PAUL THE THEOLOGIAN?

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Who is a theologian? Obviously the one who does theology. Carl Michalson was one, and he was not shy to confess it: "I am vocationally neither an historian nor a philosopher. I am a 'theologian.'"[1]

In the ancient world, theology meant the mythical talk about the gods in cult and poetry. In this sense, Homer was a theologian, in fact the theologian of the Greek world. For Eusebius of Caesarea, at the threshold of the new Christian world of the 4th century, it was confessional talk about the Christian God, one in three, the "theology of the Fathers." For Thomas Aquinas, it was the analogical talk about God whom both reason and faith must approach in ascending order, theology as "science." For Karl Barth, it was the responsible talk of the Church - the Church which always must rethink its contemporary proclamation of God in confrontation with the biblical witness of the God revealed in Christ. For Carl Michalson, theology was a "method of thinking about the Christian faith," an existential, historical and eschatological method - theology in the light of the experience of human existence, historicity and ultimacy.[2]

Theology has come a long way since antiquity. But it has always been connected with talk, speech, thought. And as such it has always implied explanation, interpretation, "hermeneutics." Hermes was the god of commerce and communication, the bringer of intelligent speech and poetry, who with these wonderful gifts taught humans the ambiguity of language, the ability to speak the truth but also to deceive, to lie. Carl Michalson was a hermeneutical theologian. As I remember him, he was fascinated by the ambivalence of language and of languages. In his own passion for communication as a speaker, preacher and teacher, he was a master of the rhetorical arts, of the power of plain words, but also of images, of the intentional

ambiguity of the message which calls for an existential commitment to truth rather than the docile and thoughtless acceptance of truth as factual information.

In the framework of the Christian tradition, existentialist theologians have always found a warrant for their method of thinking in the writings of the Apostle Paul, especially the Epistle to the Romans. Rom 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law," was behind their affirmation of Christ as the end of history, which Carl Michalson reinterpreted with the paradigm of the Christ event as the "hinge of history." Rom 10:17, "Faith comes from hearing," provided the basis for Barth's insistence that faith, in the first instance, is an "acoustical affair" – a dictum to which Michalson often referred. I remember Carl quoting to us in class Luther's famous pronouncement on the true theologian: "The real theologian is the one who can rightly distinguish between Gospel and Law; this is the most difficult art of all; I myself have not mastered it." Carl Michalson was lecturing on Bultmann and thus proceeded to explain the law/gospel dialectic in terms of "Historie" and "Geschichte," regretting all the while that the English language, unfortunately, had only one single word for this monumental duality!

Luther, of course, took his clue from Paul, and more specifically from Romans. His Romans commentary of 1515/16 marked the emergence of the unmistakable vocabulary and the revolutionary conceptuality of his new theology. One hardly claims too much if one suggests that Paul more than anyone else provided the language for the central affirmation of Protestant theology ever since. Many of the battles over the nature and structure of theology have been fought out, in biblical terms, in the exegesis of Romans commentaries.

Karl Barth did not write his "Römerbrief" as a piece of technical scholarship, but as a theological statement, a scathing indictment of the prevalent values of the Culture Protestantism of his day. Barth has been rightly criticized that his commentaty is *all krisis* and offers very little *exegesis*. But even one of the most recent commentaries by a professional "exegete," Ernst Käsemann, displays this Christian daring.[3] Käsemann's commentary engages one's full attention precisely at the points where its author turns "theological," fighting the dangers of wrong-headed theologies which claim to rest on Paul, or at least to be in line with the Pauline gospel. Behind the critical discussion of the text, the reader senses the author's passion for a theology of Christian freedom which must be defended against the straight-jackets of a supposedPauline mysticism, sacramentalism and institutionalism as much as a Pauline enthusiasm, moralism and pietism. The blows fall to the right and to the left, one after another.

One is reminded of Jude 9: The Archangel Michael disputing with the devil over the body of Moses – a war of truly cosmic dimensions. Käsemann wages his battle in the name of the true Paul of Romans. But this Paul is not a dead body, a corpse of the past. He is the voice of God in the living word of the ancient writer. No student should be allowed to avoid the challengeof Käsemann's Paul in this commentary. Käsemann's Paul? Käsemann has been criticized as presenting no more than that: at best, a "typically Lutheran" Paul, at worst an idiosyncratic maverick who reflects more directly the personality of the author of the commentary than the author of the Epistle.

