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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

THE INFLUENCE OF ST. PAUL'S JEWISH  
BACKGROUND ON HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE SEMINARY FACULTY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

DEPARTMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT

BY

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## Preface

This paper in no way presumes to indicate absolutely the entire scope of the influence of the Jewish background upon Paul's life and letters. We are limited to a brief examination of three institutions, chosen because of the formative influence they must have had upon Paul, and three doctrines chosen because of the implications they have for us interested in Christian theology.

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## I. Introduction

To attempt to understand St. Paul involves more than a study of his Epistles and the Book of Acts. His letters and the Acts of the Apostles reveal little of his "pre-Christian" biographical background. We must reconstruct his entire background from several cryptic passages, viz., "Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee."<sup>1</sup> Also: "Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city."<sup>2</sup> Also: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."<sup>3</sup> "I am a Pharisees, the son of a Pharisee."<sup>4</sup> From these passages it can be readily seen that in order to penetrate Paul's background we must make a study of the Pharisees, the school system in which Paul as a boy was taught, the Synagogue where he later on learned the vagaries of the Jewish law and probably taught himself. We begin with a few general remarks on the historical background of first century (A.D.) Judaism.

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1. Phil. 3, 5.
  2. Acts 21, 39.
  3. Acts 22, 3.
  4. Acts 23, 6.

## II. The Historical Foundations of 1st Century Judaism

The Babylonian domination of the Hebrew nation (606-538), the Persian domination (538-332), the Grecian domination (332-165), the Roman domination (63 B.C.- 70 A.D.) all had a profound influence on 1st century Judaism. The institutions of Judaism were greatly influenced by contact with foreign nations. In fact, the intellectual, social, and religious life of the Jewish nation reflect this domination.<sup>5</sup>

The Babylonian Captivity marked the beginning of foreign domination as far as Judah was concerned, and it came about in this way: Assyria was fighting the new rising powers in the East. Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt, felt that it was time to square accounts with Assyria. He intended to march through Palestine and seize Syria. Josiah, King of Judah, blocked the way. Josiah was the vassal of Assyria and tried to defend his country against Necho. The kingdom of Judah was in a precarious position. It was situated between the two great empires of Assyria and Egypt.

Josiah's Army met Necho's at Megiddo. In the unequal battle that followed, Judah was defeated. Necho was master of Judah. Now Necho went on to meet the army of Assyria. The two forces met at Carchemish on the Euphrates (605 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar was the leader of the Assyrian forces. The Egyptians were completely routed. Several years later Jehoiakim appointed

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5. Moore, G.F., Judaism, Vol. 1, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1927, p. 3.

to the throne of Judah by Necho, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who came to Jerusalem quickly and crushed the revolt. Then followed several other revolts which were attempts on the part of Judah to wrest itself from the grasp of Assyria. Finally Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, put the religious leaders to death, and carried off the leading people to Babylon.<sup>6</sup>

The significance of the Babylonian Captivity is this that it marked the beginning of the foreign domination. More important than that, it allowed the Jews to reevaluate their religion in the light of their past sins and in the light of Jehovah's many blessings toward them as a nation. Deep in the Babylonian Captivity we find the beginnings of the return to the law which is the outstanding characteristic of the following centuries of Jewish history. The Jews in the captivity finally realized that their plight was the result of their disobedience to the will of God. This furnished the impetus to return to God and His holy law.

In 538 B.C. Cyrus the Persian entered Babylon and brought to an end the Babylonian Empire. The Persian Empire now held sway. Cyrus issued an edict permitting the Jews to return to Palestine. Many availed themselves of the opportunity. Much work was done to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem. While the walls were being rebuilt the spiritual leaders were busy restoring the national and religious unity of the people.<sup>7</sup>

6. Year Book and Almanac of the Holy Land, A. P. Anthony, Ed., Chicago, Ill., 1936. Pp. 20.21.

7. Ibid., pp.22.23.

Ezra, a priest and scribe, came from Babylonia bringing the book of Moses' Law. He was commissioned by the king to investigate conditions in Judea. He was authorized to administer the law among the Jews in the restoration.<sup>8</sup>

We find in Ezra 7,8 that he and the company of Jews he was leading arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. The date given for the coming of Ezra is 458 B.C. The exact date for the beginning of Ezra's public work with the law is placed at twelve or thirteen years after his coming to Jerusalem (Neh. 5,14; 7,23) at least we have no record that the law was proclaimed before an assembly of the people before this time.<sup>9</sup>

Ezra had a vital part in the restoration of the law to its position of preeminence in the eyes of the nation. He had brought the Book of the Law of Moses with him from Babylonia. On the basis of Neh. 8,1ff., it is postulated that there was a systematic study of the law.<sup>10</sup>

Moore holds that Ezra and Nehemia and other reformers exalted the law as a protection for the Jewish nation. Under the Persian domination the Jews had no political existence. The Book of Esther bears this out. Their religion was the only feature of their life that had not been penetrated by their captor-nations. "The religious leaders had the insight to perceive this and the loyalty to contend against the dissolution of both nationality and religion, whether in the age of the restoration or in the crisis of Hellenism is not to their discredit."<sup>11</sup>

8. Ezra 7, 14.

9. Moore, op. cit., p.425.

10. Dana, H.E. The New Testament World, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1937. p.72.

11. Moore, op. cit., p.21.

The separateness of the Jews was largely brought about by the law and in the direction of the Gentiles this separateness worked animosity, particularly since syncretism of religion was practiced in the Hellenistic kingdoms and in the Roman world. However, this separateness accomplished its end in the survival of Judaism and therein history has vindicated it. The Jews were the only people in their world who conceived the idea of a universal religion. Their efforts to realize this were often more zealous than discreet and made them many enemies.

Ezra held a rather unique position in the Jewish nation. He was for them the Restorer of the law which they had received from God through Moses. Neither Ezra nor anyone else had ever added a word to this law or subtracted a word from it. While the Law of Moses was a final law it was not regarded as a finished law. The Jews observed many things which were not contained in the law. They were called the "traditions of Moses from Sinai," or ordinances of Ezra, or of other prophets, of this time or later.<sup>12</sup>

It was during these centuries of Persian supremacy that the "traditions" came into prominence. Ezra's <sup>re-</sup>~~survival~~ of the law stirred up this interest. The people wanted to know the law better. They were also interested in the traditions of the elders. This gave rise to the institution called the synagogue where the law was explained and to the teachers of the law, the Scribes, as well as to that group which most conscientiously practiced the law, the Pharisees.

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12. Moore, op. cit., p. 30.

### III. The Institutions

#### The Synagogue

The date for the origin of the synagogue cannot be ascertained with any degree of definiteness. It has been traced by the Rabbis to the patriarchs.<sup>1</sup> The Babylonian Captivity is also suggested as a possible date and place. The "how" and "when" do not concern us as much as the "why." It can be stated with a good deal of definiteness that the synagogue was developed in order to educate the whole people in their religion. Moore points out that such an undertaking was without parallel in the ancient Mediterranean world. The religions of Egypt, Greece, and Rome were a matter of domestic tradition. Religion was perpetuated by example rather than by instruction, and there was no attempt made to systematize it.<sup>2</sup>

The motive for the establishment of the synagogue lay in this that the welfare of the nation as well as of the individual depended upon conformity to the revealed will of God. The Jewish nation firmly held to the truth that in the Scriptures God had revealed to his people his will for their whole life. They believed, too, that they would not recover their independence until they proved themselves fit by fulfilling all the obligations they had undertaken at Sinai. With this thought in mind they took the law to the synagogue as the best vehicle for producing a nation suitable to Jehovah. The same motive which produced the synagogue also produced the zeal

1. Edersheim, A., Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Hodder and Stoughton, N.Y., p.251.

2. Moore, op. cit., p.281.

which moved the Pharisees of New Testament times. This led the Pharisees far afield and they soon built a wall around the letter of the law to keep men from sinning. They believed that whoever had a knowledge of the law would thereby gain life in the world to come.<sup>3</sup>

While in New Testament times the synagogue and school were ostensibly maintained for the purpose of education, Moore holds that it is not possible that the synagogue began with so definite a purpose. He believes that it had "its antecedents in spontaneous gatherings of the Jews in Babylonia and other lands of exile on Sabbaths and at times on 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."<sup>4</sup>

The synagogue of the New Testament differs from its forerunner in two respects: 1) "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. It was no longer a surrogate for the worship in the temple among the Jews who were deprived of participation in the cultus by the cessation of sacrifice or by 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 2) regular instruction in religion had taken its place

3. Schuerer, E., History of the Jewish People, 2nd Div. Vol. II, T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1924, p.44.

4. Moore, op. cit., p.285.

5. Ibid., p.284.

as an organic part of the worship, and even as its most prominent feature." 5

To the Gentile, the Jewish Synagogue took the form of a school of philosophy. Certain Greek religious and philosophical circles had analogous ritual. The vagaries of the Jewish faith of course did not mean much to the Gentile other than that they were part of the national philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

Of course to the Jew the synagogue meant much more. To the Jew it was a place of worship inasmuch as there he learned the divine truths and duties as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. He did honor to God when he received instruction in the synagogue. The influence of the synagogue was immeasurable. It helped to develop the penitent character of Judaism and to strengthen the religious fiber so that it was able to survive all the vicissitudes of its fortunes.

The synagogue was not only important as far as Judaism was concerned, but it determined the type of Christian worship. Thus Judaism gave to the world not only the great monotheistic truths but also the institutional form which became the basis of the Christian form of worship.<sup>7</sup>

It may be reasonably assumed that the Pharisees took a leading part in the development of the synagogues as a national institution. The Pharisees were an outgrowth of the Hasidim. They represented the active and progressive element in that party, - those who thought that when man had gone

5. Moore, Op. cit., p.284.

6. Ibid., p.285.

7. Dana, op. cit., p.109.

against God's will it was "time to do something for the Lord." The time of the Maccabean revolt was just such a time. Man with a deep understanding of existing conditions must have learned that the most urgent need of the times was to educate and inculcate religious knowledge and habit by some means as the synagogue.<sup>8</sup>

These leaders must have felt that it could only be through an institution such as the synagogue that Judaism would be made thoroughly secure. The incomparable worth of the Jewish tenets must be placed squarely before the people. The synagogue suited this purpose. The Pharisees cultivated the observances with high fidelity. Among the Pharisees were the Scribes who seem to have stood in a class somewhat aloof from the populace. Their learning was beyond the full comprehension of the common people. Once the Scribes were drawn into the movement they took an important part in the instruction of the people, and in the interpretation of the Scriptures in the synagogue. It was through the synagogue that the Pharisees gained their hold upon the mass of the people.<sup>9</sup>

Outside of Palestine there was a greater need for the synagogue than in it. In Palestine the Jews had the temple as a religious center. In the dispersion they met leisurely and informally, but it is likely that their gatherings had some sort of a religious character. Without some such contact, it is hardly imaginable that the Jews, deprived of their

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8. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 287

temple and ritual, would have been able to maintain their religion.<sup>10</sup>

While it is true that much of the history of the synagogue is obscure, it is none-the-less true that as an institution of religious education it proved itself hugely effective. To prove this we refer to the Lord and His Apostles. All of them were men of the people, they were not scholars. What they knew of Scripture had to be learned in the synagogue. There was no other source of knowledge accessible to them. They were pretty well versed in Scripture which is a tribute to the effectiveness of the synagogue as a vehicle of religious instruction.<sup>11</sup> The disciples were men of Galilee, and there synagogues were strictly Jewish, but we notice in Paul's (and Peter's) epistles addressed to people belonging to the hellenized synagogues of Asia Minor that he presupposes a large back-log of knowledge and understanding in his addressees.

