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Victor Harold Zwintscher

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_zwintscherv@csl.edu

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THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF PAUL

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of New Testament Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Victor Harold Zwintscher
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Approved by: Martin H. Franzmann

John Theodore Mueller

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THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF PAUL

I. Introduction

In "the fulness of time" Jesus the Savior of the world was born in Bethlehem of Judaea. Into a world disillusioned by its own achievements, despairing of its own ingenuity, came the long expected and awaited Savior. True, the promise of deliverance came first to the Jews but obviously was intended for the whole of suffering humanity. God had planned it so, and in accordance with His plan He had made the world ready for the proclamation of His Gospel, the glorious news of a Savior from sin and death. To help accomplish His purpose, He was also equipping His greatest messenger, Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ. Through Paul, the Mediterranean world was destined to hear that message which would give a new direction and a new aim to the life of its misguided inhabitants.

The magnitude of such an undertaking would surely require a unique man. It required a man with a world-view commensurate with the lofty aim. A profound insight into the various strata of society would be a prerequisite. In a world made up of three distinct civilizations, with divergent views and opinions this man would have to be "all things to all men."

We shall always regard the conversion and the commission of the Apostle as the most important factors in his preparation for the tremendous task. Nevertheless, we should fail to feel the impact of God's providence if we should neglect to recognize the natural means which He employed to prepare His messenger. A god-fearing family,

eastern and western culture in a Hellenistic city of the Roman Empire, the best in Jewish education -- all would combine to equip that man who was to preach the Gospel of salvation to a lost and groping world.

The aim the purpose of this paper will be to describe briefly the conditions and activities which influenced the Apostle Paul, during his formative years, in the preparation for becoming an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Since the actual historic facts concerning this period of the apostle's life are extremely limited, there is almost endless room for conjecture. However, in the absence of facts, the conjecture in this paper will be limited to the most logical and psychological possibilities.

II. Paul's Youth in Tarsus

Since Paul spent the greater part of his formative period in Tarsus, the city of his birth, it will be well to consider briefly the early history of that city. Tarsus, located on the Cydnus River in the province of Cilicia, had an illustrious history before the time of the Roman Empire. Though some would identify the Tarshish of the Old Testament with the city on the Cydnus, it will be sufficient to note that the history of Tarsus goes back, at least, to the time of the Assyrian Empire.¹ Already in ancient times the geographical situation made the Cilician plain "the threshold of two civilizations and the bridge between two worlds."² The country was on the route of eastern armies moving West, and of western armies moving East. In about 850 B.C., when the Assyrians conquered Cilicia, Tarsus was already a flourishing city.³ From this time on, for the next five centuries, the Oriental domination of Tarsus is clearly evident. During this time the city became thoroughly familiar with the Eastern culture which was to remain an integral part of it even in the periods of succeeding civilizations. This contact of Tarsus with the East later on served Paul by acquainting him with oriental religion and life.

With the conquest of Alexander, Tarsus most likely made its first effective contact with the Greek civilization, a civilization which would later become the dominating influence in the character

¹ W. M. Ramsay, The Cities of St. Paul, p. 132.

² Adolph Deissmann, Paul, A Study in Social And Religious History, p. 33.

³ Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 132.

of the city. Greek control grew gradually during the succeeding centuries. After Alexander, under the reign of the Seleucids, Greek civilization continued to gain an ever stronger foot-hold in the province of Cilicia.⁴ The climax of Greek influence in this early period reached Tarsus during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, in 171 B.C.⁵ At this time the town became a Greek City-State, "governing itself in all internal matters through its own elective magistrates, and exercising certain sovereign rights such as the striking of its own autonomous coins."⁶ The pride of a Greek citizen was centered in his city rather than in his country, and, reviewing the illustrious history of his own city, undoubtedly a certain pride also ran through the veins of the apostle, when he said, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city."⁷

Unification of the Mediterranean world, achieved by the process of interweaving Greeks and Semites begun by Alexander the Great, became one of the most important factors in the preparation of the world for Christianity. Similarly, this unifying process served to prepare the world's greatest missionary. However, in certain aspects, the Oriental and Greek influences of Tarsus were exceeded by that of a still greater civilization. The Roman Empire made the final contribution toward the preparation of the world for the coming of the Gospel. Since the Empire brought real fame to Tarsus and blazed the trail for the Apostle to the Gentiles, it will be well to consider

4. W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, p. 18

5. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 165

6. Ibid.

7. Acts 21:39.

those general characteristics of the Roman Empire which also affected the city of Cilicia.

For centuries the world had been subject to bloody conquests. Provinces periodically changed from eastern to western domination. The power of the East had been subdued by the Greek civilization, and in succeeding centuries, after the political and moral disintegration of the Greek world, humanity was longing for a new day. The beginning of the Roman rule, the days of the Republic, hardly at all changed the chaotic conditions of the world. This period was merely a continuation of centuries of ruthless conquest.

A new day dawned with the rise of the Roman Empire. After the Battle of Actium, in 31 B.C., people looked hopefully toward the orderly and tolerant government of the Romans. During the illustrious reign of Augustus their hopes were partially realized. The importance of political unity of the Mediterranean world for the coming world-⁸ religion can hardly be overemphasized. Under the firm, yet tolerant, management of the provinces by Augustus, this political unity is particularly evident. Rome and its provinces flourished during this period. The universal peace of the empire pervaded the land and reached out to the most remote districts. To illustrate the grandeur and solidity of the Roman Empire in its most prominent period, one need only point to its magnificent material works — its efficient commerce by land and sea, its unique engineering projects, its enormous expenditure for government and private edifices, and its solid structures for utility, amusement, and worship erected in Italy

8. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 40

9

and the provinces. All this followed in the wake of the "Pax Romana".

Though the accomplishments of the Empire were great and paved the way for the coming of Christianity, there were some glaring weaknesses inherent in the system. In its general aspects, the rule of the Empire can be characterized by the grasping power of its external government. Though the Empire was tolerant in many respects, the conquered nations never forgot the ruthless conquest in which they had succumbed. In its very march to glory the Roman Empire sowed the seeds of its own decay. Even at the peak of its achievements the signs of decay were evident. The very industry and public works for which the Empire was famous were created by enforced slavery. This slavery, as all slavery, extended beyond the actual manual labor of men, women, and children, for the bondage reached into the inner recesses of the hearts and souls of the inhabitants. Education was favored and was enjoyed by the privileged, but the great masses were consigned to hopeless ignorance and superstition. Even in the apparently sunny reign of Augustus, the people of the Mediterranean world were aware of the decay and degeneration. They too felt, "that the Golden Age lay in the beginning and every subsequent period was a step further down from the primitive period of goodness, happiness and sympathy with the Divine nature."¹⁰

Religiously and morally the Empire was thoroughly pagan. Centuries before the birth of Christ, educated people in Greece and Rome were raising questions concerning the nature of the gods

9. Conybeare and Howson, *op. cit.*, p. 11

10. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, *op. cit.*, p. 30

and the destiny of man. ¹¹ As these inquiries gained impetus, the
¹² pagan religion was undermined. The dissatisfaction with the old
 formal religions and the seeking after new ones to take their place
 created a most unstable and gross form of idolatry. There was no
 dearth of religious feeling. Only, when popular polytheism lost its
¹³ hold on men, a philosophic monotheism took its place. People were
 looking "for a religion of the individual which could elevate life,
¹⁴ give fellowship with God, and assure one of immortality." To satisfy
 this need for a personal religion many of the educated people turned
 to the philosophies of Stoicism and Epicureanism.

While the old pagan religion was still persistently clung to
 in the country districts and villages, the masses of the cities turned
 to the popular mystery religions to satisfy their craving for a
 personal religion. The most prominent mystery religions were the
 mysteries of Mithra from Persia, those of Isis from Egypt, and the
¹⁵ Cybele-Attis mysteries from Asia Minor. These oriental mystery
 religions attained a high degree of popularity because they promised
 the pagan individual deliverance and salvation from his woes and
 seemed to satisfy the great spiritual need of that time. Religious
 decay, however, did not spare the mystery religions either. "Along
 with the good and inspiring features of these religions were many
 useless and superstitious and ever pernicious practises. Those that

11. Joseph Klausner, From Jesus to Paul, p. 96

12. Ibid.

13. Benjamin Robinson, The Life of Paul, p. 16

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

appealed to senses and passions were naturally more popular."¹⁶

Religions of all kinds and religious syncretism were not hindered by the empire. In a certain sense religious liberty was fostered, especially during the time of Augustus. This was another boon of the Roman rule. Religious tolerance would be most apparent in the empire's attitude toward the Jews. To illustrate this attitude, Emil Schuerer points to an address of Nicolaus Damascenus, in which it is mentioned that everyone was at liberty to live and worship his own gods.¹⁷ Paul's activity in Athens, for which he was not persecuted, and at Corinth, where Gallio refused to take action against him, are further illustrations of the religious tolerance existing in the Empire. What such a tolerance meant to the rapid spread of Christianity, is of course apparent.