Which Paul? The "true" Paul? Is there a true Paul anywhere, at least in Romans? The question is not new. It goes back to the earliest centuries when the Pauline Epistles were canonized. In fact, the process of Paul's canonical reception itself reflects a struggle over the very definition of what was Christian theology and what was not.

Marcion seems to have been the first to "canonize" a collection of Pauline Epistles with the purpose of verifying his own understanding of the true gospel by proper authority. His Paul was the only true apostle of Christ and of the God whom Christ proclaimed, the norm by which all other Christian proclamation must be measured. While we do not have the actual text of his *Apostolos*, the very arrangement of this part of his canon reveals the polemic thrust: Galatians, not Romans, is first, the letter in which Paul is arguing most vividly against "Judaizers," the advocates of the Old Testament God and his law.

Marcion probably did not trigger the development of our New Testament canon. A normative collection of four gospels was already forming elsewhere. Pauline letter collections in some form probably existed prior to his initiative. Irenaeus accused Marcion of a biased selection not only with regard to the gospels but also with regard to the *Apostolos*. He was the first to use clearly a Pauline corpus enlarged by the Pastoral Epistles. That does not mean that the Pastorals existed before Marcion's canon as part of a larger orthodox canon as Irenaeus implies. It is no wonder that some modem scholars have suggested an anti-Marcionite origin for the Pastorals, attributing them to a Lucan circle in Asia Minor, or to Polycarp.

Of even more interest is the Paul whom Tertullian defended. Here we see some of the consequences of having to promote a canonical Paul who included the Pastorals and was clearly opposed to the Marcionite "distortion." Tertullian honored Paul as an apostle, even as a special vessel of God's election. But Paul for him was an apostle *only along with* the Twelve to whom he was "posterior" by his own admission. At one point, Tertullian calls him "haereticorum apostolus," the apostle of the heretics. The term does not *disqualify* Paul as an apostle but certainly does not qualify him as *the* Apostle either. Tertullian's interpretation of Gal 1-2 simply ignored the thrust of 1:llff, and emphasized that Paul needed and received approval for his mission from the other apostles. Thus, Paul's criticism of Peter at Antioch (Gal 2:11-14) was the typical overreaction of a new convert, to put it mildly. Against Marcion, Tertullian also tried to minimize Paul's apparent criticism of the Law, especially in Romans. Law and Gospel, he held, were not antithetical. It is the *onera legis*, the ceremonial laws, which are abolished, not the Decalogue and the moral law of God.

A second front where rival understandings of Paul clashed, was the controversy over Christian Gnosticism in the second and third centuries. Elaine Pagels has shown that the Valentinians developed their hermeneutical grid from terminology they found in Paul: outer and inner man; flesh, soul and spirit; letter and spirit; gnosis and wisdom. Obviously, they regarded Paul as a pre-eminent gnostic. Irenaeus did not challenge the Valentinian use of Christian writings in general and of the Pauline Epistles in particular. He *did* fight their claim of a *deeper* understanding which he criticized as their taking apart the beautiful mosaic of a king and re-assembling the pieces into the shape of a dog. The anti-Gnostic front still dominated the Pauline interpretation of Greek theologians in the 3rd century as far as we can judge from the scant

evidence. It is even possible that the first running commentaries by Clement and Origen, of which only Origen's Romans is known to us in a heavily revised Latin translation, were written in order to refute the Gnostic interpretation by carefully retracing the Apostle's own argument sentence by sentence.

This apologetic purpose of writing a detailed commentary in order to prove a particular use of Paul wrong is even more likely in the case of the commentaries of the astonishing "rediscovery of Paul" among Western theologians of the late 4th century. The term refers to the strange phenomenon that six major Latin commentaries on the Pauline corpus were written or begun during the 50 years between 360-410 A.D.: Marius Victorinus, the Ambrosiaster, Jerome, Augustine, Pelagius, and an anonymous work recently edited by Frede.

These commentaries have nothing to do with the Pelagian controversy; even Pelagius' own commentary antedates the beginning of the struggle in 411. Some of them reveal no obvious polemical or apologetic purpose. The situation is different for Augustine. We have only three odd pieces from his pen, all dating to the first years of his tenure at Hippo: a brief exposition of Galatians, a miscellany of 84 *propositiones* on Romans, and a long fragment on the opening lines of Romans. The latter text suggests that Augustine planned a major commentary on Romans but never took up the task. Paula Fredriksen Landes, its most recent editor and translator, has demonstrated that, in all these texts, Augustine developed his own Paulinism in antithesis to the Manichean Paul he had encountered during his years as an auditor of that religious movement.