Concerning the matter of the ritual in the synagogue and attendant parts we can have no reference here. We mention only this fact that the head of the synagogue invited strangers to address the assembly.<sup>12</sup>

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10. It is held by scholars now that the Greek translation of the Pentateuch was not made in order to enrich Ptolemy's library, but was made for the Jews in the dispersion who were rapidly losing their knowledge of the Hebrew. Moore, op. cit., p.288.

11. Ibid., p.289.

12. Acts 13, 15.

Preaching in the synagogue was not the privilege of everyone. Only those who had attended the synagogue school when a special study of the law had been made, could give a profitable edifying discourse. Paul, we know went to the synagogue school. Acts 22,3 tells us he studied at the feet of Gamaliel. He was therefore qualified to preach in the synagogue.

### The School.

Moore writes: "The second of the great institutions of religious education in Judaism was the school. In some form or other the school is as old as the synagogue, if not older, and the synagogue was always dependent upon it."<sup>13</sup>

The demands made upon those who spoke in the synagogues were these: 1) they had to be able to read the Scriptures in the ancient language, 2) give a vernacular interpretation, 3) present a homiletical exposition drawing out of Scripture its religious and moral lessons, 4) instruct the hearers in the peculiar observances of Judaism and indicate their significance. The school's object was to prepare men for the performance of these duties.<sup>14</sup>

Paul, we may assume, was instructed according to the educational maxim of the Jews, "at five years of age, let children begin the Scripture, at ten the Mishna, at thirteen let them be subjects of the law." So Paul was probably sent

13. Moore, op. cit., p.308.

14. Ibid., p. 308.

to Jerusalem between the ages of ten and thirteen, otherwise he could hardly have said that he was "brought up" in Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup>

Paul's intelligence and interest in the law fitted him for more education than the average Jewish child received. Whether he came to Jerusalem for the express purpose of studying at the feet of Gamaliel or whether his family moved there for other reasons, we do not know. We know that he studied at the feet of Gamaliel.<sup>16</sup>

Concerning the origin of the school, Moore claims that organized schools, such as we know, existed shortly before the Christian era, were preceded at an earlier time by meetings of the Soferim (Scribes) for study and discussion, the results of which were rules or decisions promulgated by their authority. Younger scholars probably sat in on these meetings and took notes.<sup>17</sup>

The studies of the high school, the Bet ha-Midrash, required a knowledge of the ancient Hebrew in which the Scriptures were written and of the Hebrew of the schools, the "language of the learned," in which the unwritten law was taught, and in which the discussions of the school were conducted. Now the Hebrew of the schools "the language of the learned" might be learned in the high school itself, but reading and writing and a knowledge of the fundamentals had to be acquired previously.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Coneybeare Howson, Life and Epistles of St. Paul,  
Scribner's, New York, 1868, p. 51.

16. Acts 22, 3.

17. Moore, op. cit., p. 311.

18. Ibid., p. 316.

To meet this need the elementary school, the Bet ha-Sefer (or Sofer) which is paraphrased "the reading and writing school" was established. Moore holds that private schools of this type doubtless long existed before any attempt was made to establish public schools in every community. He claims that they continued to exist beside the public schools.<sup>19</sup>

The Jews were obliged to establish these schools. A scholar was not allowed to take up his abode in a town in which there was no elementary teacher. The town in which the children did not attend school was to be destroyed.<sup>20</sup>

The leaders regarded the study of the Scripture as the foundation of all learning. But the higher religious education (the Bet ha-Midrash) had for its principal subject matter tradition in a wide extension of the term. This tradition was called Mishnah in distinction to Mikra, Bible study. There are these three branches of the Mishnah: 1) Midrash (also called Talmud) higher exegesis of Scripture including deviations from it and confirmations <sup>of</sup> it <sup>by</sup> of the rules of the unwritten law. 2) The Halakah, the precisely formulated rule itself, i.e., the Traditional law. 3) The Haggadah, the non-juristic teachings of Scripture as brought out in the more profound study of religious, moral, and historical teachings. These elements composed the Jewish science of tradition. Long years of study were necessary to acquire even a moderate proficiency in it, and mastery of the subject demanded an unusual capacity.<sup>21</sup>

19. Moore, *op. cit.*, p.316.

20. *Ibid.*, p.317.

21. *Ibid.*, p.319.

The schools existed before the time of Christ. From Philo we know that there were schools and masters who taught the Jewish children to acknowledge God as their Father and Creator.<sup>22</sup>

The Hellenistic Jews used the Greek translations. That spared them the labor of learning the Hebrew original. Some of the leading scholars kept up their Hebrew but the Hebrew occupied no such place as it did in Palestine.<sup>23</sup>

The attempt on the part of the Jews to educate the whole people produced a system of education that was unique. They taught not only reading and writing, but also an ancient language and its classical literature. This high intellectual standard made an indelible impression upon the character of the Jew. The value of the institutions thus established are proven by the fact that they have perpetuated themselves to this day.<sup>24</sup>

This was the school system of which Paul was a product. That it was efficient can be seen from the freedom and ease with which Paul quotes Scripture which he must have learned in these schools.

### The Pharisees.

Paul was a member of this group. His Pharisaic background must have greatly influenced his Christian life. It is our ~~renewed~~ conviction that it was this background which

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22. Moore, op. cit., p. 321.

23. Ibid., p. 322.

24. Ibid.

through the Holy Spirit gave to Paul that intense zeal and passion for souls as well as the "all-out" Christian attitude.

To begin with, the name Pharisee comes from the Hebrew פָּרִישִׁי meaning literally, "The Separated." This term refers to the practice of the Pharisees to separate themselves from certain unclean persons as well as from all uncleanness and illegality. This name marked them not only from the heathen (Ezra 6,21: "...children of Israel which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel...") but also from the mass of Jewish people, פָּרִישִׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל, who were not nearly so stringent in the matter of what was clean and unclean.<sup>25</sup> It was in this sense that they were called "the Separated." They might have received this name in either praise or blame. They might have called themselves this name because they kept as far as possible from all uncleanness and therefore also from contact with unclean persons. Or they might have been so named in a reproachful way by their enemies referring to this fact that for their own special cleanness they separated themselves from the bulk of the nation. Schuerer holds that the latter was the original meaning of the name, for, he says: "it is not probable that they gave it to themselves. Other positive self-designations would have been more obvious to them."<sup>26</sup> The name, whether received from praise or

25. Fairweather, Background of the Epistles, Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935, p. 112.

26. Schuerer, The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Div., II, Vol. II, p.21.

blame was thoroughly praiseworthy and well pleasing to God because it indicated a sincere desire to keep away from all impurity, a thing which God requested in the law.

Essentially they were a religious party, indifferent to politics. Toward politics their viewpoint was the strictly Jewish one, which means they looked at politics from a religious point of view. Their aim in carrying out the law was not political but religious. As long as no obstruction was cast in this direction they were content with any government. It was only when the civil government prevented the practice of the law in the Pharisee's manner that they would oppose it.<sup>27</sup>

The name Pharisee designated them in the eyes of their fellowmen. They called themselves chaberim פְּרִישִׁיִּים. This term being in the language of the Mishna and of the Rabbinical literature identical with that of Perushim. From the Rabbinical literature we know what the term chaber means - "One who strictly observes the law, especially the laws relating to cleanness and uncleanness." All who did not belong to this designation (chaberim) were "Am-harez" and did not belong to the true congregation of Israel. The Pharisee made of themselves an "ecclesiola in ecclesia." They firmly believed that they alone represented the true Israel and therefore had a claim on its promises. The demeanor of the Pharisees agreed with their theoretical estimation. Just as an Israelite avoided all contact with the heathen lest he would become unclean through contact, so did the Pharisee avoid the non-

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<sup>27</sup>Schuerer, op. cit., p. 17.

Pharisee. Even the clothes of the "am-haarez" were unclean for the pharisee. A Pharisee would not think of having one of the "am-haarez" enter his house, nor would he enter such a one's house. If a woman of the "am-haarez" entered the home of a ~~chaber~~<sup>chaber</sup> to do some grinding (of grain), the house was unclean as soon as the mill stopped; if it keeps on grinding then it would be unclean only as far as the unclean woman could reach by stretching out her hand.<sup>28</sup>

When the gospels relate that the Pharisees found fault with Jesus' free intercourse with the "am-haarez" (publicans and sinners), this agrees with what Schuerer points out as the common practice among the Pharisees. Cp. Mark 2, 14-17; Matt. 9, 9-13; Luke 5, 27-32.<sup>29</sup>

Of the origin and antecedents of the Pharisees there is no record. It is commonly surmised that they were the spiritual descendants of those who in earlier years were called Hasidim (meaning pious or religious) to distinguish themselves as what we call religious men from their hellenistic countrymen.<sup>30</sup> The Hasidim came into being during the Grecian domination more specifically during the reign of the Ptolemies. They were the faithful remnant who held themselves aloof from the hellenizing influence to which Israel had been subjected since the conquest of Alexandria in 332 B.C.<sup>31</sup> The Hasidim were the spiritual descendants of Ezra who was

28. Schuerer, The Jewish people in the Time of Christ, op.cit., p.25.

29. Henry Preserved Smith holds that the legalism of the Pharisees began when the minute specifications outlined in Deuteronomy were laid down. The Religion of Israel, Scribner's, New York, 1925, p.191

30. Moore, op. cit., p.59.

31. Dana, op. cit., p. 78.

an ardent protagonist of the law and the racial exclusiveness of Judaism during the Persian domination. Ezra's great stress upon the law challenged the people to get a better knowledge of it. This need brought into existence a new class of people called the scribes or rabbis. The scribes were laymen who gave themselves to the study and teaching of the law. The position of the Hasidim was one of reaction to the hellenizing tendencies under the reign of the Ptolemies. They continued to uphold the absolute supremacy of the Mosaic law and they zealously sought to further the interests of the Israelites.