Although there were almost countless religions in the empire from which a person might choose, there was none except the Jewish religion which could satisfy the basic needs of man. "The crimes and their consequences, which deluged and blackened society and the life of the individual, had made vividly clear the need of a faith that would unite religion and morals."¹⁸ The Roman Empire had produced the tolerance necessary for the dissemination of such a religion, but among its many gods and temples, its many syncretistic creeds, there was not one religion which could fulfill the needs of man. Christianity, as preached by its greatest witness, was going to fulfill the world's

16. *Ibid.*, p. 18

17. Emil Schuerer, A History of the Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 275

18. Charles Foster Kent, The Work and Teachings of the Apostles, p. 16.

eager longing for a real Savior from sin.

Such were the general conditions of the Empire which also affected Tarsus, and he who was chosen to preach salvation to this world became familiar with those characteristics in his native city. However, the relation of Tarsus to the Empire reached beyond that of merely a casual influence. When the Empire basked in its brightest glory, Tarsus shared its grandeur. It is extremely significant that Tarsus was reaching the peak of its prominence in the Empire when Paul was born.

Among the accomplishments of Pompey one may also reckon Rome's particular interest in the province of Cilicia. He, who had also exterminated the pirates on the coast of Asia Minor, made the eastern plain of Cilicia a province of the Roman Empire. Unlike Judea, Cilicia¹⁹ had a governor and was immediately responsible to Rome. Shortly after its first reduction by Pompey, in about 51 B.C., Cicero was the distinguished governor of Cilicia. Special honors, however, were conferred upon Tarsus, the capitol of Cilicia. In 42 B. C. Antony complimented the city for its loyalty and granted it the status of a²⁰ 'free city'. Among other advantages, this distinction granted Tarsus the privilege of governing itself according to its own laws,²¹ and gave it the right to duty-free export and import trade. Augustus confirmed the privileges which Antony had bestowed on Tarsus, and in 22 B.C. gave the city the title of "metropolis" and the right to issue²² its own coins with that title upon them.

19. Conybeare and Howson, *op. cit.*, p. 21

20. Ramsay, *Cities of St. Paul*, *op. cit.*, p. 197

21. *Ibid.*

22. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 26

Like the Oriental and Greek civilizations, Rome too became an important chapter in the history of Tarsus. There was a definite reason for the Empire's keen interest in that city on the Cilician plain. For centuries past Tarsus had played an important role in the civilization of the Mediterranean world, and the Empire, which raised the city to the peak of its prominence, did not fail to recognize its strategic position. Three geographical conditions determined the history and civilization of Tarsus: the relation of the city to the rest of the Cilician plain; its connection through the river Cydnus with the sea; and its position commanding the end of the principal pass across the Taurus mountains. ²³ Though Tarsus had rival cities on the maritime plain of Cilicia, its direct connection with the inland plateau ultimately accounted for its supremacy. Since the rival inland city lacked harbor facilities, and the rival harbor city was forced to depend on the inland city for its passage to the northern plateau, Tarsus gained the upper hand. As far as its geographic position was concerned, the river harbor of Tarsus was of even greater note than its relation to the rival cities of the plain. The natural lake at the mouth of the Cydnus afforded most excellent facilities for a harbor. Tarsus had always been an important harbor, but in the glorious maritime history of Rome it grew into one of the most important seaports on the Mediterranean. People from all over the empire that sailed on the ships which docked at Tarsus were bound to contribute to the already extensive culture of the city. Finally, the famous pass through the Taurus mountains, the Cilician

23. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 97

Gates, probably contributed most to the fame and character of the city. This pass placed Tarsus on one of the great routes which determined²⁴ the history of the Mediterranean world. Excellent Roman roads and the attendant increase in travel served to enhance the importance of this route and make it, as never before, one of the most important factors in the cultural and economic history of Tarsus.

With such facilities the city of Paul easily became a unique center of international intercourse, "and a microcosmos, in which the forces of the great ancient cosmos of the Mediterranean world were all represented."²⁵ Though Tarsus had been strongly influenced by Greek civilization, and had been raised to the prominence of a metropolis in the Empire, it nevertheless retained its dominating oriental characteristics. Because of its unique geographic position and its easy accessibility by land and sea, there was accomplished in Tarsus²⁶ the most perfect union between East and West. In the days of Paul, Tarsus probably numbered no less than half a million inhabitants,²⁷ having a culture as composite as its population. Tarsus, with its varied culture, its flourishing industry and commerce, its interest in education, was surely well adapted to be the home of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul could well point to himself as a citizen "of no mean city."

Besides being exposed to the composite culture of the Oriental, Greek, and Roman civilizations, Paul received above all the influences

24. Ibid.

25. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 34.

26. Robertson, op. cit., p. 12.

27. William Arndt, The Life of St. Paul the Greatest Missionary

of his own nationality during his early years in the city of Tarsus. For this reason it will be necessary to include at this point a brief history of the Jewish population of Tarsus.

The Dispersion of the Jews, which began with the Assyrian exile, also contributed a group of inhabitants to the population of Tarsus. To illustrate the geographical extent of the Dispersion during the time of the Roman Empire, one need but glance at the list of provinces mentioned in Acts 2: 9-11. It is impossible to point to accurate historic data which might indicate the time of the arrival of Jews in Tarsus, but it seems more than likely that a body of Jews was settled in that city, in 171 B.C., by Antiochus Epiphanes. ²⁸ Antiochus, like his predecessor, Seleucus, had been eager to Hellenize Palestine and Syria, and in that effort, probably to foster commerce and trade, he introduced Jewish colonists into Tarsus and doubtless into other Cilician towns. ²⁹ In many places the Jews received the citizenship of their respective cities, and with regard to their own affairs were more or less autonomous and only slightly different from the dominant peoples. ³⁰ Especially was this the case in Tarsus, for here, "so far as the scanty evidence justifies an opinion, the Jews seem to have been regarded in a less degree than elsewhere as an alien element." ³¹ In spite of the fact that in most cases the Jews maintained close connections with their homeland, they were not discriminated against politically and economically. Augustus sanctioned the remittance of

28. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 180

29. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 15.

30. Klausner, op. cit., p. 13.

31. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 139

temple dues to Jerusalem and enjoined the principalities of Asia Minor and Cyrene not to interfere with this privilege..³²

In a general way, the social conditions of the Jews of the Dispersion are applicable also to the Jews of Tarsus. Though their separation from Palestine caused some, on the one hand, to become more faithful to their religion, it also made them more cosmopolitan in their views.³³ The first evidence of their adaptation to their new surroundings can be noticed in the general acceptance of the Greek language and the use of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. That such a change in language occurred is not at all strange when one considers that Greek was the common language and was a necessity for anyone who wished to operate in the political and economic spheres of the Empire. Concerning the predominant use of the Greek tongue, also among the Jews, Emil Schuerer says, "The truth is, Hebrew was so little current among the Jews of the dispersion that not a single instance has been met with of its use upon a tombstone."³⁴

However, among the dispersed Jews, the signs of the assimilation of foreign cultures went deeper than the mere changing of names and languages. Even though the Jewish people made a conscious effort to maintain their own nationality, customs, and religion, they nevertheless were not able to prevent the unconscious infiltration of the Oriental, Greek, and Roman cultures. In this manner all became Hellenistic to a certain extent, but some, who might be termed "Hellenizers", sold their

32. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 261

33. F. W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, p. 68.

34. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 283.

birthright and adopted the religion and customs of their heathen neighbors.

If the Jews profited from the culture of the Gentiles, the Gentiles profited equally much from the culture of the Jews. The Jews had much to offer to the idolatrous inhabitants of the Empire. To people who had grown weary of their idols and had become dissatisfied with the mystery cults, the Jews offered their one true God and the hope of a coming Messiah. This was exactly the kind of God and the kind of salvation many of the heathen wanted, and, consequently, the Jews in their contact with the Gentiles, especially in the synagogues, attracted many to their faith. Although many of the heathen became "proselytes of righteousness", joined to the Jewish religion to the fullest extent, the greater number gladly received the faith of the Jews, but remained unwilling to accept the ceremonial laws. These, who were hindered by the ceremonial laws from becoming full-fledged Jews, later on formed "the keystone in the arch of the bridge which led from Jerusalem to the peoples of the world."³⁵ These "proselytes of the gate", "those that fear God" or "the devout" as they are so often called in the New Testament, welcomed Christianity, and the Apostle of the Gentiles found in them a ready access to the heathen world.