Following the lead of Marcion, the Manicheans in North Africa rejected the Old Testament and used the Pauline Epistles to argue against "the Law" in all its unspiritual forms. Polemic against the Manichean Paul can also be discerned behind the first of the new commentaries, that by Marius Victorinus. Recent close inspection of this work has revealed an additional polemical background. The professional philosopher not only wanted to refute pagan polemicists such as Porphyry and the Emperor Julian who poured out their contempt for Paul, but he also tried to establish Nicene orthodoxy against the use of Paul by the Arians. His argument was basically philosophical but employed quite deliberately the genre of the detailed commentary of an authoritative text. In this climate, the example of this highly respected commentator may have triggered the attempts of other would-be "philosophers" to develop their true Christian philosophy by producing commentaries on Paul in the wake of the Western acceptance of Anti-Arianism as orthodoxy in the 350s.

Our survey of three clashes between rival interpretations of Paul in the early church does not suggest the smooth linear reception of Paul into Christian theology which many scholars have assumed. From the beginning of Christian theology, the Roman Catholic exegete Otto Kuss maintains, Paul was a dominant factor. His letters were collected early on and enriched by pieces issued from a Pauline school which tried to protect the master against unwarranted consequences drawn from his teaching.

I think we must reckon with a far more confusing interplay of assertions and reactions, affirmations and denials; in short, with a much more colorful palette of normative images of Paul. Which Paul influenced the beginnings of Christian theology? Which Pauline school upheld

the "true" Paul against distortions? In terms of the Epistles, we should not forget that there is early evidence for more reticent, if not outright negative reaction corning from various quarters.

One might mention the caution expressed in II Peter 3:16, a document sympathetic to Paul. It speaks of Paul's Epistles "in which there are some things hard to understand which the ignorant an1 unstable twist to their own destruction." Or one could note James 2:14-16, the famous passage about faith and works. The author of James may not polemicize against Paul's letters themselves but certainly argues against some kind of Paulinists. More obvious is the strong Anti-Paulinism of the Pseudo-Clementine "Grundschrift" which attacks passages of Paul under the name of Simon the Magician.

I for one am still wondering about the assumed *universal* impact of the Pauline Epistles among Christians in the early 2nd century. Were there *no* churches that did not know them or had no use for them? It seems clear that the late 2nd century epistolary canon of the New Testament with its two parts, Paul or Pseudo-Paul, and the Catholic Epistles, had its *Sitz im Leben* in anti-Marcionite and anti-Gnostic circles which valued Paul highly. But what was the situation *before* 140/145? Recently, Ernst Dassmann has surveyed the material once more and concluded that "a large number of writings of all kinds and genres of early Christian literature betray a knowledge of the person and work of Paul."[4] Dassmann's discussion is balanced and allows for considerable variety in the reception of Paul. With regard to Paul's *letters*, however, I am still impressed by the large numbers of authors before 140 who show *no* knowledge or interest at all: Acts, Didache, Barnabas, II Clement, Hermas, but also Papias, Hegesippus, Aristides. One can cite good reasons for their silence. But reliance on the Pauline Epistles and their theology apparently did not belong to the *sine qua non* of Christian theologizing.

With Dassmann and others, we may even have to distinguish between knowledge of Paul's *work* and of his *person*, the Paul of the *Epistles* and the Paul of *story and legend*. The latter could exist without the former. Hans Martin Schenke has argued that the tradition of a Pauline legend extolling the exemplary missionary and wonderworker, antedates the epistolary collection by a considerable margin. Small collections may have developed locally after Paul's death, but the legendary Paul had a life quite independent from such material. The apocryphal literature of the late second and early third centuries such as the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Andrew and Paul, the *Epistola Apostolorum*, and especially the Acts of Paul, witness to a popular veneration which was nourished by traditions whose origin is hard to trace.

In a study published in 1983, Dennis MacDonald tried to link the development of the legend to two startling hypotheses.[5] First, assuming that the Acts of Paul were based on older oral tradition, and taking his clue from the prominence in the stories of Paul's convert Thecla, he claimed a Pauline circle of ascetic women as the likely matrix for the legendary Paul of the "Acts." For the second, he rests his case on I Tim 4:7 which, he claims, should be translated, "Avoid the profane tales told by old women (*muthoi graōdeis*, from *graus*, 'old woman')." The RSV has, "Have nothing to do with godless and silly myths." He suggests that the Pastoral Epistles were written to counteract this sectarian image of Paul, presenting the Apostle as a social conservative who would silence the tale-telling women.

