the Messiahship of one who had suffered a death of shame.

Inwardly, however, a change was taking place in Saul. Though he tells us nothing of any scruples prior to his conversion, we may safely assume that he had been impressed by the heroic death of Stephen. Then, when the change came, it carried such vehement forces that it seemed to blot out all that had gone before. Paul realized that he had lived in a style of sin, not on account of any failure to observe the Law, but on account of the unregenerateness of his will which obstructed the outpouring of divine grace. He actually died to his former self to be born again in Christ. His conviction of sin came together with Christs redeeming Grace.

In our fourth chapter we attempted to analyze St.Paul's conception of sin under three different aspects: Law, Flesh and Death.

a) Sin presupposes the existenc of a LAW, for without a law we have nothing to sin against. The Jews were privileged in having a written code of law, containing the complete revelation of God, though the Gentiles, too, had some sense of the Law, Notwithstanding their possession of such a Law, the Jews had been disobedient to it in many ways. Trying to obey it constituted their whole religion.

St.Paul saw that righteousness could not be attained through obedience to the Law. The Law could check the "yeser-ha-ra" of man, but it was powerless to provide a regenerative basis for the sinful nature of man. Therefore the Law had to be subordinated to the Cross. It could quicken the consciousness of sin and make its conviction more forceful; it could not secure peace. However, the Law is necessary because it is better to be under the Law than to be morally insensitive.

b) FLESH,according to St.Paul, seems to include more than the human body. Paul was not favorable to the Greek idea of attributing all evil to the flesh as contrasted with the spirit. His belief in God as the Creator of all kept him from going to such length. Instead, he made the flesh the channel through which the evil impulses of sin ran their destructive course. Even Christ was manifested "in the flesh", but in Him the designs of sin were frustrated. There is, however, a great deal of investigating yet to be done in connection with St.Pauls use of the word.

c) As for DEATH, in it connected with sin by a causal link. St.Paul believed in the origin of death such as we

find it described in the book of Genesis. Death came as a punishment of sin. However, we went beyond the natural fact of death, in putting forth his belief in that spiritual death which was more to be feared than the physical. The stillness of death settles upon the soul whose struggle for salvation has ceased. Furthermore, death follows not only as a result of individual sinning but as punishment meted out by God to our fallen race. Only in Christ is there redemption from sin, and death, and this is the final aim toward which Paul deploys all his talent of persuasion: to convince sinful man of his need of Christ.

In our fifth chapter we came to the notion of sin proper. Though he spent much time on external sins, yet St. Paul's main preoccupation was to convey to us a sense of the subtler type of sin which is internal. The Fall is the final illustration of both sin and grace, because death came through one man, and through another did we regain life. The evangelistic power of Paul made the most of extending the conviction of sin and the salvation of Christ from the chosen people to all the peoples of the earth. To him the human race was bound together by indissoluble ties. While the Jews conceived justice and justification in the sight of God as a result of human endeavor, Paul saw in it a free gift of God to be accepted by faith. He argued that the more the race advanced, the more inexcusable became the falseness of its beliefs in the sight of God. The worst of paganism was that it was leading humanity further and further away from

the worship of the one true God. Only Jesus remained as the hope of all mankind. His way of life pointed away from natural selfishness and sin to a new birth of faith and justice.

In conclusion it may be said that St.Paul's conception of sin was the most important phase of his teaching, outweighed only by the remedy which he offered for it, i.e.salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Though rooted in the beliefs of his race as well as his own personal experience, his conception of sin never became an end in itself, but always served to prepare his hearers for the blessed gift of Grace coming through the free gift of God's Only-Begotten Son.

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