Paul characterizes his nationality and citizenship in the following words: "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia." That a strong body of Jews inhabited Tarsus, and that their environment, in a general way, resembled that of the dispersed Jews cannot be doubted.³⁶

35. Robinson, op. cit., p. 22.

36. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 173

We now turn to the ancestors and parents of the great Apostle, members of this body of Jews in Tarsus. With regard to their place of origin and their time of arrival in Tarsus, there is considerable difficulty. According to a tradition found in Jerome, the ancestors of Paul emigrated from Gischala of Galilee, probably in the time of Pompey or Varus when that country was laid waste by the Romans.³⁷ This reference of Jerome is so remarkable that it cannot very well be explained as a fiction, and may have had its origin in the tradition of the family which traced its beginnings to Gischala.³⁸ Further evidence for this view can be found in the fact that Paul refers to his ancestors as 'Hebrews'. "By 'Hebrews' in the Imperial period we are to understand Jews who spoke Aramaic."³⁹ W. M. Ramsay rejects the view which has just been mentioned, believing that the ancestors of Paul belonged to the families which came to Tarsus in 171 B.C.⁴⁰

After their arrival in Tarsus, the ancestors of Paul, or at least his father, together with a group of Jews living in the city, held the municipal citizenship. W. M. Ramsay supports this view, when he says, "— inasmuch as Paul was a Tarsian citizen, and his father before him was a citizen, there must have been a body of Jewish citizens constituting the Tribe in which they were enrolled. There can never have been a single and solitary Jewish citizen of a Greek

37. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 20. Klausner, op. cit., p. 304.

38. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 90.

39. Ibid.

40. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 185. Concerning his view, Ramsay says, "We must therefore regard St. Paul as sprung from one of the families which got the Tarsian citizenship in 171 B.C., and reject the story (in itself an impossible one) recorded by St. Jerome, that he or his parents had emigrated from Gischala in Palestine, when it was captured by the Romans."

city: if there was one Jewish citizen, there must have been a group of Jews forming a Tribe, holding together in virtue of their common Jewish religion; and it may be regarded as practically certain that the synagogue was their Tribal centre, where they met not only for religious purposes, but also for judging all cases affecting their tribal union and rights. --- This train of reasoning seems indisputable; and it has been fully accepted by Professor E. Schuerer.⁴¹ The 'kinsmen', fellow-tribesmen, mentioned in Romans 16: 7-21, may present further evidence for this view.⁴² Being enrolled in such a tribe would indicate that Paul's father had at least some part in the public affairs of the town. Paul himself was, of course, born a citizen of Tarsus, and there can be no doubt that this heritage of municipal citizenship contributed much to his preparation of becoming a messenger of the Gospel.

To an individual in the Roman Empire, Roman citizenship would be of even greater import than the citizenship of a city, especially, if like Paul, that individual's functions should take him to the various provinces of the Empire. The Tarsian-Roman citizenship probably began in 64 B. C. with Pompey's settlement of the East.⁴³ For the ancestors and parents of Paul, Roman citizenship was another advantage which accrued from their membership in the Jewish Tribe of Tarsus, for it was impossible for an individual Jew to become a Roman

41. *Ibid.*, p. 176

42. *Ibid.*, p. 171. Ramsay says, "--- such proof is furnished by Romans 16: 7-21, where six persons are called "kinsmen" by St. Paul. --- The word "kinsmen" here means fellow-citizen and fellow-tribesman, for all six were doubtless Jews and therefore members of the same Tribe in Tarsus."

43. *Ibid.*, p. 205

citizen in a Greek city like Tarsus, unless he was enrolled in the City Tribe. It is doubtful whether the Roman citizenship of Paul's ancestors can be traced any farther back than Paul's own parents. Paul himself was born a Roman citizen, indicating definitely that both he and his parents possessed that privilege. How this citizenship was acquired by Paul's father is not known, but it probably came to him, or to his ancestors, as a reward of services rendered to some influential Roman.⁴⁴

Roman citizenship in no way indicated social position, for the privilege ranged through the whole social scale, all the way from the Emperor himself down to the emancipated slave. Consequently, the Roman citizenship of Paul and his family does not indicate their status in society. Roman citizenship does not guarantee it, nor is there any need to make Paul and his family members of the wealthy literary upper classes. Nor is it necessary to place them at the bottom of the social scale.⁴⁵ Their municipal citizenship and their membership in the Jewish Tribe of the city indicate a very respectable social standing. With regard to the occupation of Paul's father, the most logical assumption would seem to indicate that he was in the "hair-cloth" business, for which Tarsus was well known, and that he was actively occupied in the traffic of the Mediterranean coast.⁴⁶

44. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 42.

45. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 48. "It appears to me to be certain, that Paul of Tarsus, although his native city was a seat of Greek higher education, was not one of the literary upper classes, but came from the unliterary lower classes and remained one of them." Anxious to prove the "letter view" concerning Paul's epistles, Deissmann perhaps overemphasizes Paul's relation to the unliterary lower classes. Cf. Part VIII for a further discussion of Paul's contact with Greek education and culture.

46. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 45.

Even though citizenship in the Empire did not affect social position, nevertheless, Paul and his family, as possessors of the Imperial franchise, were proud of their heritage. On numerous occasions during his later missionary travels, Paul demonstrated his pride in his Roman citizenship. Even though the full implications of this heritage did not impress themselves on Paul until his later years, certain general effects of its importance must have been apparent to him even during the years of his preparation. Both he and his family must have been aware of the excellent possibilities for communication which had been instituted particularly by the Empire. The temporary cessation of wars and conquest, and the unity in the Empire would hardly go unnoticed. Tolerance in religion, as it existed under the rule of Augustus, must have impressed them particularly. Paul's later interest in military affairs, slavery, legal practices and law courts, building, commerce, and sea voyaging, may have been nascent in his formative years in Tarsus as he thought about himself as a citizen of the Empire.⁴⁷ But above all, with the citizenship which he inherited from his parents, Paul derived a great part of that broad world-view which became so important for his later activity. "He was unquestionably the greatest statesman of the primitive Christian church -- broad in his grasp of the world situation and master of details as well as of men, able to execute as well as to plan."⁴⁸

In the illustrious city of Tarsus, in the home of parents, descended from the people of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin, was born Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.⁴⁹ On the eight day, according

47. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 71

48. Kent, op. cit., p. 71

49. Philippians 3:5

to the ordinance of the Old Testament (Cf. Gen. 17: 12), he was circumcised, and, according to the tradition of his people, he undoubtedly also received his name upon that occasion. Whether he was named "Saul" after the name of his father or after the name of the first king of Isarel, who was also a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin, cannot be determined. Though he was named "Saul" at birth, he undoubtedly also received his Roman name, "Paul", early in his youth, since he grew up in a metropolis of the Empire.

Concerning the date of Paul's birth, there are almost as many opinions as there are commentators. It is generally agreed that Paul was born during the first ten years of the Christian era. At the stoning of Stephen, he describes himself as "a young man", and in his letter to Philemon, as "the aged." Since, however, both of these terms are extremely vague, they do not accurately indicate the date of the Apostle's birth. Yet, since Paul was entrusted with a most important mission shortly after the death of Stephen, and, in all probability, was a member of the Sanhedrin (Cf. Part V), we may quite safely conclude that he was at least thirty years of age at that time.⁵⁰ Bearing this in mind, it would seem that all the information concerning the chronology of Paul's life would be satisfactorily accounted for, if we assume that he was born in the year 1 A.D.⁵¹

There can be no doubt that the greatest influence on the character of Paul during his early years at Tarsus must be sought in his own pious home. Though the family of Paul, through their municipal and imperial franchise, must have had considerable contact with the

50. Farrar, op. cit., p. 8.

51. Arndt, op. cit., p. 9.

culture of Tarsus, nothing would be more remote than to imagine that they were "Hellenizers". A certain amount of Hellenistic influence, such as a change of names, language, and perhaps some customs, could hardly be avoided, but that the family and ancestors of Paul remained very loyal to their Jewish heritage is obvious from a few brief descriptions given by Paul himself. Concerning his devotion to his God and his people, Paul says of himself and his ancestors, "I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers"; and, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees".⁵² Paul's home surroundings were faithful to traditional Judaism, and the history and culture, the joys and woes of his people were close to his heart. That the Aramaic language was spoken in the home is very likely, but to interpret the phrase, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews", as indicating the use of the Aramaic language to the exclusion of the common Greek, would be overstressing the phrase. Paul's later facility in the use of Aramaic and Greek points to an early familiarity with both languages.

The injunction of Moses in the sixth and eleventh chapters of Deuteronomy, concerning the diligent education of children, was also observed in the home of Paul. Considering the fact that he grew up in a Pharisaic home, there can be no doubt that Paul, in his tenderest youth, became familiar with the unique history of his people, and with the Law and the glorious promises which God had made to the chosen people. "At the age of five he would begin to study the Bible with his parents at home; and even earlier than this he would doubtless

52. II Tim. 1: 3; Acts 23: 6.

have learnt the Shema and the Hallel (Psalms 113 - 118) in whole or in part."⁵³

Upon reaching the age of six, the Jewish boy customarily entered a synagogue-school, and, since a prominent Jewish community existed in Tarsus, it is more than probable that the young Paul availed himself of that privilege. Instruction in the Law was the main function of the synagogue.⁵⁴ The written Law formed the starting point, and at a more advanced age, probably at the age of ten, Paul also studied the earlier and simpler developements of the oral law.⁵⁵ According to a later custom among the Jews, the thirteenth year in a boy's education was considered a transition point between the elementary and higher education, and, to indicate the change, the youth became a "Son of the Commandment" at that time. In all probability, this custom also existed at the time of Paul. The ultimate aim in Jewish education consisted in a thorough familiarity with the Law and the Prophets, and in most cases the synagogues seem to have supplied the means necessary to obtain that goal. "That the synagogue gave opportunity to acquire such familiarity is sufficient testimony to the quality of its instruction. For the Hellenistic synagogues, the knowledge of Scripture which Paul assumes that his hearers possess gives similar witness." ⁵⁶

The strongest influences of Paul's youth in Tarsus were undoubtedly centered in his pious home and the synagogue. Here he acquired a deep

⁵³. Farrar, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁴. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 54.