The temper of the Hasidim is illustrated by the fact that at the beginning of the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes (who gave a new impetus to the Hasidim movement), <sup>number of them</sup> allowed themselves to be slaughtered together with their wives and children rather than profane the Sabbath by raising a hand to defend themselves, saying, "let us all die together in our innocency."<sup>32</sup>

It was of such stuff that the Pharisees were made. Moore holds that their aggressive national spirit was a direct result of the wars in which the Jews engaged. This spirit was reflected in their religion.<sup>33</sup>

Now to the 1st century Pharisees with whom we are more concerned. Beginning with the reign of Queen Alexandria 78 B.C. the history of the Pharisees is the history of the Jewish religion. It was during her reign that they gained

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32. Moore, op. cit., p. 56.

33. Ibid.

the ascendancy and they have retained it to this day.<sup>34</sup>

The attitude of the Pharisees was a reaction to the loss of their national independence (under Pompey in 63 B.C.). This ends the period of Jewish freedom which had begun in 165 B.C. The Pharisees rally around their law and religion now that their political and economic freedom is gone. They build a "fence around the law." It was the only center of unity that remained for them. They gave their energies to the interpretation and exposition of the law. They did not suppress any doctrine contained in the Hebrew Old Testament -this is said in their favor - but they did accumulate many new requirements of devotion.<sup>35</sup>

The Pharisees made it their aim to put into practice the ideal scheme of life as drawn up by the scribes. This was for what they lived. As they were strict in their observance of the law, so were they constant in their defense of it. The Pharisees made religion a personal relationship with God. This was not a fellowship in isolation but a fellowship of the religious community and of the whole Jewish people. This Judaism was at once both a personal religion and a national religion.<sup>36</sup>

An outside observer might have given this definition of the Pharisees, " a body of Jews who profess to be more religious than the rest and to explain the laws more precisely." It was the scribes primarily who were the truly learned group of the Pharisees. Their life study was the

34. Moore, op. cit., p.70.

35. Coneybeare Howson, opcit., p.56.

36. Moore, op. cit., p. 121.

law and its interpretation. Most of the scribes were of the Pharisees, but the bulk of the Pharisees were not scholars. The deep devotion of the Pharisees was placed squarely at the door of the traditional law with its many regulations and ordinances. <sup>37</sup>

Fairweather asserts that there is no reason to doubt that the formalism of the Pharisees was based upon the heartfelt desire to obey the divine commands. Their sincerity at the outset is unquestioned, but as time went on, legalism developed and inevitably it degenerated into gross externalism (Matt. 23,25), odious self-righteousness (Luke 18,9ff), and quibbling casuistry (Mark 7,11). <sup>38</sup>

The qualifications for membership in the Pharisaic association were these: 1) The candidate must set apart all the sacred tithes and refrain from eating anything that had not been tithed or about the tithing of which there was some doubt. 2) Scrupulously observe the essential laws of purity. <sup>39</sup>

The distinguishing characteristic of the Pharisees was this: They were the zealous partisans and the jealous guardians of the unwritten law. This attitude of theirs is fundamental in their controversy with the Sadducees. The Pharisees held that the Jews had an obligation over against the traditional rules and observances even if there was no biblical authority to back them up. Moore holds that herein lies the historical importance of the Pharisees; that they passed on

37. Moore, op. cit., p.66.

38. Fairweather, op. cit., p. 114.

39. McClintok and Strong, Cyclopedia, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1894, Vol. VIII, p.69.

to the people the knowledge of the law and then impressed its authority upon the people by precept. More than that, they set themselves up as the example of close observance of its detail. This they were able to do because their adherents were drawn principally from that medium layer of society in which puritan movements<sup>enCS</sup> in all religions have found their chief support.<sup>40</sup>

The Pharisees were not only the representatives of orthodox Judaism but they also held the clay of its history in their hands. They were popular with the masses, they were the real leaders of the people, but more than that, they had the general control of education. The tradition of leadership was passed down from generation to generation. The Pharisees felt that the future of Judaism lay with them, for when the temple was destroyed, the law only remained and they were the propounders of the law.<sup>41</sup>

Unquestionably post exilic Judaism was devoted to the law, primarily the law of Moses. Around the law they had grown a mass of traditions. These traditions were venerated by the Pharisees. Morality was ultimately made by the Pharisees a matter of external rules. Machen cleverly calls this "a credit and debit arrangement with God."<sup>42</sup>

The legalism of the Pharisees theoretically would have produced a sense of profound futility in the lives of those practicing such a close observance of the law, and thereby

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40. Moore, op. cit., pp. 66.67.

41. Machen, Origin of Paul's Religion, Macmillan Co., New York, 19,25, p. 178.

42. Ibid.

works a distinct advantage for the preparation of the Gospel. The many laws should have resulted in a deep consciousness of sin and an earnest longing for a Savior, but the exact opposite was the case. The Pharisees felt quite self-sufficient. Their legalism was not making the law too hard to keep, but was actually making it too easy to keep. The principle involved was this: it is easier to cleanse the outside of the cup than to cleanse the heart.<sup>43</sup>

The sworn enemies of the Pharisees were the Sadducees. The chief point of controversy was the matter of the traditions. The Pharisees placed the traditions on the same level as the Scriptures and made them binding while the Sadducees said they could not be considered equal.<sup>44</sup> "The Halacha or traditional law, as developed and settled by the labors of the scribes, was declared to be as legally binding as the written Torah."<sup>45</sup> It is Josephus who originally tells us of this fact, "The Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are delivered from the tradition of our forefathers."<sup>46</sup>

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43. Machen, op. cit., p. 179.

44. Moore, op. cit., p. 68.

45. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 12.

46. Josephus, Antiquities, Book XIII, chap. X, 6.

The next important doctrinal difference was in the field of eschatology. The Pharisees believed in 1) the survival of the soul, 2) the revival of the body, 3) the great judgment, 4) the life of the world to come. The Sadducees found nothing in the Scriptures as they read them in their plain sense, concerning these points. Josephus sums up the Sadducean viewpoint on eschatology and on the law in this way: "The doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies, nor do they regard the observ<sup>nce</sup>ation of any thing besides what the law enjoins them; for they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent: but this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity. But they are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them."<sup>47</sup>

The Sadducees were not a religious party as were the Pharisees. They were primarily a social class. They were members of the well-to-do stratum of Jewish society. They were also the liberals of their day. There is nothing about them to admire and they appear to be largely inoffensive in their mode of life.<sup>48</sup>

The Pharisees ostentatious religious life manifested itself in these excesses: 1) they prayed long and frequently

47. Josephus, op. cit., XVIII, 1, 4.

48. Dana, op. cit., p.122.

in public, 2) fasted often, 3) set casuistical distinctions into the smallest details of conduct, 4) sought to increase their nation's power in the only way it was practicable and that was by trying to enmesh everyone in their laws. They felt that since they could not fortify Jerusalem against the heathen, they could at least fortify the law as an impregnable city.<sup>49</sup>

It was from such a background that Paul emerged. Paul had been a Pharisee and a good one. In a following section we shall treat of the influence of this background upon Paul and his writings.

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49. Coneybeare <sup>and</sup> Howson, Op. cit., p.56ff.

#### IV. The Doctrines

In this section we treat of several of the doctrines of Judaism. We have confined ourselves to these three: the law, the Messianic hope, and monotheism. We are interested in these three phases of the Jewish religion primarily because of the implications they have as far as the Christian religion is concerned. In the next section we shall strive to indicate the influences these three Jewish beliefs had upon Paul's Christian teachings. We do not for a moment claim that these three aspects of Judaism cover the entire Jewish religion. There are other aspects just as important as the three we have chosen. We felt constrained to limit ourselves to these three because the broad scope of Jewish teaching.

##### The Law

The Jew had a tremendous respect for the law. Everyone was to know what the law commanded and to do it. The entire life of the Jew was to be ruled according to the law. Schuerer puts it this way. "All zeal for education in the family, the school and in the synagogue aimed at making the whole people a people of the law." <sup>1</sup>

A definition of the law: The comprehensive name for the divine revelation, both the written law and tradition, is 'Torah.' The Torah was the sole standard and norm of the

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1. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 90.

Jewish religion. By 'Torah' is not meant merely what is translated by the word "law." This is a frequently occurring misconception. But there is no single English word which adequately expresses what is meant by 'Torah' because the 'Torah' not only included what we understand as law, but must be taken to include the entire revelation - in fact, everything that God had made known to man. The prophets referred to their writings as 'Torah', the Psalms were also included in that designation. Even the traditions of the elders were included in the 'Torah.'<sup>2</sup>

The Israelites from a very early date identified the 'Torah' with wisdom. "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."<sup>3</sup>

The perpetuity of the law: It was generally held by the Israelites that the law was perfect and therefore unchangeable.<sup>4</sup> The law was considered to be eternal. Josephus writes, "Even if we are deprived of wealth, of towns, and of the other possessions, the law remains to us forever."<sup>5</sup> The association of the law with divine wisdom further indicates the perpetuity of the law. A number of passages from the Apocrypha also bear this out. Baruch 4,1: "This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endureth for ever." Also, Ecclesiasticus 24,23: "All these things are

2. Moore, op. cit., p.263.

3. Deut. 4,6.

4. Psalm 19,7.

5. Qpion 2:38, taken from Schuerer.

the book of the covenant of the most high God even the law which Moses commanded."

This idea of perpetuity carries over into the New Testament times. Matt. 5,18: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot and one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

The Universality of the Law: The revealed religion of the Jews was recognized by them to be primarily their religion. However they were well aware of the fact that the one true religion was destined to be the religion of all mankind. They realized that the revelation had not been made to one nation only. Isaiah, from his fortieth chapter on, indicates the prophetic mission of Israel. "Who carried up the righteous man from the east. The isles saw it and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, draw near, and come."<sup>6</sup> But generally speaking the heathen nations did not accept the law as divine. Israel alone accepted it.

Though Israel alone accepted the law as divine and bound themselves to it, the content of the law is universal. Individual Gentiles who obey its commandments share in its promises. Rabbi Meir is reported to have found proof that even a foreigner (or Gentile) who occupies himself with the law is like the high priest. He quotes as his authority such passages as Lev. 18,5: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." In this passage it does not say, "if a

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6. Is. 42, 2.5.

priest or a levite do according to the law" but it says, "if a man do," therefore even a Gentile. <sup>7</sup>

Scriptural proof for the universality of the law - "This gate is of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter." It does not say, "into which the priest, levites and Israelites shall enter."<sup>8</sup> Also, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts."<sup>9</sup> Not, "do good, O Lord, to the priests, levites and Israelites." Hence it follows that the law, if kept by a Gentile, would bring the same results to him as to the Jews.