While the basis of this bold theory is slim, there are some implications worth pondering. Dassmann has shown that apart from his pairing with Peter in Rome, the archaeological and liturgical evidence for a veneration of Paul is astonishingly meagre, even in places such as Ephesus, Thessalonica, Philippi or Corinth. In Asia Minor, the Thecla cult [of Seleucia] vastly outdistanced any veneration for Paul. In the known iconography of Paul and Thecla, the Apostle is almost exclusively a companion figure of the female saint, not the main subject. Was Thecla more important to certain groups of women in Asia Minor than Paul?

A second implication which commends itself quite apart from MacDonald's hypothesis is this: We can not simply assume that the Pastoral Epistles were "the rightful second century heirs of the Pauline legacy." For the 2nd century, we have to reckon with a plurality of "Pauls," all of whom had their supporters in smaller or larger circles of Christians who regarded themselves as disciples, pupils and adherents of Paul. The theory of a single "Pauline school" is insufficient. Pauline pluralism was fed on the one hand by varied appropriations of the legendary image of the great missionary by groups of his converts and admirers. On the other hand even more importantly, it was fed by the versatility, if not ambiguity, of Paul's own theological language in the surviving remnants of his correspondence. In a very real sense, it was the Paul of the Epistles who could become "all things to all people."

This holds true even for the time of the fully canonized Paul of later centuries. In a little known essay, Ernst Benz made this point 40 years ago in relation to the differences between Eastern and Western Christianity.[6] In a general sense, Benz said Western theology was always concerned with the juridical aspect of the relationship between humanity and God, with law and gospel, covenant and human obligation. The East, on the other hand, stressed soteriological themes such as deification, rebirth, new creation, resurrection, and the glorification of human nature. Consequently, the Eastern churches remained deaf to the theme of justification as Paul laid it out in Romans, and they never developed a doctrine of justification. Instead, the East took up and deepened the mystical impulses of Pauline theology, the themes of christology, sacraments, Spirit and spiritual gifts, which the West never knew except in a partial, muted and ecclesiastically modified form. As proof for his observation, Benz pointed to the history of Pauline exegesis: The great interest in Romans in the West from the 4th century onward simply was not shared in the East. None of the great fathers of the 4th century produced a commentary on Romans; in fact, Didymus the Blind wrote on I-II Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians, but *not* on Romans. When later writers such as some Antiochian exegetes and Cyril of Alexandria included Romans, it was more for the sake of completeness; the great themes of the Epistle found no echo here. Benz concluded that, roughly speaking, "the East could be described as having accepted the Paul of Corinthians, the West the Paul of Romans."[7]

One might want to question Benz's proof from the distribution of sources. The *catenae* fragments reveal that, just as in the West, there were Arianizing and Anti-Arian Romans commentaries written by Greek theologians of the later 4th century and the sustained interest in Romans among the Antiochian school theologians demands explanation. But Benz's basic point remains intriguing. Compared with the East, the interest in Romans and its theological themes

was infinitely greater in the West. A recent author counted over 50 Romans commentaries in the Latin Middle Ages before the Reformation.

II.

Working with medieval commentaries on Romans is not easy. One faces first of all the problem of availability. The 12th century, for example, saw a tremendous upsurge in commentary production; no less than 20 unedited Romans commentaries are known from this period. Even among those that are available in print, the question of interdependence remains unclear. We have learned only recently that an anonymous commentary of the latter half of the 12th century, which was used as a standard text in the High Middle Ages, served as an agent for spreading Peter Abelard's daring and innovative Romans interpretation to a much wider readership than had been assumed.

Incidentally, this standard commentary from the School of St. Victor in Paris, bears the title, "Allegories of the New Testament." For Romans and other Pauline Epistles, this title itself is a total misnomer. There is no allegorization in it whatsoever. In fact, a reader who expects medieval exegesis of Paul to proceed by the fourfold sense of literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical interpretation, or at least by the twofold method of literal and spiritual, will find that allegorical interpretations are almost totally absent. All pursue one sense only, the literal.

What is the reason for this startling fact? The answer has to do with the role assigned to Paul in the context of the medieval canon. The medieval understanding of "allegory" was no longer synonymous with "spiritual interpretation" as it had been in the early centuries. In a very technical sense, "allegory" meant the interpretation of the Old Testament in New Testament terms or the interpretation of *all* of Scripture in terms of Christian *doctrine*. This doctrine, the "Gospel," was hidden in the text of the Old Testament and the stories and parables of the Evangelists. The older biblical authors proclaimed the mysteries of Christ under a veil: the apostles, especially Paul, declared the full truth without allegorical cover.