⁵⁵. Farrar, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁶. George Foot Moore, Judaism, p. 289.

understanding of the true religion, and a thorough familiarity with the character and customs of his own people. Yet, it would be a mistake to minimize the powerful cosmopolitan influence of the broad Tarsian culture. "The silent and imperceptible influences of life are often the most permanent, and no amount of exclusiveness could entirely blind the more intelligent sons of the Dispersion to the merits of a richer civilization."⁵⁷ Humanly speaking, both the Jewish culture and that of a Graeco-Roman metropolis were indispensable for the preparation of the Apostle to the Gentiles, and, already in his early years, Paul assimilated them together.

III. Rabbinical Training in Jerusalem

The Jewish religion and culture, which had been a conscious and predominating influence in Paul's youth, had just begun to exert its power on the heart and mind of the Apostle. In the years immediately succeeding his youth at Tarsus, Paul was exposed to a Judaism which thoroughly permeated his entire being. Undoubtedly his pious parents favored such a thorough indoctrination, and, since the purest Judaism issued from Jerusalem and its famous schools, Paul was sent there to begin his higher education. In Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, the rallying point of all the Jews in the whole then known world, Paul was imbued with the spirit of his people. Here he received a firm foundation in and a thorough familiarity with, the Old Testament Scriptures. Since it was customary for Jewish boys to begin their higher education after they had become "sons of the Commandment", we may assume that Paul made his first trip to Jerusalem in approximately the fifteenth year of his life.

An intense but perverted zeal for the true religion pervaded Jerusalem when Paul arrived. This enthusiasm, which also engulfed the future apostle to the Gentiles, had its roots in the chaotic history of the land. Palestine, a country on the highways of the world, had for centuries been plagued with foreign politics, and,

during the two hundred years preceding the birth of Christ, the little country had given up the last of its political and national independence. The last two centuries before Christ also marked an almost continuous struggle against the encroaching Hellenism. During the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), who attempted to enforce the Greek civilization in Palestine, the Jews all but lost their religious independence. They rallied once more under Judas Maccabaeus to re-establish their religious liberty, but from the brilliant career of Antiochus it became obvious that a partial political independence lay either in disturbed Syrian politics or in Roman interference.⁵⁸ The heroic Maccabean struggle, however, was short lived, and the ensuing years brought further political intrigue and civil war, which was finally to culminate in Roman conquest.

For a time the consolidation of the Jews under Simon (143 - 135 B.C.) and under John Hyrcanus (135 - 105 B.C.) seemed to renew the hopes of political independence, but the rift between the two leading political parties was only getting wider. The Pharisees favored a narrow religio-political policy, but the Sadducees, representing the last relic of sympathy with Hellenistic culture, wished to see the Jews a nation among nations.⁵⁹ Because of their intense nationalistic

58. Shailer Mathews, A History of New Testament Times in Palestine, p. 61.

59. Ibid., p. 49.

zeal and their religious superiority, the Pharisaic party gradually gained the ascendancy. Under the reign of Alexandra (78 - 69 B.C.) the beginnings of the judicial influence of rabbinical Pharisaism are apparent. "As members of a judicial body, the Pharisees sent their old enemies into banishment, and made the oral tradition, which had grown up within the circle of literati, the law of the land."⁶⁰ After the death of Alexandra, the struggle between the two parties resulted in another civil war, which ushered in the Roman conquest of Judea.

With the Roman conquest all the political ambitions of the Jews came to an end. With the gradual extinction of their political life, begun during the time of the Maccabees and accomplished with the conquest of Rome, the Jews turned their attention from politics to religion. Their Law and their religion were now the only center of unity which remained to them.⁶¹ Consequently, this new religious zeal also gave rise to a new succession of great teachers of scribism, who were almost without exception, members of the Pharisaic society.⁶² The Pharisees concentrated their energies on the search for righteousness in accordance with the oral law. They, who were so devoted to the oral and the written law, who gave their energies to the interpretation and exposition of the Law; "who consecrated, moreover, their best zeal and exertions to the spread of the fame of Judaism, and to the increase of the nation's power in the only way which now was practicable -- could not fail to command the reverence of great numbers of the

60. Ibid., p. 88.

61. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 30.

62. Mathews, op. cit., p. 97.

people."⁶³ During the reign of Herod the Great, (40 - 4 B.C.), when the last vestiges of the old unity between politics and religion were utterly broken, the Pharisees consolidated and exerted their greatest influence. At this time also the two best-known Jewish rabbis, Shammai and Hillel, taught, and the two famous schools named after them trained the rabbis who carried on the intense religious zeal of the Jews.

In a general way, the above-mentioned conditions of Palestine and Jerusalem prevailed when Paul journeyed to Jerusalem to avail himself of a higher education in one of the famous schools of the Rabbis. To be sure, the externalized religion of the Pharisees and their fanatic enthusiasm to preserve the last stronghold of Judaism were not new to the young man from Tarsus. The Pharisaic home in which he was born and reared had already influenced him in this direction. However, in the environment of Jerusalem, he was subject to the ultimate in legalistic Judaism. In this metropolis of Judaism, with its growth in learned Rabbinical schools and its increased number of synagogues, in which both Aramaic and Hellenistic opinions found a home, there was no lack of religious atmosphere. However, beyond these general opportunities for religious learning, Paul was privileged to study under Gamaliel, a teacher of the School of Hillel, the most influential of the Rabbinical schools in Jerusalem. Describing his activity during his course of instruction at Jerusalem, Paul says that he had been "brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel,

63. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 30.

educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers."⁶⁴ To appreciate fully the influence which the famous Rabbi and his school at Jerusalem exerted on Paul during his years of preparation, it will be necessary, in the first place, to describe briefly the illustrious Rabbi himself.

In its broader aspects, Gamaliel was perpetuating the tradition of his illustrious grandfather, Hillel. By recognizing that the laws must take account of actual conditions, Hillel gave a new impulse and direction to the study of the Law, and infused a new spirit into Pharisaism.⁶⁵ While he was the head of ^{the} school, which later bore his name, Hillel had also systematised the exegetical method of earlier scribes and had reduced it to seven rules. As president of the Sanhedrin he demonstrated his interest in practical affairs by procuring the passage of a law regulating the cancellation of debts in the sabbatical year, which was proving injurious to business enterprise.⁶⁶

The broadminded leadership of Gamaliel, exercised in the true spirit of his grandfather, and characterized by his sound judgment in relating the learning of the schools to the practical life of the people, earned for him the title of "Rabban". He is one of the seven among Jewish Rabbis who have been honored with this title, and in addition, all the Rabbans except Johanan Ben Zakkai were descendants of Gamaliel.⁶⁷ Gamaliel was a man of eminent learning and character, and was not trammelled by the narrow bigotry of the sect.⁶⁸ Like

64. Acts 22:3

65. Moore, op. cit., p. 80.

66. Mathews, op. cit., p. 117.

67. Farrar, op. cit., p. 61.

68. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 53.

Hillel, Gamaliel was influential in passing many excellent laws which were aimed at promoting the welfare of the whole community.⁶⁹ In the laws which he framed for the intercourse between Judeans and the heathen, he advocated an equality in the treatment of the two peoples.⁷⁰ Even though he inspired a watchful enthusiasm for Jewish Law, he was not averse to the Greek literature and culture which had been brought to Jerusalem. Surely, this thoughtful, highminded, and religious teacher must have made a profound impression on the young pupil from Tarsus. Paul probably did not realize the true greatness of his teacher until after his conversion, but, that the broadmindedness, and sympathy which later characterized the great Apostle had their beginnings in the school of Gamaliel is quite probable.

Though the mild and gracious character of Gamaliel must have had a direct effect upon his school and his pupils, the course of instruction which was presented was undoubtedly much like that found in the other Rabbinical schools of Jerusalem. Because of the lack of information it is difficult to determine the exact nature and extent of the education in a Rabbinical school during the time of Paul. Some general conclusions, however, seem to be possible. The whole course of instruction undoubtedly was aimed at a thorough familiarity with the written and the oral law and their respective commentaries. That such an emphasis was placed on the study of the Law is evident from a remark made by Josephus, to the effect that the Jews consider that person a wise man who is fully acquainted with the laws of his

69. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. II, p. 193.