The Law and Tradition: As mentioned before, the law (Torah) did not merely mean the written will of God, but the unwritten traditions were also included. These traditions in part supplemented the law and in part interpreted and applied it. There can be no doubt that tradition existed in all ages of the Jewish history. Moore points out that the traditional knowledge concerning sacrifices by the priests is constantly assumed in the laws in the Pentateuch. <sup>10</sup>

The Soferim (scribes) saw to it that there was no conflict between the written and the unwritten law. To establish a harmony between scripture and tradition was even the work of the schools. The authority of the unwritten law did not depend on the written law but the perfect agreement between the two

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7. Moore, op. cit., p.279.

8. Ps. 118, 20.

9. Ps. 125, 4.

10. Moore, op. cit. p.251.

was a criterion of the soundness of a particular tradition or interpretation.<sup>11</sup>

The traditions were merely an expansion of the written law. Edersheim says "these halakoth were either simply the laws laid down in Scripture, or else derived from, or traced to it by some ingenious and artificial method of exegesis; or added to it, by way of amplification and for safety's sake; or, finally, legalised customs."<sup>12</sup> The traditions "provided for every possible and impossible case, entered into every detail of private, family and public life; and with iron logic, unbending vigor, and most minute analysis pursued and dominated man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable."<sup>13</sup> Many of the traditions came into existence by the search in Scripture for a principle by which a new question could be answered. In such a case, if the result was approved by the authorities as deduced in a valid way from Scripture, the judgment would become a part of the Mosaic tradition.<sup>14</sup>

What return did the Jew receive for obeying the tradition or the law in general? The Jew believed a close observance of the law entitled him to a life of happiness. Good works were looked upon as capital, whose interest is already enjoyed now - in this life. The capital itself - the final and complete happiness remained for the life to come.<sup>15</sup>

11. Moore, op. cit., p. 254.

12. Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Erdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1936, Vol. I., p. 98.

13. Ibid.

14. Moore, op. cit., p. 255.

15. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 92.

Schuerer holds that the hope of a future retribution was therefore the real mainspring of all zeal for the law. The entire Jewish life revolves around these two poles: 1) the fulfillment of the law, and 2) the hope of future glory.<sup>16</sup>

But to return to the unwritten law specifically. According to the Jewish view God had given Moses on Mt. Sinai both the oral and the written law, i.e., the law with all its interpretations and applications. It is inferred from Exodus 20, 1<sup>17</sup> that God gave to Moses the Bible, the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Haggadah. In answer to why the Bible had alone been written it was said that Moses had wanted to write down everything but the Almighty had refused because of the subjection of the Israelites to heathen nations who would take the written law from them.<sup>18</sup> And thus the unwritten law would remain to separate the Jews from the Gentiles.

The passing down of the traditions was a natural thing. Moses transmitted them to Joshua, Joshua gave them to the Elders, the Elders gave them to the prophets, and the prophets gave them to the great assembly, etc.<sup>19</sup>

Strangely enough the unwritten law was in no way inferior to the written law, in fact, the opposite was true. It was declared: "A more serious matter is made of the words of the scribes than of the words of the written law."<sup>20</sup> The

16. Schuerer, op. cit., p.93.

17. "And God spake all these words saying," etc.

18. Edersheim, Life and Times, p.99.

19. Moore, op. cit., p.255.

20. Ibid., p.262.

later teachers set out to prove that the words of the scribes and elders were of more importance than the words of the prophets.<sup>21</sup> However it is an interesting fact that although Jesus finds much fault with the scribes and Pharisees still he recognizes them to be the legitimate interpreters of the law. He tells his disciples to obey them but not to follow their evil example.<sup>22</sup>

The Law and the Sadducees: The Sadducees, as indicated before, took exception to the Pharisaic veneration of traditions. They acknowledged no revelation but that in the Scriptures. However ~~that~~<sup>they</sup> had ritual and jural traditions of their own, but their authority rested on the approval of the Sanhedrin and not on supplementary instructions given to Moses at Sinai. In their approach to the written law they were very literalistic and often more vigorous than the Pharisees. The Sadducees clung tenaciously to the letter of the law in regard to matters for which the traditions of the Pharisees supplied circumventions. The Sadducees on the other hand ridiculed the absurdity of the Pharisaic teaching that the manuscripts of the sacred Scriptures made the hands of anyone touching them unclean, while other books do not.<sup>23</sup>

Moore thinks that there were points of dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees which were far more serious than the ones of which we are aware. He ~~thinks~~<sup>thinks</sup> that our sources report

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21. Moore, op. cit., p. 262.

22. Matt. 23, 1ff.

23. Moore, op. cit., p. 280.

only trivialities.<sup>24</sup> The import which these tenets of the law had upon the Jewish society of the first century of the Christian era, was unique. There was an incredible externalizing of the religious and moral life. There is always and everywhere only one duty - to fulfill the law. In the hands of the scribes the law became a widely ramified science. Laws covered every possible situation. The scribes cut up the law into thousands upon thousands of single commands. The bad feature of this was that all moral action was now completely crushed. Every action was motivated not by a free will acting upon a moral impulse but by an external compulsion of a legal requirement. There is no higher vocation than to be faithful to the letter of the law for the letter's sake. The emphasis thereby shifted from the internal motive to the external correctness. All this interest and zeal in often picayune matters finally became the true and genuine service of God.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Messianic Hope.

During the Period when Paul lived, the Messianic hope had two aspects: 1) One aspect included general religious ideas which concerned the world and man in general, and 2) the other aspect was related to specific Israelitish ideas of the relationship of Jehovah as the God of Israel.

The form of the imagined Messianic activities took on the aspects of a golden age. The Jews imagined that their

24. Moore, Op. cit., p.280

25. Schuerer, op. cit., p.96.

national religion would be internationalized.<sup>26</sup> The temple in Jerusalem would become the hub and center of a great religious activity which would radiate into all the world. Worshippers from all lands would stream to Jerusalem, bringing sacrifices and precious gifts.<sup>27</sup> The Jews would not lose their prerogative, but they would be the priests and the other people would minister to them in temporal things as the Jews took care of their spiritual needs.<sup>28</sup>

In the centuries preceding the Christian era there <sup>became prominent</sup> arose a fear of the after life. The thought of what was in store for men after death began to haunt the minds of men. The visions of the golden age which preceded the after life was not enough. The salvation which Judaism offered, <sup>it was</sup> ~~took on~~ <sup>realized,</sup> ~~to show~~ <sup>showed</sup> man the way and give him assurance of a blessed hereafter.<sup>29</sup> The real significance of the Jewish Messianic hope lay in this fact that God held the reigns of the universe and everything would work out according to his dictates.

The Messianic doctrine proper: In this section we shall keep together the two aspects of the Messianic concept i.e., the golden age for the Jews and the Jewish eschatology concerning the whole world. We note the following divisions of the Messianic doctrine:

The Last Tribulation.

The Old Testament clearly predicated that the appearance

26. Moore, op. cit., p.231

27. Mal. 1,11-14; Is. 19,18-25; 2, 2-4.

28. Is. 61,5.

29. Moore, op. cit., p.232.

of redemption would be preceded by a period of special trouble and affliction (Hosea 13,13; Dan. 12,1) and thus there evolved in the Rabbinical theology the teaching of the travail of the Messiah which would precede his birth ( cp. Hosea 13, 13). There were to be many strange omens, "there were seen horsemen running in the air,"<sup>30</sup> " thus there was a star resembling a sword which stood over the city."<sup>31</sup> "The eastern gate of the temple was seen to be opened of its own accord."<sup>32</sup> Everything in nature was to fall into commotion. "The sun shall suddenly shine again in the night and the moon through the day. And blood shall drop out of wood and the stone shall give his voice."<sup>33</sup> Men shall fight with each other and nation shall rise against nation, and there will be famines and pestilences, etc.<sup>34</sup> The period of the last tribulation was<sup>to be</sup> a time of much commotion.

#### The Appearing of the Messiah.

After due preparation had been made by a prophet, presumably Elijah (cp. Mal. 4,5; Matt. 17,10), the Messiah was to appear. His name was "the Anointed" or Messiah. (He had many names including Son of Man, Son of God, Son of Woman, etc.) He was to be the leader of Israel, anointed by God.

In Israel there were four cardinal conceptions of what constituted a leader. The Messiah might be a prophet

30. II Macc. 5, 2.

31. Josephus, Wars, VI, V, 3.

32. Ibid.

33. II Esdras 5, 4.5.

34. Matt. 24,7; Mark 13,9.

a priest, a king, or a supernatural Messiah, a sort of angelic being. Naturally the most prominent and popular view was that the Messiah was a warrior king who would be a descendant of David, and a purely political potentate.<sup>35</sup> Politically, Israel was to flourish once more. There would be a renaissance of the golden age, the good old times of the early monarchy.<sup>36</sup>

There were many speculations regarding the time of the Messiah's appearance. In rigidly legal circles it was held that the Messiah could not come until the people repent and perfectly fulfill the law.<sup>37</sup>

The manner of his coming was conceived of as being a matter of a sudden and glorious appearance. He would first live in concealment and then suddenly come forth.<sup>38</sup> Cp. John 7,27.

#### The Conflict with the Hostile Powers.

After the appearance of the Messiah the heathen powers would assemble against him. The Old testament suggests this, see Daniel 11 where the kings of the earth arise. Schuerer on the basis of several apocryphal references holds that these uprisings are not against the Messiah but against the people of God.<sup>39</sup> However these hostile forces are not victorious, but they are destroyed by God Himself.<sup>40</sup> This view of the supremacy of the Messiah and His anointed was not entirely selfish. The devout Jew believed that it was for the

35. Dana, op. cit., pp. 131-134.

36. Moore, op. cit., vol. II, p.324.

37. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 163.

38. Ibid., p. 164.

39. Ibid.

40. Is. 11,4.

best that all the earth should be made subject to the dominion of Israel. They believed that the unhindered sovereignty of God's will would bring the highest possible state of human happiness.<sup>41</sup>

#### The New Jerusalem.

The conquering Messiah was to set up a new kingdom in the Holy Land. Jerusalem would therefore be renovated. The holy city would be purified and the heathen would be removed. Both Schuerer and Moore express this view that a new Jerusalem would come down from heaven in place of the old city.<sup>42</sup> The Old Testament foundation for this hope is Ezek. 40 - 47; also Is. 54, 11ff. This new Jerusalem is conceived of as already existing in heaven.

With the establishment of the new Jerusalem there was to be a gathering of the dispersed Israelites who were naturally to share in the Messianic kingdom. Isaiah even adds that the heathen nations shall themselves bring the dispersed as an offering to the temple.<sup>43</sup>

The result of all this would be that there was established a new Jerusalem which was the seat of the theocracy in the future as it had been in the past.<sup>44</sup> The Messianic kingdom would have as its head the Messianic King, but the supreme ruler is God Himself. "With the setting up of this kingdom, the idea of God's kingship over Israel becomes full reality and truth."<sup>45</sup> God was already king of Israel but

41. Dana, op. cit., p.138.

42. Moore, op. cit., vol.II, p.342; Schuerer, op.cit., p.168.

43. Is. 49,22; 60, 4.9.

44. Moore, op. cit., Vol.II, p.342.

45. Schuerer, op. cit., p.170.

He did not exercise his kingship completely. He had exposed his people to the chastisement of the heathen, until in the glorious future kingdom He would again take the government into His own hand. It is therefore called the kingdom of God in contrast to the heathen kingdoms. (cp. Mark and Luke).