As the "latest" among the apostles, Paul was the last of the inspired canonical writers; in this sense, he stood at the end of a line. At the same time, he was the first *doctor evangelii*, opening the long succession of biblical interpreters after him. The text of the Pauline Epistles was therefore *manifesta expositio*. Understood in its own literal sense, it contained the full spiritual truth about the Old Testament and the things of Christ with no cover in need of being lifted and no allegory to be supplied. In the East, the Apostle John was called *ho theologos*. In the West, *the* theologian was Paul.

He was the steward at the wedding feast of Cana, the first to serve the wine into which the Lord had changed the old water. If Peter was given the keys of the kingdom, Paul received the key to open the words of the Law. It is well known that the development of "systematic theology" as a separate discipline in the Middle Ages started with exegetical questions (*quaestiones*) being added to the exposition of biblical texts in the schools. We probably need to be even more specific: being added to the exposition of the Pauline Epistles, primarily Romans, in the work of Peter Abelard and his school. Paul was the exemplary teacher of theology; his

theological language was the norm, the purest expression of that which any formulation of doctrine could only hope to achieve.

With this emphasis on the literal understanding of Paul, it is no wonder that medieval exegetes were interested in the rhetorical analysis of Romans. To take an example, Rom 8:1-11 is a central passage in the Epistle. Its most impressive rhetorical analysis was offered by Aquinas. His summary of the argument in the same passage reads as follows: After demonstrating in Ch. 7 that we are freed from sin and the law, Paul adds in Ch. 8 that we are freed from condemnation. First, he establishes our freedom from guilt (1-9), secondly, from the punishment of death (10-11). Concerning the first, he states the theme (vs 1), then proves his proposition (vs 2). The proposition itself has two parts: first, it establishes the benefits of grace in terms of a conclusion from prior premises ("there is therefore now no condemnation"); second, it names the beneficiaries noting two conditions, (1) that they must be "in Christ Jesus," (2) that they must not walk according to the flesh. In vs 5-6, Aquinas discovers two formal syllogisms, one concerning the flesh, the other the Spirit: (A) The wisdom of the flesh leads to death, (B) Those who live according to the flesh follow its wisdom, (C) Therefore, those who live according to the flesh are on the way to death. Thomas identifies major, minor, and conclusion, and explains with obvious admiration how skillfully the Apostle has interwoven the various elements; no classical rhetorician could have done better!

In a delightful essay, Otto Hermann Pesch has described Aquinas' Paul as "The Professor Among the Apostles."[8] Indeed, for Thomas Aquinas, the Paul of Romans is not only the teacher of the *content* of Christian doctrine but also the master of its scholastic *presentation*, the professional role model for Thomas' own aspirations. Paul handled the art of rhetorical division with such subtlety and applied formal logic with such skill that the interpreter can never hope to do more than retrace the steps. of this "vessel of God's election."

For the medieval exegete, interpreting Paul's Epistles was the sublime training ground for proper theological argumenta ion and systematization. What Maurice Wiles observed with regard to the early commentators applies even more to the medieval theologians: they present Paul's thought as uniform throughout and reduce his various affirmations to a wholly self-consistent system. Since God is a God of "sweetly disposed orderliness" (Wisdom 8:1), Paul's text must be shown to reflect everywhere the "fittingness" and "necessity" of God's actions under the Old Covenant and under the New. Paul was a teacher, not a prophet.

One cannot fault medieval exegetes for inattentiveness to the Pauline text or for simply reading their own ideas into it. They were careful, meticulous readers precisely because they looked to Paul as *the* teacher both of the content and language of Christian theology. To a large extent, medieval theology itself was based on a Pauline vocabulary which gave it its main concepts. But their reading of Paul labored under some serious drawbacks. There was first of all, the Latin Vulgate. This text could influence the interpretation as in the subject of justification. The word *iustificatio* in its very etymology as a Latin compound suggests a specific model of reading our salvation in Christ: *iusti-ficare* means to *make* righteous, to *transform* the impious into a pious one, the sinner into a righteous person. The entire Augustinian tradition reads justification in this way. There was also the Paul of the commentary tradition. It included almost

no Greek Fathers. Augustine, on the other hand, was omnipresent. From Carolingian times on, Augustinian chain commentaries were available, glossing the Pauline Epistles by excerpts from all of Augustine's writings. But it is also a fact that, along with Augustine, Pelagius' commentary on the Pauline Epistles remained a standard tool throughout the Middle Ages. Three differently revised versions circulated under orthodox names and were used without any suspicion. If one adds that from the 9th century through the 16th, the pro-Augustinian decisions of the Synod of Orange in 529 had simply fallen into oblivion, one realizes that the Pelagian reading of Paul with its strong ascetic imperatives was alive and well.