70. Ibid.

people and is able to interpret them.⁷¹ The system in the main, therefore, was one of Scriptural exegesis. In addition to memorizing as much of the text and commentary as possible, the students were also trained in the subtle arts of disputation and facile conversation. Ecclesiasticus lists the following elements found in Rabbinical training: to give the mind to the law; to be occupied in the meditation thereof; to seek out the wisdom of the ancients; to be occupied in prophecies; to keep the sayings of renowned men; to be where subtil parables are; to seek out the secrets of grave sentences; to be conversant in dark parables.⁷² Oral instruction appears to have been the method most commonly employed. Most likely, during the school sessions, the learned doctors proposed various Scripture passages or other suitable topics in the original Hebrew. Then, after these had been translated into the vernacular, they made them the subject of commentary: "various interpretations were given; aphorisms were propounded; allegories suggested; and the opinions of ancient doctors quoted and discussed."⁷³ Even the young pupils were urged to participate and to contribute to the discussions.

Undoubtedly the Rabbinic training which Paul received at the feet of Gamaliel left some life-long impressions on his person and character. The influence of Paul's education at Jerusalem included both negative and positive characteristics. On the negative side may be included the extreme legalism, the fanatic zeal, and the misguided enthusiasm which characterized the Apostle before his

71. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 54.

72. Ecclesiasticus 39: 1-3.

73. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 54.

conversion. In the schools of the Rabbis he could hardly avoid the hair-splitting exegesis and the extreme emphasis on the "letter" of the Law. For him too the spirit of the Old Testament Scriptures had been lost in the maze of commentary and tradition. Later on, the negative effects of his Rabbinic training became apparent again in his intense hatred of the Christians who were accused of offending against the Law and the Temple.

Nevertheless, the instruction under Gamaliel, which probably extended over four or five years, also exercised a positive influence on Paul. Among the assets of Rabbinic education gained by Paul, we must first of all mention his astounding knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. In his later ministry Paul repeatedly referred to the Old Testament and assured his hearers that the Messiah promised by God through Moses and the prophets had come. Paul could speak of analogies and relationship between the Old and the New Covenant because he was firmly grounded in both. A more specific, but less important influence, of the school of Gamaliel is noticeable in Paul's interpretation of Scripture, which occasionally reflects the rabbinical or apocalyptic method. The allegory of Sara and Hagar, used by Paul to show the relationship between the Old and the New Covenant, indicates a point of contact with the allegorical exegesis current in the Jewish schools of his day.⁷⁴ Furthermore, rabbinic influence on Paul can be detected in his dependence "on the peculiarities of the edifying legend, the so-called 'Haggada'". From this source comes the [interpretation] theory mentioned in Galatians (3:19).

74. Deismann, op. cit., p. 101.

and noticed in other places (Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2), that the Law was not given directly by God Himself but by the angels; from this source comes the number 430, also in Galatians (3:17), and that popularly familiar touch (I Cor. 10:4) that the rock that gave water to the fathers had followed them in their journeyings in the wilderness."⁷⁵ The device of ranging type and antitype in corresponding columns, indicates another trace of the influence of Rabbinic training.⁷⁶ In the one column Paul mentions such types as Hagar, Ishmael, the Old Covenant, and the earthly Jerusalem, and in the other their spiritual opposites, Sara, Isaac, the New Covenant, and the heavenly Jerusalem. Undoubtedly Paul did not use many of the methods and skills acquired at the school in Jerusalem, but, nevertheless, the training in these details had disciplined his mind and had opened many new vistas toward the understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Apart from the actual skills acquired in his formal education, Paul's stay in Jerusalem served to familiarize him thoroughly with the Jewish thinking of his day. Later on it was extremely important for him to know what the Jewish scholars and teachers thought, and what they taught the people. In the light of his Jerusalem experience, he could intelligently discuss with his people the fulfillment of the

75. Ibid., p. 103. Robinson, op. cit., p. 34. Zahn, in his commentary on Galatians 3:19, makes the following statement concerning Paul's interpretation of the manner in which the Law was given: "In ihrer [der Engel] Begleitung ist Gott auf Sinai erschienen (Ps. 68,18; Deut. 33,2, unzweideutig nach LXX) und in dem durch Engel gewirkten posaunenartigen Schall hat Gott zu Moses geredet. --- Das Gesetz ist von Gott nicht unmittelbar, sondern durch Vermittlung von Engeln gegeben oder, wie es in bezug auf den gebietenden Charakter dieser Offenbarung heisst, verfügt worden; und es ist dem Volk nicht unmittelbar gegeben sondern in eines Mittlers Hand gelegt worden."

76. Farrar, op. cit., p. 33.

Messianic promises of the Old Testament, and, by virtue of his insight into the thinking of his people, he could understand their doubts and misgivings. He could become "to the Jews a Jew". In addition to the understanding of the thinking of his people, the Rabbinic training of Jerusalem helped Paul bridge the gap between the faith of the Old and the New Covenant. "He had an intimate knowledge, both practical and theoretical, of the ground of the legalistic controversy, on which he was to play a decisive part. He brought with him to the Christian camp, the resources of a trained Jewish jurist, a skilled Rabbinical scholar and disputant. He was the one man qualified to effect the transition in doctrine and institutions from the old faith to the new, to transplant Christianity, without destroying any of its roots, from the ancient soil of Judaism into the wide and rich field ready for it in the Gentile world."⁷⁷

⁷⁷. G. G. Findlay, Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. III, p. 698.

IV In Tarsus After Rabbinic Training

After Paul had completed his course under Gamaliel, he most likely returned to his home in Tarsus. The reason for this conclusion lies in the fact that there is no evidence indicating that Paul saw Jesus during His public ministry. Such passages as I Cor. 9:1, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord," and II Cor. 5:16, "even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view," do not refer to the possibility that Paul was an eyewitness of the Master's sojourn on earth. Surely, if he had heard Jesus preach, and if he had seen the many miracles, we might expect some reference to these activities in his epistles. Furthermore, Paul's question on the road to Damascus, "Who art thou, Lord?", seems to imply that the appearance of the Lord was unknown to him. The allusion to the risen Christ, mentioned in I Cor. 15:8, "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me," seems to confirm this view.⁷⁸ In all probability, therefore, Paul returned to Tarsus after his Rabbinic training in Jerusalem.

There are no historical data to indicate the nature of Paul's activity in Tarsus after he returned from Jerusalem. According to the custom of his people, Jewish teachers learned a trade in addition to their profession. Undoubtedly Paul also recognized the need of learning a trade which could help to provide for his bodily wants in the coming years. Consequently, Paul may at this time have acquired the skill of making tents. Later on, this occupation served him wonderfully, for he had to depend on himself for financial support, and no one could say

78. Farrar, op. cit., p. 43.

that he was preaching the Gospel just to make a living. Not only did this occupation give him the opportunity to become self-supporting, but it also enabled him to come into contact with the working classes. By working side by side with the common man and the slave, he studied their lives and conditions, and thus prepared for himself an approach for his later Gospel message.

In addition to learning a trade, Paul undoubtedly also continued his education. Though it is possible that he studied at the university of Tarsus at this time, it does not seem very likely. Since from his birth until his conversion Jewish influence was such a predominant factor in his life, it would be difficult to ascribe to Paul a special interest in Greek education. Later, after he had received his commission to preach to the Gentiles, his interests undoubtedly changed considerably. Until that time, however, Paul perhaps continued on the way which had been outlined for him in his home and in the school of Gamaliel.

V. The Preparation For Conversion

At the time of the stoning of Stephen Paul was again a resident in Jerusalem. Since it seems very probable that Paul did not see Jesus during His ministry on earth, it may be assumed that he returned to Jerusalem at some time between the Ascension of the Lord and the stoning of Stephen. Paul was probably about thirty years old when he returned again to the center of Judaism, and may have planned to enter gradually upon the work of a teacher of the Law. His persecution of the Christians which began soon after his arrival, and various things which he says about himself, seem to indicate the nature of his activity during this time. Concerning his life he says, "— according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee;" and, "— as to righteousness under the law blameless."⁷⁹ Accordingly, Paul, in all probability, became steeped in Pharisaism at this time, carrying on the tradition of his ancestors and broadening the education received at the feet of Gamaliel.

That Paul should become a leading member of the Pharisaic party and should distinguish himself in their unrighteous zeal proved to be a most tragic experience. Emphasis on the dead-letter of documents and on the minute ritualism of service describes the externalized religion of the Pharisees. Their purpose and aim was to carry out in practice the ideal of a legal life set up by the scribes. Their motive and enthusiasm revolved around their faith in divine retribution, a retribution in the strictest juristic sense.⁸⁰ The covenant between them and God was a legal one, by which both the contracting parties

⁷⁹. Acts 26:5. Philippians 3:6.