The Holy Land was the central point of this Messianic kingdom. It was not confined to the limits of Palestine but it is conceived of as in some way comprising the whole world.<sup>46</sup> The Old Testament has passages referring to this fact that Gentiles, too, should acknowledge Jehovah as their supreme ruler<sup>47</sup> and be converted to Him and be consequently admitted to the theocracy.<sup>48</sup>

The Messianic period is described as one of joy and gladness. All strife and discord ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> to cease. Peace and righteousness were to prevail everywhere. But external blessings were not the only ones. As a matter of fact, they result from this that the Messianic church is a holy church and that God has sanctified it and the Messiah governs it in righteousness. Schuerer points out that in this future kingdom not only the dispersed members of the nation were to participate but also the deceased Israelites. They will come forth from their graves to enjoy the happiness of the Messiah's kingdom.<sup>49</sup>

#### The General Resurrection.

Before the last judgment there was to take place a general resurrection. It is the book of Daniel that speaks

46. Schuerer, op. cit., p.172.

47. Micah 4, 1.2; 7,14.

48. Is. 55,5.

49. Schuerer, op. cit., p.175.

clearly and decidedly of a resurrection of the dead (Daniel 12,2). But later on by the first Christian century this belief was very firmly established. "But the king of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life."<sup>50</sup> "They (the Pharisees) also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, accordingly as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again...."<sup>51</sup> Only the Sadducees denied the resurrection.<sup>52</sup> There were two theories as regards the resurrection. Some held that it was to be a resurrection of the righteous only for the purpose of participation in the Messianic kingdom and others held that there was to be a general resurrection of the righteous and the ungodly to judgment. Schuerer holds that the former view is the oldest one.<sup>53</sup> The expectation of a general resurrection to judgment is the extension of this older resurrection hope. Daniel 12,2.<sup>54</sup> In quoting these views we do not mean to assert that the patriarchs and prophets did not believe in the resurrection of the body.

### The Last Judgment.

A last judgment at the close of the Messianic period can only be spoken of when limited duration is ascribed to

50. II Macc. 7,9.

51. Josephus, Antiquities, 18: 1,3

52. Ibid., 18: 1,4.

53. Schuerer, op. cit., p.181

54. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

55. Schuerer, op. cit., p.182; Moore, op. cit., II, p.339.

the Messianic kingdom.<sup>55</sup> It is certainly the scriptural viewpoint. We see in the New Testament that sentence is passed on every individual exactly in proportion to his works. The deeds of men are therefore recorded in the Book of Life.<sup>56</sup> The logical conclusion being that their sentence is passed according to the contents of these books. The ungodly will be punished, the righteous will be received into Paradise.<sup>57</sup>

The significance of these Messianic views is this that it indicates that the Jews had very definite ideas about the events which were to precede and follow the coming of the Messiah. Their intense nationalism flourish<sup>ed</sup> upon this hope. They were convinced that there would be a special interposition of divine power. There would be a supreme elevation of the nation of Israel, and the subjugation of the world to the rule of Jehovah and His anointed.<sup>58</sup> Dana holds that there was no other element in Jewish life that held so prominent a place as the Messianic expectation. It was the vital center of the Jewish religion. He feels that the Messianic hope was productive of a more spiritual type of religious experience than could have otherwise been possible in the midst of Pharisaic formalism.<sup>59</sup>

It was in front of such a background that St. Paul did his work of preaching the Gospel.

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55. Schuerer, op.cit., p.182; Moore, op.cit., II, p.339.

56. Phil. 4,3; Luke 10,20.

57. Dan. 12,3.

58. Dana, op. cit., p.135ff.

59. Ibid., p.138ff.

## Monotheism.

The Jewish conception of God lifts Judaism above all other religions. The God of Judaism was not one god among many, but it is the One and Holy God above whom there is no other. In Him there is all power and essence. This lofty conception of the deity forms the essence of Judaism and made it unique among the ancient nations which changed gods with each conquest or defeat.

To understand what Judaism was during the time of Paul's life it must be kept in mind that it had a two-fold character of nationality and universality which, Moore tells us, had been inseparably impressed upon it by its history.<sup>60</sup>

Originally it had been a national religion, Jehovah was the Lord of Israel; and Israel was the people of Jehovah.

*We do not share those views of Moore, but mention them here because they are widely accepted.*

A strong manifestation of this monotheism is found in the Jewish antipathy to images and idols. The opposition to these iconic representatives of the deity was at first manifested because they belonged to other religions. Later on this objection was raised that Jehovah is invisible and therefore cannot be represented in any visible form.<sup>61</sup> There was even strong feeling against the aniconic pillars and posts at the places of worship because it was feared that they might be taken for images or idols.

Interestingly enough the Jewish Encyclopedia traces Monotheism to the religious awakening of Abraham,<sup>62</sup> whom

60. Moore, op. cit., Vol. I., p.219.

61. Ibid., p.223.

62. Jewish Encyclopedia, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1907, Vol. VIII, p. 659.

they regard as the patriarchy of their race. According to Scripture we trace the monotheistic concept back to creation and from there to pre-creation eternity. But at all events the Jews acknowledge One God and one religion. The idea of unity carries with it the idea of universality. Israel alone worships the true God, but according to God's scheme, it must one day be the religion of all mankind. Israel is the instrument for the accomplishment of this end.<sup>63</sup> Israel is to be His servant. Israel is to bring its religion to the heathen nations,<sup>64</sup> so that salvation may come to all the world.

The Jewish idea of monotheism together with their ideas of the nationalism and universalism of their religion in no way affected the personal aspect of their belief. God knows man at all times with an all-embracing, and inescapable knowledge. They were able to conceal nothing from the all-seeing eye of God. Wisdom of Solomon 1, 6: "For God is witness of his reigns, and a true beholder of his heart and a hearer of his tongue." Other passages of the Apocrypha bear this out.<sup>65</sup>

#### The Character of God.

The Jewish nation more than any of the other ancient race developed an intense and well-articulated religious consciousness. There can be no doubt that it was the Old Testament which developed this spiritual sensitivity. At

63. Moore, op. cit., I, 228.

64. Is. 42, 1ff; 49, 1ff.

65. Baruch 3, 32; Ecclus. 42, 18-20.

all events we find them possessing some deeply-felt beliefs as regards their God. They believed God to be:

Omnipotent and Omnipresent.

As far as His omnipotence is concerned, the universe is the most obvious proof of that. God is the sole creator of the heavens and the earth.<sup>66</sup> Not only is He the sole creator of the world, but He also upholds and maintains it by His will and power.<sup>67</sup> "The maintenace of the world is a kind of continuous creation: God in His goodness makes new every day continually the work of creation."<sup>68</sup> The history of the world is His great plan and all things move in the fulfillment of His purpose.

God's power is limited only by His own will. "He doeth what He willeth."<sup>69</sup> And His will implies that He has the power to accomplish His desired end. And therefore His omnipotence may be coupled with His omniscience.<sup>70</sup> Not only the general hope of an action but every moment and every detail is known by God and is an object of His omniscience.<sup>71</sup> All man's doings are known by God.<sup>72</sup> And likewise the destiny of all nations is in His hands. He alone foretells the future and can bring it to pass.<sup>73</sup>

The Pharisees of Paul's day fully ascribed to God the regulation and knowledge of all things. The Sadducees denied

66. Is. 40, 12ff.; 44, 24; 45, 12, etc.

67. Ps. 104, 11ff.

68. Moore, op. cit., I, p. 385.

69. Deut. 3, 24.

70. K. Kohler, Jewish Theology, MacMillan Co., N.Y., 1928, p. 93.

71. Moore, op. cit., I, p. 385.

72. Ps. 37, 23; Prov. 20, 24.

73. Is. 45, 1f.

that God could have a part in any thing that is evil. However they were confusing the issue and really denying the moral responsibility of man. The Pharisees pursued these two lines of thought: 1) God was omnipotent and omniscient, but 2) man, while he had freedom, still had responsibility.<sup>74</sup>

God's Omnipresence and Eternity.

"Another doctrine, equally important, is the timelessness and the omnipresence of God."<sup>75</sup> Man soon realizes the vast difference between his own finite being, limited by space and time, and God's omnipresence and eternity. Of all of God's attributes possibly man is most keenly aware of these two because he is himself so restricted as regards time and space.<sup>76</sup>

The Old Testament very clearly sets forth the omnipresence of God. "...the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."<sup>77</sup> Also: "If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there," etc.<sup>78</sup> "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."<sup>79</sup> Also other passages.

There is a similar clarity as regards the eternity of God. "The eternal God is thy refuge."<sup>80</sup> "Thy name, O Lord, endureth forever; and thy memorial, O Lord throughout

74. Schuerer, op. cit., p.16; Josephus, Ant., XVIII; 1,3.

75. L. Finkelstein, The Religions of Democracy, Kelvin-Adam, Co., N.Y., 1941, p.20.

76. Kohler, op. cit., p.98.

77. Deut. 4,39.

78. Ps. 139,8ff.

79. Prov. 15,3

80. Deut. 33,27.

all generations."<sup>81</sup> "...and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."<sup>82</sup> The implications are obvious: God's eternity and omnipresence raise Him far above the world and further confirm the Jewish idea of monotheism.