What then happened in the Reformation? Certainly, the rediscovery of the Greek Paul in humanistic circles was opening new horizons. There was indeed another "Paulusrenaissance" in the 15th century. Humanists admired Paul's Greek and continued to extol him as a master of rhetorical form. Another factor may be more important. In his letters, the humanists discovered Paul as an individual and thus as an ideal figure with whom to identify. Many humanists wrote commentaries on Romans reflecting this trend. Marsilio Ficino understood Paul in the light of II Cor 12:2f as the great mystic whose ascent into the third heaven gave him the vision of the same eternal truth to which Plato had access and which Marsilio himself felt called to proclaim in a great synthesis of classical and Christian thought. Erasmus' "Paraphrases" on Romans and Galatians promoted an anti-clerical Paul whose teaching of Christ's philosophy was really aimed at a simple piety of the heart. This Paul was for everyone; all true theology is for everyone, not just for schoolmen.

Luther's theological conversion was inextricably linked to his exegesis of Romans. He was aware of the parallel to Augustine. For him as a late medieval theologian, Paul was still primarily the normative systematic theologian whose teaching must open the meaning of all scripture. His discovery was a new form of the Pauline key to this meaning which he too worked out in a language nourished by Paul, and for that matter, by the Paul of the Latin Vulgate: iustificatio impii. simul iustus et peccator, the dialectic of lex and evangelium, the theology of the Cross and the theology of Glory. Why then does the Paul of Luther's reading sound so different from the Paul who taught medieval theology?

I think, the strength of Luther's reading; just as that of the Romans commentaries of the Early Church, was its anti-heretical, polemical bias. In Luther's eyes, the church and theology of his time had succumbed to the Pelagian error. The Paul he discovered was the anti-Pelagian Paul whose picture Augustine had never fully drawn out exegetically. The task had been left unfinished and had become ever more difficult in the wake of the development of the exegetical tradition. Measured by the standards of his day, Luther's reading of Paul revealed to him a startling truth: "Here you have Paul, the most heretical of all heretics; his heresy is unheard of: dead to the law to live for God!" (Gal 2:19).

Was Luther's "heretical" Paul the real one? Luther still had no sense for the historical situation of the Epistles. Romans, he claimed, "was written to Christian believers of a congregation which was to have a witness of its faith and doctrine from the pen of this great Apostle in their fight against Jews and Gentiles in Rome." In the same vein, Melanchthon's commentary on Romans called the Epistle "a compend of Christian theology" and proceeded to

subject it in good Ciceronian fashion to a rhetorical analysis by *loci* which systematized its content into a schoolbook of Lutheran orthodoxy. Today we will always remain uncomfortable with this blatant disregard for the historical Paul. If one thing is clear, it is that the real Paul was *not* a professor of systematic theology, as medieval exegetes firmly believed and Luther and Melanchthon still assumed. Well, then – what was he? In trying to answer this question *our* way [1]we should keep in mind for which Paul we are looking in our exegesis: The legendary author of the 1st century, whose historical personality will probably remain as elusive as ever to our grasp? The great system builder whose interpretation of the Christ event established the true form of Christian philosophy once and for all? Or the ever challenging and militant apostle who has helped the church of all ages to fight the good fight of the faith, then as much as now? I still would settle for the third. I know Carl Michalson would have. What did he say? "I am vocationally neither an historian nor a philosopher. I am a theologian."

ENDNOTES

[1] Michalson, *The Rationality of Faith*; NY: Scribner's, 1963, p. 18.

[2] Michalson, *The Hinge of History*; NY: Scribner's, 1959, p. 9.

[3] Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

[4] Dassmann, *Paulus in frühchristlicher Frömmigkeit und Kunst*; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1982, p. 316.

[5] Macdonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon*; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983.

[6] Benz, "Das Paulusverständnis der morgenländischen und abendländischen Kirche,“ *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 3 (1951), 289-309.

[7] Ibid., p. 291.

[8] Pesch, "Paul as Professor of Theology, The Image of the Apostle in St. Thomas's Theology," *The Thomist* 38 (1974), 584-605.