⁸⁰. Schuerer, op. cit., p. 91.

were mutually bound. "This hope of a future retribution was therefore the mainspring of all zeal for the Law. Nay, the entire religious life of the Jewish people --- just revolved round these two poles: Fulfillment of the law and hope of future glory."⁸¹ Since for the Pharisees Messianic salvation depended on fulfilling legal righteousness, they spared themselves no pain and privation. "If but one person could only for one day keep the whole Law and not offend in one point -- nay, if but one person could but keep that one point of the Law which affected the due observance of the Sabbath -- then (so the Rabbis taught) the troubles of Israel would be ended, and the Messiah at last would come."⁸² Such was the motive for the sincere, but fanatic and unholy zeal ("not according to knowledge") of the Pharisees, and how thoroughly Paul was imbued with this spirit he himself explains when he says, "--- and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers."⁸³

Surely Paul was sincere in his self-righteous and zealous observance of the Law and the traditions of his people. He was convinced that his path was the right one. Yet, it would be difficult to believe that Paul was not at times impressed with the futility of obtaining righteousness through the strict observance of the Law. For centuries men had attempted it and had failed, and every minute ordinance added by the scribes only made matters worse. Subconsciously Paul may have experienced a secret struggle. When doubts entered his mind concerning the ability to obtain righteousness through the observance of the Law, the last

81. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

82. *Farrar, op. cit.*, p. 37.

83. *Gal.* 1:14.

stronghold of Judaism, Paul's fierce zeal for the Law increased to the point of persecution.

When Paul was on his way to Damascus, Jesus said to him, "It hurts you to kick against the goads".⁸⁴ Without attributing any Pelagianistic tendencies to the Conversion of Paul, this statement of Jesus could well refer to Paul's subconscious preparation for his conversion. His doubts about gaining righteousness through the Law, his presence at the stoning of Stephen, and his remembrance of the Christians whom he persecuted may have created in his heart secret misgivings concerning the way which he was pursuing. This inward struggle probably made Paul all the more zealous for the Law and increased his bitter hatred toward the Christians. Theodor Zahn limits the "kicking against the goads" to Paul's post-Conversion conflict.⁸⁵ However, since there is no indication that Paul resisted the will of Jesus after he was converted, or fought against the plan which Jesus laid before him, it is best to refer Paul's "kicking against the goads" to his pre-Conversion days. It is not necessary to assume that Paul, before his conversion, lost all confidence in the power of the Law to save. He remained a self-righteous Pharisee, who himself had

84. Acts. 26:14.

85. Theodor Zahn, in his Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, die Apostelgeschichte des Lucas, Vol. V. part II, says, "Wenn nun Jesus, den Pl bis dahin geschmaecht und in seiner Gemeinde verfolgt, nun aber als eine ueberirdische Macht erkannt und als Herrn angeredet hat, zu ihm sagt; 'Es ist hart fuer dich (oder es wird dir schwer fallen und Schmerz bereiten) gegen die Stacheln hinten auszuschlagen', so ist vorausgesetzt, dass Pl schon in diesem Augenblicke gegen die Ansprueche, die Jesus an ihn macht und fernerhin an ihn stellen mag, sich innerlich straubt, weil er sich ploetzlich aus der bis dahin mit Leidenschaft von ihm verfolgten Lebensbahn hinausgeworfen fuehlt. Das sind die Kaempfe, die waehrend der 3 Tage der Blindheit und des Fastens bis zur Ankunfft des Ananias in seiner Wohnung ihn beschaeftigt haben----."

realized how the Law had awakened in him the sense of sin, but who, nevertheless, put all his confidence in the Law. At this time he may have been subconsciously aware of the weakness of his belief in righteousness through the Law, but, not until after his conversion did he understand the spiritual significance of the Law and realize how utterly unable it is to save.⁸⁶

Paul's secret and subconscious dissatisfaction with the Pharisaic religion was perhaps only the beginning of a struggle which was going on within him, as he was fighting a losing battle against Christ and His Church. With the stoning of Stephen, which probably occurred in 30 A.D., Paul's inner struggle gained momentum. It is quite possible that Paul heard Stephen in the Cilician synagogue at Jerusalem, and that he belonged to the group which could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which Stephen spoke.⁸⁷ When Stephen was executed by "lynch law", it is quite significant that Luke reports that a certain young man, named Saul, consented to his death. Stephen was accused of speaking against Moses and the Law, and prophesied that the temple and its ceremonies would pass away. This was enough to convince any Pharisee that the man was worthy of death. Saul, as a leading member of the Pharisaic party, was also convinced.

Outwardly, judging from his Pharisaic training and influence, Saul was convinced that Stephen and the other early Christians were in the wrong. Inwardly, however, he may have been filled with grave doubts

86. Romans 7: 9, 14.

87. Acts 6: 9-10

and misgivings. "We cannot disassociate the martyrdom of Stephen from the conversion of Paul. The spectacle of so much constancy, so much faith, so much love, could not be lost. It is hardly too much to say with Augustine, that 'the Church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen.'⁸⁸ How deep an impression Stephen's death left on the memory of Paul is evident from the thoughts which came to him in his vision within the precincts of the temple.⁸⁹ Not only the faith and courage of Stephen, but undoubtedly also his powerful message exerted a strong influence on Paul. F. W. Farrar points this out when he says, "How tremendous the cogency of such arguments would be to the hearers of Stephen cannot be shown more strikingly than by the use made of them by Paul after the conversion which they doubtless helped to bring about. It must have been from Stephen that he heard them first, and they became so convincing to him that he constantly employs the same or analogous arguments in his own reasonings with his unconverted countrymen."⁹⁰

We may imagine that Paul's hatred of the Christians increased to the same degree in which the confidence in his Pharisaic beliefs disintegrated. Paul himself describes his furious persecution, when he says, "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women ---;" and, "I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished

88. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 70.

89. Acts 22:20.

90. Farrar, op. cit., p. 85.

them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blasphemous."⁹¹ When Paul hunted the Christians, he saw much of the Christian spirit. He saw the disciples when their faith was on trial and when they were put into prison. He was a witness of their Christian love, which also reached out to him who persecuted them. The faith and love of the persecuted might have been for Saul a call to repentance, but the more he saw of the Christians the more furious he became. He was "kicking against the goads."

The extraordinary zeal which Paul demonstrated in his persecution of the Christians merited for him the approval of the Sanhedrin. Whether Paul at this time became a member of that august Council is to be doubted. His words in Acts 26:10, "— when they were put to death I cast my vote against them," if taken literally, could indicate that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. However, various arguments seem to speak against this view. First of all, "casting vote" may mean nothing more than giving approval. Horatio Hackett says, "The expression itself affords but slight proof that Paul was a voter in the Sanhedrin. *ψῆφος*, a stone used as a ballot, like our "suffrage", signified also opinion, assent, and accompanied various verbs, as *τιθέω* and *καταψηφίζω*, as meaning to think, judge, sanction, with a figurative allusion only to the act of voting. Plato uses the term often in that sense."⁹² Furthermore, according to later regulations, membership in the Sanhedrin was restricted to married men with families. If this rule existed as early as the time of Paul, there is every

91. Acts 22:4; 26: 10-11.

92. Horatio B. Hackett, A Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 304.

reason to believe that Paul was not a member of the supreme Council. Surely Paul was not married when he wrote the seventh chapter of I Corinthians, and since there are no allusions to a wife or family, it is extremely farfetched to imagine that Paul was a widower. Finally, the fact that Paul was probably only about thirty years old at this time might indicate that he was not eligible for membership in the Sanhedrin.

Neither personal revenge against the Christians, nor the approval of his conduct by the Sanhedrin, nor the leadership of the persecution in Jerusalem were enough to satisfy Saul's bitter hatred of the disciples of the Lord. "But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."⁹³ "But when his work was done -- when there were in Jerusalem no more Hellenists to persecute -- when even the Galilaeans had fled, or been silenced, or been slain -- then such doubts would again thicken round him, and he would hear the approach of them like the sound of a stealthy footfall on the turf. Was it not this that kindled his excessive madness -- this that made him still breathe out threats and blood? Was not this a part of the motive which had driven him to the wily Sadducee with the demand for a fresh commission? Would not this work for the Law protect him from the perplexing complications of a will that plunged and struggled to resist the agonizing goad-thrusts of a ruinous misgiving?"⁹⁴

93. Acts 9: 1-2.

94. Farrar, op. cit., p. 103.

VI. The Conversion

More furious than ever before, and probably more skeptical about his own convictions, Paul made his way to Damascus. He and his accomplices probably followed the ridge northward through Judea and Samaria, and then, after crossing the Jordan River just south of the Sea of Galilee, they ascended to the plateau which stretched away toward Damascus. After a long and arduous journey across the scorching desert, Saul and his band came to the place where the persecutor of Jesus was to be transformed into His most illustrious servant. Near Damascus, probably a half mile from the city, Paul experienced that never-to-be-forgotten appearance of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.⁹⁵

In their essential points, the three accounts of Paul's conversion are in complete agreement.⁹⁶ Whatever differences in wording or point of emphasis appear in the various accounts can be satisfactorily explained without denying the authenticity of any one of them. With regard to the differences in the stories, it is important to remember that the whole matter was at bottom a personal one between Saul and Jesus, and that Paul, in his epistles, repeatedly affirms the heart of his story.⁹⁷ Besides, even if these differences are

95. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 82. In a foot-note on this page, the authors make the following comment on the place of Paul's conversion: "Notices of the traditional place where the vision was seen are variously given by earlier and later travelers. The old writer, Quaresmius, mentions four theoretical sites; (1) twelve miles south of Damascus, where there is stream on the right of the road, with the ruins of a church on a rising ground; (2) six miles south on the left of the road, where there are traces of a church and stones marked with crosses; (3) two miles south on the same road; (4) half a mile from the city; and this he prefers on the strength of earlier authorities, and because it harmonizes best with what is said of the Apostle being led in by the hand."