#### The Holiness of God.

This is another "living belief,"<sup>83</sup> of Judaism. The God of Israel was inviolable. His consuming purity was absolutely unlike man. His holiness is the essence of all moral perfection. This type of holiness can only be ascribed to divinity as it is far above the ability of man.<sup>84</sup> Scripture (O.T.) gives adequate proof of the firm foundation of this belief. "...who is like thee, glorious in holiness..."<sup>85</sup> "The Lord our God is Holy."<sup>86</sup> "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts."<sup>87</sup> The contemplation of God as the "Holy One" inspired man with a fear of sin and exerted a healthful influence upon his conduct, and it became man's chief end to be in a human measure like God.<sup>88</sup>

#### His Mercy and Justice.

Two other aspects of God's character which are strongly displayed are his mercy and justice. See such passages as Ex. 33,19: "And will shew mercy," etc., Deut. 5,8.9: "Visiting the

81. Ps. 135, 13.

82. Ps. 145, 13; Is. 57, 15; Lam. 5, 19.

83. This term used by Dr. Wycoff of Biblical Seminary, N.Y.C. to express the intensity of Jewish thought as regards God.

84. Koehler, op. cit., p.102.

85. Ex. 15, 11.

86. Ps. 99, 9.

87. Is. 6, 3.

88. Moore, op. cit., I, p.386.

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

But Justice and Mercy in the abstract may seem to be conflicting principles, if justice is understood as punishment and mercy is understood as the unwillingness to punish.<sup>89</sup> Actually to the Jews these two attributes were not contradictory but complementary aspects of His character. Finkelstein points out that to speak of God as being merciful in the sense in which man is merciful is almost blasphemy for in Jewish theology it is always an error to attribute to God those qualities which are found in man.<sup>90</sup>

It is true however that a note of earnestness runs through the pages of the Old Testament as regards God's justice. The prophets particularly speak of the sins which bring down punishment upon the different nations. However, in the presentation of the impending doom there is inevitably a reference to the grace and mercy of God. Kohler claims that the predominance in God of mildness and mercy over punitive anger is expressed most clearly in the revelation of Moses (Ex. 32,1 -24,7) where the people had provoked God to anger by worshipping the golden calf. Moses intercedes in their behalf and then the Lord proclaims: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the

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89. Moore, op. cit., I, p.392.

90. Finkelstein, op. cit., p.20.

guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."<sup>91</sup> Thus justice and mercy are not two separate powers in the Deity but they are really two sides of the same power.

### His Love.

From an endless abundance of passages in the Old Testament we see the love of God. This divine love even shows itself in the law, where compassion is enjoined on suffering creatures ( law permitted the rescue of an animal that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath). Even to the dumb animals not suffering, God's mercy is extended.<sup>92</sup> The ox treading the corn is not permitted to be muzzled.<sup>93</sup> That these Old Testament precepts were carried out in the New Testament times is borne out by the Talmudic rules. Kohler informs us that this treatment of animals remained a characteristic trait of Judaism.<sup>94</sup>

Love came to be regarded as the inner-most part of God's being. That love was directed primarily at Israel. Thus there are frequent references to God's love for his people Israel. Moore informs us that God's love for His people is a frequent topic in the Old Testament especially in the prophets from the 7th century on.<sup>95</sup> Thus Hosea 11,1:  
" When Israel was young I loved him and out of Egypt I called

91. Kohler, op. cit., p.113ff.

92. Ex. 23,5.

93. Deut. 25,4.

94. Kohler, op. cit., p. 128.

95. Moore, op. cit., I., p.398.

my son." This idea of God's love for his people as being compared to the love of a man for his wife is the ruling thought throughout all his prophecies.

This love of God for men was to call forth from men love for God and for their fellowmen. Finkelstein calls this the cardinal principle of Judaism "that the highest form of piety is to perform the will of God out of Love for Him, rather than out of fear of Him."<sup>96</sup>

#### Summary.

Through this brief study of monotheism it has been seen that while God has a great majesty, still He was not inaccessible. The idea of God was eminently personal. Moore says: "God was supermundane, but not extramundane; exalted, but not remote."<sup>97</sup> The Lord was the sole ruler of the universe which He had created and which He was maintaining. His will for all men was righteousness and goodness. He wanted to bring salvation to all men.

We propose in the next section to indicate the significance of these three Jewish doctrines in Paul's Christian writings.

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96. Finkelstein, op. cit., p.21.

97. Moore, op. cit., I, p. 423.

## V. The Influence of the Institutions on Paul.

In this section we have attempted to indicate the influence which the three institutions, which we have studied, had upon Paul's life and work. In the biographies of Paul which we consulted, the influence of Paul's Jewish background was often disposed of in a sentence or paragraph. Only Machen seem to have been vitally interested in this problem.

### The Influence of the Synagogue on Paul's Work.

Paul began his missionary activities in a city by just going to the synagogue. Here he was guaranteed a hearing because his<sup>of</sup> education in the rabbinical schools and because of the liberality accorded to visiting teachers. Machen says, "It is hard to exaggerate the service which was rendered to the Pauline mission by the Jewish synagogue."<sup>1</sup> Not only was Paul here given an audience to speak to but he had really a picked audience, for everywhere (in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world) where the "God-fearers" (Gentiles) to be found. They were particularly amenable to the Gospel. According to Machen in many cases the "God-fearers" formed the nucleus of the first Christian church in the community.<sup>2</sup>

Not only was the synagogue helpful in getting Paul a hearing, but it also supplied a very fine atmosphere for his work. The synagogue had a definite order of worship. This

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1. Machen, op. cit., p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

immediately placed Paul's sermon, when he spoke in the synagogue, on a high and dignified plane. A student of the history of the early church goes as far as to say that the synagogue was perhaps the most valuable gift which was made by Israel to the generally life of the world.<sup>3</sup> This is of course an overstatement, but it does serve to indicate the importance of the synagogue in Paul's work.

If Paul would have always had to speak in the marketplace, as he did at Athens, then his work would have been far more difficult. He would have had to ~~just~~ educate the people in the teachings of the Old Testament, etc. But all that was unnecessary when he went into the synagogue.

The Synagogue made it possible for the common people to worship Christ. The Jewish synagogue was, generally speaking, a democratic institution. No class of people was excluded from worship except the heathen. Just as Judaism was brought to the masses in the synagogue so also was Christianity brought within the reach of all via the same vehicle.

Paul wisely utilized the synagogue for the building of the kingdom of God and thus his work was greatly facilitated.

#### The Influence of the Rabbinical School on Paul's life and letters.

Paul's education in the Rabbinical school "at the feet of Gamaliel," (Acts 22,3) qualified him to speak in the synagogues and give exposition on Bible passages (see above, page 6). Paul was fortunate to study under Gamaliel who was

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3. E.F. Scott, The Nature of the Early Church, p. 71.

one of the most moderate and enlightened men of his class. Undoubtedly Paul imbibed from him some of the candour and honesty of judgment for which Gamaliel was noted.

Paul's training during his youth moved within the sphere of the Old Testament and rabbinic thought, and no doubt formed the habits of his mind according to the Jewish models. Stevens says that this can be "abundantly illustrated and confirmed" by various conceptions and modes of argument as presented in Paul's epistles.<sup>4</sup>

Taylor gives an interesting account of how the classes in a rabbinic school were conducted. He claims that they were un-not like a debating society where views are presented and opposed. The most contradictory opinions were allowed to be expressed and freely argued and in this way the intellectual powers were sharpened. The benefits of this system for Paul undoubtedly were: 1) a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament. 2) a mental alertness for anticipating objections and replying to them. 3) A rapidity of mental movement coupled with a readiness of utterance. All these things are apparent in Paul's closely packed argumentation, his pointed interrogations, and the remarkable energy for which his epistles are noted.<sup>5</sup>

Both Robinson and Stevens claim that traces of Paul's Jewish training can be seen in his presentation of Gal. 3,16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises

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4. Stevens, op. cit., p.55

5. Taylor, Paul the Missionary, p. 30.

made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." The argument here is based on the difference between the singular and the plural of the word "seed." These men claim that this passage is indicative of the exegetical method taught in the rabbinical schools,<sup>6</sup> and how arguments were made to revolve around one word.

Of course in the rabbinic school, the Old Testament was used as text-book and this was a great storehouse of facts and arguments for Paul in his work as a Christian teacher. Thus we find Paul making numerous allusions to Old Testament characters and stories, as well as prophecies.<sup>7</sup>

We notice also traces of the traditions of the elders which Paul refers to in his epistles. Gilbert writes: "We should expect to find rabbinic ideas and modes of thought in Paul."<sup>8</sup> "Paul draws on tradition and communicates things which are not found in the Old Testament." Thus in Gal. 3, 19, the law "was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator."<sup>9</sup> He <sup>is said to</sup> quote rabbinic tradition as if it were of <sup>on this case the Holy Spirit authenticates the statement as true.</sup> equal authority with Old Testament scripture. Another instance is I Cor. 10, 4: "They drank of a spiritual rock that followed them." The Old Testament makes no such reference but Robinson tells us that rabbinic tradition speaks of the rock of Kadesh

6. Stevens, op. cit., p.62; also Robinson, Life of Paul, p.34.

7. Rom. 9, 4ff.; 9, 14; 9, 22ff.; Gal. 4, 22; etc.

8. Gilbert, A Student's Life of Paul, p. 17.

9. Robinson, op. cit., p.34; Gilbert, op. cit., p.34.

following the Israelites in their wanderings.<sup>10</sup> Thus also Paul gives the names of the Magicians who withstood Moses (Jannes and Jambres).<sup>11</sup> Gilbert points that Paul occasionally allegorizes as the rabbis did. Cp. Gal. 4, 22-25, where Sarah and Hagar are two covenants. Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia and Sarah is the Jerusalem which is above. Also, the rock which followed the Israelites (see above) is Christ.<sup>12</sup> <sup>12a</sup>

Gilbert claims that Paul's angelology and eschatology also have a definite rabbinic flavor. But, he sums up, "these Jewish and rabbinic elements in Paul's writings are exceptional and incidental, and we should be surprised, not at their presence, but rather that they are not far more numerous."<sup>13</sup>

The rabbinic training in the Old Testament is far more outstanding in Paul than the traditions referred to above. Orello Cone makes the statement that Paul could not write on a doctrinal or religious theme without making reference to the Old Testament teachings.<sup>14</sup> On the basis of the brief study we have made of Judaistic theology and the influence of it in Paul's epistles we agree with him. (This is brought out by the next section on doctrines) "One cannot read a page of Paul's writings without finding the traces of such an (rabbinic) education."<sup>15</sup>

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10. Robinson, op. cit., p. 35.

11. II Tim. 3, 8.

12. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 17.

13. Ibid., p. 18.

14. O. Cone, Paul, p. 7.

15. Ibid.

12a. The Bible Christian, believing Paul inspired, finds authentic epigrams in these passages.

Thus we have seen that Paul was directly influenced by the environment of the rabbinic school. But at the same time it is true that his religion was the product of independent reflection. Had he not received inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he would have been unable to lead the infant church out of the maze of the perplexing problems which confronted it. It was Paul "who defined the true relation of the Christian community to the Old Covenant, clearly contrasted the law and faith as principles of salvation, and otherwise both determined the doctrine and shaped the course of the early Church."<sup>16</sup> Had Paul been entirely bound by the Old Testament and the traditions and had he been impervious to the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart, of course, he could not have championed the cause of Christianity as he did.

#### The Influence of the Pharisees on Paul.

Paul, as a member of the sect of the Pharisees, was undoubtedly also influenced by them. Of course it is a matter of speculation to say exactly how he was influenced. But we think that Paul imbibed some of the zeal which characterized the Pharisees - zeal for souls, zeal for God, "zeal for the Pharisaic ideal"<sup>17</sup> and zeal for the law. The Pharisees were noted particularly for their zeal for the law. Paul was noted for his zeal for God's Word.<sup>18</sup> There is a direct hook-up

16. Stevens, op. cit., p. 71.

17. Iverach, St. Paul, p. 10.

18. Rom. 1,16; I Thess. 2,13.

here, in this way that Paul after his conversion placed the Gospel of Christ in the same authoritative position as the law as a rule and norm of life.

There can be little doubt that God used Paul's Pharisaic background for the spreading of the Gospel. Perhaps the Lord brought Paul into the Pharisees for the very purpose of endowing him with some of their characteristic zeal. We know that they "compassed land and sea to make one proselyte."<sup>19</sup> Paul compassed the world to bring the Gospel to every creature. We know that the Pharisees had already undertaken a world-wide propaganda.<sup>20</sup> How many of the methods of the Pharisees Paul adopted in this world-wide effort we do not know. It is not at all impossible <sup>that</sup> of the Pharisees ~~su~~ppressed Paul on to even greater activity. It is evident that Paul retained his Pharisaic zeal for God, and the heritage of his Jewish home and school is manifest in his thought to the end of his life.<sup>21</sup>

Paul manifests an intense nationalism which can be traced to his Jewish background. In Romans Paul mentions that "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."<sup>22</sup> While Paul does give evidence of his nationalism it is not overdone, but he has an intense love for all men, "I am debtor both to

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19. Matt. 23,15.

20. Robinson, op. cit., p.36.

21. Gilbert, op. cit., p.17.

22. Rom. 9, 2.3.

Greeks, and to the Barbarians."<sup>23</sup> And also I Cor. 9,22: "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." It seems that Paul's love spread out from loving his own people to loving all men. No doubt the Holy Spirit at conversion wrought this change in Paul's heart.

Thus we have seen that Paul's life and letters reveal concrete evidence proving that Paul's Jewish background and his Christianity were very directly connected. We might summarize this section: Paul's mind was honed on the rabbinic distinctions and logic. His soul was tempered by the intense nationalism which only a great race that for many centuries had been dominated by foreign powers can feel. Through the years the Jewish nation had retained the attitude that they above all other nations had a Messianic mission. This thought instilled in them a feeling of superiority. Paul felt that he had a Messianic mission to fulfill - he had to preach the Messiah to all men. If Paul had a sense of superiority, it was only in feeling that God had given him much grace and he was therefore by grace a steward of God. There can be no doubt that Paul's desire to be thoroughly Christian was instilled by the Holy Spirit but the habits and approach of the zealous Pharisee were put to use in his life and work as a Christian missionary.

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23. Rom. 1,14.

## VI. The Influence of the Doctrines in Paul's Letters.

In this section we have undertaken to point out how Paul's doctrinally Judaistic background manifests itself in his epistles. We have followed our previous doctrinal section both as to order of appearance and aspects of the doctrine treated. In general we would say that there are found in Paul's letters obvious traces of Judaism, in fact, Jewish doctrine comprises the foundation and often a good deal of the structure of his Christian theology which is, of course, topped by Christ who has the pre-eminent position in Paul's thought.

### The Influence of the Law of Judaism in Paul's Epistles.

Paul, as a sensitive Jewish young man, had striven with his whole heart to fill the requirements of the law. From Gal. 1,14<sup>1</sup> we see that Paul made every effort to observe the code that he had been taught. He had been greatly devoted to Judaism. As a matter of fact, he himself mentions that as far as the law was concerned, he was blameless.<sup>2</sup> But he found no satisfying relationship with God through the law. We find in Paul that intellectual honesty which characterizes the truly great. He had tried more than all his brethren in the

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1. "And profited in the Jew's religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."
  2. Phil. 3,6.

Jewish faith to obtain satisfaction before God and he had failed. He was esteemed by his fellowman but not right with God. In view of his conversion, we note that he re-evaluated the Jewish law and his epistles indicate the following facts which show the adjustment Paul made between Christianity and Judaism.

Paul considered the Law something to be reckoned with.

Since the law is eternal it cannot be denied, but must always be reckoned with. "Thus Paul in Romans teaches both (law and Gospel) side by side, first at great length the law (ch. 1, 18- 3, 20), then the Gospel."<sup>3</sup> Paul does not depart from the perpetuity of the law as developed in Judaism, see above p. 26 .

Machen avers that Paul regarded the law as given to the Jews as authoritative and truly divine, but as a temporary measure in this that it was truly authoritative only until the fulfillment of the promise should come. In other words, the law is the schoolmaster to bring everyone to Christ by producing a consciousness of sin.<sup>4</sup>

Paul still considered the law universal.

According to Paul the law as a schoolmaster was universal as regards the sphere of its activity. "Now we know

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3. F. Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, translated by W. Albrecht, Vol. III, p.114.

4. Machen, op. cit., p.18.

that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."<sup>5</sup> The law had a job to perform on all the world. Both Jew and Gentile were to be made one in Christ.<sup>6</sup>

While the moral law still held sway over all men, the ceremonial law was not to be forced upon the Gentiles, in fact, need not be kept at all except where necessary in order not to give offense to the weak brethren who did not realize their liberty.<sup>7</sup>

He found the keeping of the law in the Judaistic sense impossible. Paul agreed with established Judaism that the law was holy and good. He knew that he should try to live according to it. He had tried desparately to do that. But he was continually frustrated. "The ultimate point at issue was his own inability to execute what the law required. Thus there was presented a complete opposite. The law was good, but he could not realize its requirement."<sup>8</sup>

Possibly one of the clearest passages which indicate his inward struggles is Rom.7,14:"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do

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5. Rom. 3, 19.

6. Eph. 2, 15.

7. Col. 2, 16; Rom. 14, 13-23.

8. O.W. Riddle, Paul, Man of Conflict, p.45.

it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The law is of itself totally inadequate to remedy the situation, but only increases the tension, Rom. 7, 21ff. "I find than a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." The apostle despairs of being able to live according to the law and cries out, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul clearly sees the inadequacies of the law and quickly articulates the liberator Christ. In this passage we see that Paul has departed from the teachings of Judaism because he has added a new ingredient - Christ.

Since the law is impossible to keep, it is at the same time unable to save. Gal. 3, 21, "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." But the law does not give life but death ("who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7, 24) and righteousness does not come by the law.

What could have made Paul see the law and its inadequacies so clearly? It was his experience with Christ. Since the time of his conversion, Christ had to be included in all of his religious experience. He sees faith in Christ as being diametrically opposed to work-righteousness. Christ, the new element, which he added to Judaism, could not be seen correctly unless the law were put in its proper place as the schoolmaster.

In fact, in any other capacity the law works against Christ, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."<sup>9</sup>

In Paul's religion it was easier, perhaps, for the Gentile to obtain a satisfying relationship with God. How was the Jew to understand his judaism in the light of St. Paul's experience? What about the Old Testament? What about the promises made to Abraham?

Paul never said that the Old Testament had been found untrue, "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."<sup>10</sup> But mere descent from Abraham's line was not enough to be reckoned as God's chosen people. See Rom. 3,6-9.<sup>11</sup> Could Christ reject the Jews in view of their sin? Paul answers this question in Gal. 3,29. He states it positively, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." A more complete presentation of the problem of rejection is given in Rom. 9 - 11. Thus Paul indicates that the Mosaic law had been abrogated by Christ.

What then is the present purpose of the law?

As mentioned before, Paul said "that the law was a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ, and by that he meant that the law produced the consciousness of sin."<sup>12</sup>

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9. Gal. 5,4.

10. Rom. 3,21.

11. C. Lattey, Paul, p. 116.

12. Machen, op. cit., p.179.

In Paul's religion all things were subservient to Christ. Whatever did not point to Christ was done away with. Paul saw in the law a useful device, it could put a sting in sin which made Christ all the more necessary and useful. Paul did not reject the law of Judaism. He merely used it in the capacity for which it had been originally given.

The Influence of the Judaistic Messianic Hope on Paul's Epistles.

Since Paul was an ardent Pharisee we may believe that he held to the popular belief in the Messiah. The popular Judaistic belief in the Messiah which obtained during Paul's time was really a hope in an apocalyptic Messiah. This concept of the Messiah - his life and actions - was largely the product of the apocryphal writings and preconceived ideas which the Jews had held for some time. Undoubtedly the pre-Christian Messiah of Paul was the Messiah of contemporary Judaism.<sup>13</sup>

But Paul's conversion shook him loose from the Judaistic moorings and gave him a new outlook.<sup>14</sup> In the light of his conversion experience he rejected at least partially the apocalyptic Messiah of contemporary Judaism. Paul retained the Messiah, but it is a refined notion of the Messiah. Machen in his "Origin of Paul's Religion," goes into this problem at some length and shows that Paul's pre-Christian notions of the Messiah was not the source of his

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13. Machen, op. cit., p.174.

14. G. Stevens, The Pauline Theology, p.229.

Christology. He rightly indicates the source of Paul's Christology as being his conversion and the contact he had there with Christ.<sup>15</sup>

The basic implication of the Judaistic Messianic hope referred to on page 33 still obtains in St. Paul's theology, viz., that God controls all and has the good of the believer in mind.<sup>16</sup>

We note these similarities between the apocalyptic Messianic hope and Paul's Messianic doctrine: According to Paul's epistles the Messiah had come and gone, and Paul therefore made no reference to the last tribulation which preceded the Messiah's coming, and the coming of the Messiah, and the conflict with the hostile forces which was to follow immediately upon the Messiah's come. (See pages 32 to 36). But he does make mention of the other aspects of the Judaistic Messianic doctrine.

Paul in Hebrews (if he wrote Hebrews) refers to a new Jerusalem.<sup>17</sup> Paul's new Jerusalem is a spiritual one. But the new Jerusalem of Judaism was a material city where the Jews were to enjoy physical happiness and superiority over all other nations. Paul's new Jerusalem is undoubtedly heaven, and thus totally different from the Judaistic conception. Paul merely retains the terminology of Judaism's Messianic new Jerusalem. He changed the essence of it from

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15. Machen, op. cit., p.173ff.

16. Rom. 8,28.

17. Hebr. 11,10; 11,16; 12,22; 13,14.

a physical to a spiritual city.

The Judaistic idea of a general resurrection before the Last Judgment was also retained by Paul. Cp. I Cor. 15; II Cor. 4,14. Paul held to the later view (see page 38) that spoke of the resurrection of both good and evil to receive their just rewards (as contrasted to the older view which spoke of the resurrection of the righteous only for the purpose of participating in the Messianic kingdom.

The idea of the Last Judgment was also retained by Paul. There are several clear references to it in his epistles. I Thess. 4,16 (referring also to the resurrection); I Thess. 5,2; II Cor. 5,10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Also Rom. 2,16 and 14,10. This aspect of the Judaistic Messianic hope is the only one which Paul retained in its entirety and in its original sense.