96. Cf. Acts 9; 22; 26.

97. Robertson, op. cit., p. 43,45.

considered only on a purely critical-historical basis, the integrity of Luke's writings has proved itself to be unimpeachable.

The historical, resurrected and glorified Jesus of Nazareth appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus. To indicate the actual bodily appearance of Jesus, Luke uses the word "ὤφθη", the same word used by him to describe the appearance of the risen Jesus to Peter, and the same word used by Paul when he told about the appearance of Jesus to the Apostles and others after the resurrection.⁹⁸ In a supernatural manner, surrounded by a light above the brightness of the sun, Paul, the persecuter of the Christians, was changed into a most zealous disciple of Jesus. The arguments of those who attempt to explain this great event in terms of natural causes, such as lightning, heat stroke, epilepsy, or psychological phenomena, are so unscientific that they do not deserve to be discussed. Furthermore, no rational motive on the part of Paul could be adduced to explain the remarkable change effected in his heart and mind. A love of power could not have prompted Paul to change his course, "for Jesus' flock was driven to the slaughter and He the Shepherd had been murdered a little before. All he could hope for by the change was a similar treatment."⁹⁹ A love of wealth could not have been Paul's motive, for he joined himself to the poor. "Was it a love of fame? His prophetic power must have been miraculous, if he could look beyond the shame and scorn which then rested on the servants of a crucified Master, to that glory with which Christendom now surrounds the memory of St. Paul."¹⁰⁰

98. Cf. Luke 24: 34; I Cor. 15: 5-7.

99. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 91.

100. Ibid.

Saul was seized and turned around against his own will. He himself says that Jesus did it, and no one has yet disproved Saul's own explanation of what occurred to him on the way to Damascus.

Next to the resurrection of Christ, the Conversion of Paul, which occurred in about 32 A.D., is one of the most decisive events of New Testament history. By his inquiry, "What shall I do, Lord?", Saul indicated that he had been overpowered by the appearance of Jesus, and that he was ready to submit to His will. That which Paul saw and heard on the road to Damascus continued to live in his memory. "It was the secret of his inmost being; it was the most unalterable conviction of his soul; it was the very crisis and most intense moment of his life."¹⁰¹ Now he was convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah and that He was alive. All his subsequent teaching gathered around this truth and this conviction. Furthermore, he had learned that this truth was intended for all nations and that he had been chosen to bear witness of it before all men. The glorious vision of the international destiny of the Gospel was now unfolding before his eyes. It is impossible to estimate the tremendous benefits which the world and the Church derived from the conversion of Paul. As an act of God's grace in the Church's behalf, the conversion of Paul is excelled only by the birth, death, and resurrection of the Master Himself.

101. Farrar, op. cit., p. 108.

VII. Adjustment in Damascus, Arabia, and Jerusalem

In an instant, on the road to Damascus, Paul's former convictions were completely changed. Jesus had completely overpowered him and had made of him a disciple. However, it would be a serious mistake to imagine that Paul at once grasped the full implications of the marvelous change which had been effected in him, or that he at once understood the full meaning of the commission which he had received from Jesus. Chastened by God and stricken with blindness, Paul was led by the hand into Damascus. Those three days of blindness which he endured in that city were the beginning of that long period of adjustment which was necessary to equip him completely for the tremendous task which lay before him. In these days, with quietness and fasting, Paul began to ponder the new life which had just recently been created in him. Much of his former life had to be discarded, and the remainder had to be directed to a new goal through the power of the Holy Spirit. After the three days of prayer and contemplation, meditation, Ananias, the messenger of God, came to Saul and laid his hands on him. Thereupon Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit and was cured of his blindness. Filled with joy, he arose and was baptized, and took food to strengthen himself.

During the three days of blindness Paul was probably able to recover from the first shock of his conversion, but he was not able to make a complete adjustment. Though it would be difficult to describe the exact nature of the introspection with which Paul was engaged after he had again received his sight, we can well imagine that he needed much more time to ponder God's mercy. He needed time to reconstruct his whole world view. All the experiences of his former

days in Tarsus and Jerusalem would have to be examined in the light of his new life. Undoubtedly Paul realized fully the necessity of such an adjustment, and in his own description of his immediate post-conversion activity he says, "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus."¹⁰² In hostile Damascus, where both friend and foe doubted his motives, Paul could not make an adjustment. He needed a place away from friends and enemies, a place where he could be alone with God and could concentrate on the wonderful thing that had happened to him. Arabia met the requirements.

If the above-mentioned considerations concerning Paul's physical and spiritual condition after his conversion are borne in mind, it will be difficult to believe that he preached immediately in the synagogues of Damascus. It will be best to understand the ἐὺθ' ὥς of Gal. 1:16 as immediately succeeding Paul's conversion, and the ἐὺθ' ὥς of Acts 9:20 as immediately succeeding his return to Damascus.¹⁰³ After a period of contemplation in the Arabian desert, it would seem that Paul would be much better prepared to testify to the name of Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus.

Various parts of the vast territory known as Arabia have been suggested as possible places for Paul's sojourn. In all probability

102. Gal. 1: 15-17.

103. Farrar, op. cit., p. 116.

he did not go as far south as Sinai, but rather restricted his travels to the region called Arabia Petraea. Aretas IV, whom Paul mentions in II Cor. 11:32, was king of this area. In this territory, which was probably about a four days' journey from Jericho, Paul could find the necessary seclusion which would enable him to think about his new way of life.¹⁰⁴ To indicate the length of his stay in Arabia, Paul himself says, "Then after three years (three years after his conversion) I went up to Jerusalem ---."¹⁰⁵ Consequently, Paul spent the years between 32 and 35 A.D. in Damascus and Arabia. Since, however, the Jews of Damascus proved extremely unfriendly toward Paul and the narrative of Acts 9: 19 ff. implies a comparatively short preaching activity in Damascus, we may conclude that he spent the greater portion of this three-year period in Arabia.

After Paul had deliberated on the facts of his conversion and commission in the desert of Arabia, he went back to Damascus and boldly proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues of that city. The Jews, who had once been his friends, sought to kill him. He who had once persecuted the Christians was now being persecuted for his testimony of Jesus. In an ignominious flight he made his way back to Jerusalem.

Upon arrival in the city where he was once a leading figure, Paul received a very cold welcome. Luke very significantly says, "--- he attempted to join the disciples", indicating that Paul was unsuccessful in joining himself to them, for the Christians were afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple.¹⁰⁶ Barnabas,

104. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 90. In a footnote on this page, the authors quote Strabo as saying that Petra is a four days' journey from Jericho.

105. Gal. 1:18.

106. Acts 9:26.

however, vouched for Paul and introduced him to the apostles. Paul met Peter and James and undoubtedly explained to them in detail the things which had happened to him. When Paul realized that he was suspected by his fellow Christians, scorned and hated by his former associates, his faith must have been tested to the utmost. Nevertheless, he preached boldly in the name of the Lord and disputed against the Hellenists.¹⁰⁷ Very soon he encountered active hostility. Perhaps the very people with whom he once had joined hands to persecute the Christians were now turned against him and tried to kill him. The Lord Himself intervened when He appeared to Paul in the temple and told him, "Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me."¹⁰⁸ If any pride still remained in the heart of Paul, surely his experiences in Damascus and especially those in Jerusalem cut that pride to the quick. The Lord was preparing for Himself a humble servant. In all probability Paul was somewhat reluctant about leaving Jerusalem. (Cf. Acts 22: 19-20), but the Lord strengthened His previous command with the words, "Depart, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles."¹⁰⁹ With his commission reaffirmed, Paul acceded to the Lord's will and left Jerusalem. Some of the brethren from Jerusalem brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

107. Acts 9:29.

108. Acts 22:18.

109. Acts 22:21.

VIII. Adjustment in Syria and Cilicia

Though Paul had already made a beginning of his active mission career by preaching in Damascus and Jerusalem, it is best to regard the activity of those years as a part of Paul's period of adjustment, rather than as a part of his still future mission program. Similarly, it seems more advisable to consider his years spent in Cilicia and Syria after his conversion as a part of his adjustment and preparation for his future work. Paul's own words in Gal. 2:1, "Then after fourteen years (fourteen years after his conversion) I went up again to Jerusalem ---", indicate the approximate length of his stay in Cilicia and Syria. The visit to Jerusalem, described in the above reference, occurred after Paul's first missionary journey. Therefore, if the total of his approximately two-year Antioch ministry, his two-year missionary journey, and his three-year sojourn in Arabia is subtracted from the fourteen years, we may conclude that Paul spent about seven or eight years in Syria and Cilicia after his conversion.