According to Machen, there were several general features of the Jewish Messianic belief that had their counterpart in Paul, viz., that the Messiah was a transcendent, as well as individualistic and universalistic being. He was transcendent in that his kingdom was not thought of as being merely an earthly one. His kingdom was individualistic in that not merely nations were to be judged by him, but the secrets of individuals as well. And he was universalistic in that the coming of his kingdom was regarded as an event of cosmic significance, the Gentiles even sharing in the blessing.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Machen, op. cit., p.190ff.

Differences between the Messiah of First Century Judaism and Paul's Messiah.

There was no close tie-up between the Messiah and God in Judaistic theology. Machen informs us that there are isolated passages in I Enoch where the Word of Spirits and the Son of Man are linked together by the word "and," but these instances do not begin to approach the height of the Pauline conception of the Trinity.<sup>19</sup> In short, in the apocalypse there is no reference to the divinity of the Messiah, while in Paul the divinity of Christ is presupposed on every page. The Pauline doctrine of Christ's divinity is not dependant upon individual passages. Throughout his epistles Paul uses the term "Lord" in connection with Christ, and this term is equal to the term "God" in the designation of the deity. Paul's attitude is that of man toward God. Machen says that such an attitude is absent from the apocalyptic representation of the Messiah.<sup>20</sup> The Messiah of the apocalypses is hidden in heaven. He is a mystery. At no time does this relationship break down into an intimate one. The Christ of Paul, on the other hand, is a warm being, who can be loved and who loves, as Paul clearly indicates.<sup>21</sup>

Another difference we note is that the Messiah of the first century Judaism is in no way connected with the creation of the world. The Pauline Messiah is definitely linked up with the activity of the creation. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and

19. Machen, op. cit., p. 198.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 195.

we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."<sup>22</sup> Col. 1,16 also very clearly hooks up Christ with the creation of the world.<sup>23</sup>

Another difference, and perhaps the most important, between first century Judaism and Paul's Christology, is the doctrine of the suffering Messiah. First century Judaism knew nothing of a suffering Messiah who thereby made atonement for sin. Schuerer writes: "In not one of the numerous works discussed by us have we found even the slightest allusion to an atoning suffering of Messiah. That the Jews were far from entertaining such an idea is abundantly proved by the conduct of both the disciples and opponents of Jesus, cp. Luke 18,34;<sup>24</sup> Luke 24,21; John 12,34. Accordingly it may well be said, that it was on the whole one quite foreign to Judaism in general."<sup>25</sup>

One would think that Isaiah, the 53rd chapter, would have clearly indicated the suffering of Christ. But Judaism according to Machen<sup>26</sup> had moved in another direction. The Messiah was conceived of only as a conquering hero who would sweep all before Him in a glorious action which would redound to the glory of the Hebrew nation. In such a set-up there was absolutely no room for a suffering Messiah, in fact, the

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24. "Then he took unto him the twelve and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished....And they understood none of these things."

25. Schuerer, op. cit., pp.186.187.

26. Machen, op. cit., p.197.

22. I Cor. 8,6

23. Machen, p. 194.

passages referred to above indicate that such an idea was extremely repulsive to the Jewish mind. This attitude had much, if not all, to do with the making of the cross a stumbling block for the Jews.

We know from Acts 27,3 that Paul preached a sufferingg Messiah, "Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

Thus we see that Paul had swung far from the traditional approach to the Messianic hope. It is strange that he so completely cast off the traditions. But Paul received an insight into the true Messianic facts through the working of the Holy Spirit at the time of his conversion and thereafter. From this doctrine of Judaism more than from any other Paul cast himself free. It is interesting how the Holy Spirit's power was able to completely cut off Paul from the forces of his environment and upbringing and turn him in a new direction. Paul's doctrine of the Messiah was not influenced to any degree by the Messianic hope of first century Judaism. We have here a clear indication of the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Influence of the Jewish Concept of Monotheism on Paul's Epistles.

In Paul's theology Christ is the center. Latley writes that "the system of Paul has truly been described as a Christology rather than a theology.<sup>27</sup> All else is explained

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27. Latley, op. cit., p.45.

in relation to Christ, even the Holy Trinity. But Paul implies no weakening of the concept of God. "Paul never went back upon the strict doctrine of the unity and transcendence of God which he had learned as a Jew."<sup>28</sup> As Machen put it, "the religion of Paul is a religion of redemption."<sup>29</sup> And therefore it is natural that Christ, the foremost person of the Trinity in the work of redemption, should be featured. But the general concept of God is developed, in the words of Stevens, "quite incidentally."<sup>30</sup> And we therefore search in vain for any abstract definition of the ethical nature of God (in the Pauline epistles) or for an enumeration or analysis of His attributes.

We know that Paul's Jewish background gave him his monotheistic concept as contrasted to the polytheism of the age. Certainly Paul's conception of God was intensely monotheistic.<sup>31</sup> He gives evidence of a deep scorn for the polytheism of his day. "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods ~~in~~ many, and lords many) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."<sup>32</sup>

Thus the fundamental concept in Paul's religion is the idea of Christ as the personal redeemer of man. Paul bridges the gap between God and Christ by using the idea

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28. Latley, op. cit., p.45.  
 29. Machen, op. cit., p.22.  
 30. Stevens, op. cit., p.96.  
 31. Machen, op. cit., p.24.  
 32. I Cor. 8, 5.6.

of "the Fatherhood of God" (which is used here and there in the Old Testament). God was the Father of the Israelites, and this relationship was to the distinct advantage of the children of Israel. In the New Testament God is the Father of all who believe on Him and call Him "Father."

Paul at once makes intimate not only the relationship between the believer and God, but also between God the Father and God the Son. Paul speaks of them sometimes as separate persons in the Trinity, as for instance when he gives the inspired benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all, Amen,"<sup>33</sup> and then again he refers all the attributes of God to Christ. That is what we are interested in here. We notice that Paul often diverts all the transcendent power and glory from God and deposits it in the lap of Christ. (We shall make no references to the divine attributes as ascribed to God - merely to the divine attributes as ascribed to Christ.) This only serves to indicate the close relationship between God the Father and God the Son. This phenomenon also speaks volumes as regards the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of Paul.

Omnipotence is spoken of as an attribute of Christ.

St. Paul clearly ascribes to Christ infinite power, "...from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned

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33. II Cor. 13,14.

like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."<sup>34</sup> In II Tim. 1,12, Paul indicates his trust in the divine ability of Christ, "for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." A further statement of the superabundance of power in Christ, "unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory..."<sup>35</sup> We notice the same assurance in the epistle to the Hebrews (if Paul wrote Hebrews), "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he even liveth to make intercession for them."<sup>36</sup>

#### Omniscience ascribed to Christ.

On the basis of several passages we see that Paul attributes omniscience to Christ. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is in the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."<sup>37</sup> We see in this instance that Christ knows what is in the heart of man as well what is in the mind of the Spirit and that he makes intercession before God for man. I Cor. 1, 24: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Here the wisdom and the power of God are applied to Christ. Christ

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34. Phil. 3, 20.21.

35. Eph. 3, 20

36. Hebr. 7, 25.

37. Rom. 8, 27.

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34. Phil. 3, 20.21.

35. Eph. 3, 20.

36. Hebr. 7, 25.

37. I Cor. 3, 19.20.

indicate that St. Paul refers the divine attribute of omniscience to Christ whom he held to be the Son of God.

Paul assigns Omnipresence to Christ.

We feel sure that Paul considered Christ to be omnipresent. However in his epistles he makes no direct reference to Christ's omnipresence. However, a passage in Romans speaking of Christ as sitting at the right hand of God proves His omnipresence. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."<sup>38</sup> Some give II Tim. 4,18 as evidence of His omnipresence. "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Paul refers eternity to Christ.

On the basis of Eph. 3,21, we see that Paul considers Christ to be eternal. He imputes eternal glory to Him implying that Christ will eternally be glorified. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." There is also a clear passage in Hebrews which speaks of Christ and Melchisedec, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life."<sup>39</sup>

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38. Romans 8, 34.

39. Hebr. 7, 3.

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38. I Cor. 3, 19.20.

39. Hebr. 7, 3.

### Christ is Holy.

Paul ascribes unto Christ a sinless condition which is holiness considered negatively. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."<sup>40</sup> In I Thess. 3,13 we deduce by inference that Christ is holy since He is able to establish us in holiness. "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father." And Hebr. 7,26, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy." Also Hebr. 4,15, "but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

### Christ is Merciful.

Christ indicated His merciful kindness toward us by the part he played in the plan of salvation. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."<sup>41</sup> Christ indicates His mercy by forgiving us. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."<sup>42</sup> Thus we see the mercy of Christ as attested to by Paul's epistles.

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40. IJ. Cor. 5,21.

41. Titus, 3,5.

42. Col. 3,13.

### The Justice of Christ.

That justice is ascribed to Christ by Paul is seen from a passage in Colossians(4,1), where it is inferred that masters should be just because Christ is just. But possibly the clearest passage on the justice of Christ is presented in the table of domestic duties where servants are advised to do good service, "knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."<sup>43</sup> By the same token masters are told to do their duty, "knowing that your Master (Christ) also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."<sup>44</sup>

### The Love of God in Christ.

Paul makes love the essential glory of divine perfection.<sup>45</sup> In the love of God is found the motive for the redemption through Christ. II Thess. 2,16:"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." Paul in Romans throws the love of Christ into a very obvious position by his question:"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"<sup>46</sup> Paul gives as his motive for service the love of Christ. "For the love of Christ constraineth us."<sup>47</sup> "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."<sup>48</sup> Paul exhorts the Ephesians to "walk in

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43. Eph. 6,8.

44. Eph. 6,9bc

45. Stevens, op. cit., p.97.

46. Rom. 8,35.

47. II Cor. 5,14

48. Gal. 2,20.

love, as Christ also hath loved us."<sup>49</sup> Of all the attributes ascribed to Christ, Paul most cleraly presents this attribute of love, which backs up Paul's statement of the pre-eminence of love as presented in I Cor. 13.

Thus we see that Paul took the Judaistic doctrine of monotheism and focused it squarely on Christ. The reason for Paul's emphasis upon the love of God must come from his conversion experience. According to Judaistic theology, love is presented by Paul in a manner that is out of proportion to the other divine attributes. But that is Paul, and that is the New Testament. "Love is the fulfilling of the law,"<sup>50</sup> and therefore pre-eminent.

This brief study of the Judaistic influences operative in St. Paul's life indicates the supreme power of the Holy Spirit. That Paul should make a complete turnabout from being the strictest of the strict, that he should cast himself loose from the entangling meshes of the Jewish doctrine - these things throw into bold relief the power of God and serve as an eternal testimony of the possibilities that every Christian has before God as long as he does not get in the way of the Gospel, the Power of God.

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49. Eph. 5,2.

50. Rom. 13,10.

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