Little is known about Paul's activity during these seven years, but some fairly reliable conjecture seems possible. Paul's post-conversion days in Tarsus and the surrounding territory served as a final preparation for the great work which lay before him. These years gave him time to grow in grace and to acquire the missionary skills which he later on employed so successfully. Now that he was assured of his call as a missionary to the Gentiles, he undoubtedly put forth every effort to prepare himself for that work. With the outline of his future work in mind, he must have been eager to understand the people to whom he was to preach, eager to become thoroughly familiar with their culture and way of life. During this time he

could not have failed to learn what Gentile religion really was. His insight into the moral working of idolatry, and his ready appreciation of Gentile sentiment described in his epistles, seem to indicate that he worked hard to acquaint himself with the thinking of the Gentiles. The manner in which he uses the public games as illustrations in his letter to the Corinthians, seems to be evidence for the assumption that he interested himself in the wholesome functions of the social life of the heathen.¹¹⁰

Besides acquainting himself more fully with the general culture of the Gentiles, it is quite possible that Paul at this time also took an interest in the University of Tarsus. Paul knew that his future work would bring him into contact with all strata of society, and, realizing this fact, he may have familiarized himself with the public education of his time. "Hellenism evolved a national and public education, intellectual and physical, of remarkable character; and it was in later times and in the Graeco-Asiatic cities that this system can be observed in greatest perfection."¹¹¹ The Tarsians, too, were proud of their system of education, and their interest in learning is best described by Strabo, who says, "The men of this place are so zealous in the study of philosophy and the whole circle of education, that they surpass both Athens and Alexandria, and every place that could be mentioned, where schools of philosophers are found. And the difference amounts to this. Here, those who are fond of learning are all natives, and strangers do not willingly reside here; and they themselves do not willingly remain, but finish their education abroad,

110. Cf. I Cor. 9:24-27.

111. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 40.

and gladly take up their residence elsewhere, and few return. Whereas, in other cities which I have just mentioned, except Alexandria, the contrary takes place: for many come to them and live there willingly; but you will see few of the natives either going abroad for the sake of philosophy, or caring to study it at home. The Alexandrians have both characters; for they receive many strangers, and send out of their own people not a few."¹¹² The quotation just mentioned has sometimes been misinterpreted. Some have felt that the fame of the Tarsian school of philosophy exceeded that of the schools in Athens and Alexandria. Strabo's description does not warrant such an assumption, and undoubtedly Ramsay gives a correct interpretation when he says, "Yet it is sometimes stated by modern writers that the Tarsian school of philosophy at the beginning of our era surpassed those of Athens and Alexandria; it surpassed them only in respect of the eagerness of its students and in filling its class-room with its own people, but it did not surpass them in equipment or in standing and fame as a seat of learning. Nor is it even correct to say that Tarsus was one of the three great university cities of the Mediterranean world."¹¹³

Nevertheless, the University of Tarsus apparently exerted a powerful influence not only upon the government but also upon the life and thought of all the citizens. The people were famous for their ability to speak on practically any subject without previous preparation.¹¹⁴ Eminent philosophers and teachers had left an indelible mark on the culture of Tarsus. Many Stoics of Tarsus were men of celebrity in the

112. The free translation of the quotation from Strabo is given by Copebeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 98.

113. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 232.

114. Kent, op. cit., p. 71.

Roman Empire. Athenodorus, the tutor of Augustus, died at the time of Paul's birth, "but the influence of Athenodorus did not die with him. He was long worshipped as a hero by his country, and his teaching was doubtless influential in the University of Tarsus after his death."¹¹⁵ Another influential man who studied at Tarsus was Apollonius, a contemporary of Paul and a native of Tyana, a city about seventy-five miles north of Tarsus. "Paul must have known his name and works well, for Apollonius was one of the most striking characters of the first century, whether he was 'a sage, an impostor, or a fanatic.'¹¹⁶ Not only was Paul acquainted with the literary works of his contemporaries, but he also referred to the writings of scholars and teachers who lived long before his time. "Chrysippus, the great Stoic, was a native of Tarsus, and the teacher of Cleanthes, whose noble utterance Paul aptly quoted in his famous address at Athens before the court of the Areopagus."¹¹⁷

If Paul did go to school in Tarsus after his conversion, it would be difficult to determine to what extent he made use of the formal educational facilities of the city, or to what extent he was influenced by the schools. That he became familiar with the education and the general Hellenistic culture of the upper classes could hardly be denied. The Greek refinement and the tact of a man of the world, apparent in the letter to Philemon, seem to speak for this view.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Paul's spirit of curiosity and investigation, his wide experience and capacity for dealing with varied interests and intricate matters of

115. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 223.

116. Gilbert, The Student's Life of Paul, p. 3.

117. Kent, op. cit., p. 71.

118. Deissmann, op. cit., p. 20.

business, and his social courtesy, seem to indicate a reasonably close contact with the more refined Greek culture of the educated class.¹¹⁹

However, in the discussion of the varied education which influenced Paul's life and thought, it is very important to avoid two extremes.

On the one hand, there are those who believe that Paul, by reason of his Rabbinic training, has "rabbinized" Christ and hence has obscured Jesus instead of revealing him.¹²⁰

On the other hand, men like Rabbi Koehler assert that Paul was a Hellenist and no real Jew like Jesus.¹²¹

The correct view probably lies between these two extremes and is nicely expressed by Ramsay, when he says, "In the mind of Paul a universalised Hellenism coalesced with a universalised Hebraism."¹²² Paul was aware of the fact that the true God, worshipped by the Jews, was also the God of the Greeks. The Hebrew and Hellenistic elements of his environment fostered this belief and helped him see the religion of the Jews, with its promise of a Savior, as the one religion which would satisfy the needs of the whole world.

There appears to be very little convincing evidence to show that Paul received any extensive formal education at the University of Tarsus. The fact that Paul on several occasions quotes Greek poets does not prove that he had an extensive knowledge of Greek literature, or that he was a student of Greek literature at the university. One can well imagine that these quotations were in common use among the educated classes. Concerning Paul's use of the Greek language, Farrar says,

119. Ramsay, op. cit., p. 78. Farrar, op. cit., p. 698.

120. This is the view of Pfleiderer, as mentioned by Robertson, op. cit., p. 71.

121. Ibid.

122. Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 43.

"His Greek is not the Greek of the Atticists nor his rhetoric the rhetoric of the schools, nor his logic the logic of the philosophers.

It is doubtful whether the incomparable energy and individuality of his style and of his reasoning would not have been merely enfeebled and conventionalized if he had gone through any prolonged course of the only training which the Sophists of Tarsus could have given

him."¹²³ Yet, in another section of his discussion on the life of Paul, the same author tempers the statement made above by making the following comment concerning Paul's education at the university:

"And it is far from improbable that it was in some 'class of Rhetoric' at Tarsus that the Apostle acquired the germs, at any rate, of that argumentative habit of mind, that gift of ready extempore utterance, and that fondness for chiasmus, paronomasia, paraleipsis, oxymoron, litotes, and other rhetorical figures, which characterise his style."¹²⁴

Though it is not very probable that a man who wrote and spoke Greek as Paul did would be lacking in those elements of Greek culture which were common to all the educated people of Asia Minor, it, nevertheless, is not necessary to overemphasize Paul's familiarity with Greek learning.

Besides familiarizing himself with the general culture of the people among whom he was destined to work, Paul undoubtedly spent most of his time after his conversion acquiring the practical experience necessary for his great career. He preached and founded congregations in the regions of Syria and Cilicia. That Paul was thus occupied during his post-conversion days in Syria and Cilicia is evident from his own letter to the Galatians, in which he states that the churches

123. Farrar, op. cit., p. 21.

124. Ibid., p. 698.

in Judea glorified God because they had heard that he was preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.¹²⁵ On his second missionary journey Paul went through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches, and, undoubtedly, these churches were the ones which he had founded during his 'silent years' in that area,¹²⁶ The statement in Acts 15:23, that the decree of the council of Jerusalem was addressed to the brethren of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, offers a final proof to show that Paul was actively engaged in mission work during his immediate post-conversion days.

In about 43 A.D., when Barnabas found Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch, Paul was fully prepared for the great work which lay before him. Paul had been marvelously prepared and singularly blessed by God. He was born in Tarsus, a Hellenistic metropolis of the Roman Empire; he was educated in the most prominent school in Jerusalem; he was called by Jesus Himself on the way to Damascus; and, during a ten-year period of adjustment, he had acquired a broader and deeper acquaintance with Greek culture, and had been trained in the skills of practical mission work. Now, through the power of the Holy Spirit, he was ready to change the course of humanity with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

125. Cf. Gal. 1:22-24.

126. Cf. Acts 15:41.

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