5-1-1949

Epicurean Catchwords in the Letters of Saint Paul

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EPICUREAN CATCHWORDS IN THE LETTERS OF SAINT 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

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by

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May 1949

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Introduction

A cloud has hung, and still hangs, over Epicureanism. Many men, scholars and theologians alike, have made the mistake of identifying the name Epicurean with sensualist, and have contemptuously dismissed Epicureanism as an ignoble philosophy of anti-Providential dogmas stressing voluptuary living. Such is not the case. Far from being an ignoble philosophy, these teachings from "the Garden" form an enlightened creed, as enlightened as is possible within its materialistic limits.

Such a materialistic philosophy which stressed the urgency of this life presented a definite and powerful block to the spread of Christianity in the early centuries of the Church. It is not difficult to see, then, that all who are vitally interested in early Christianity must take the Epicureans into serious consideration, along with other modes of ancient thought, if there is to be a proper understanding of that early Christian tradition.

Saint Paul undoubtedly encountered many Epicureans during his missionary travels. How did he deal with this hedonistic philosophy? In being "all things to all men" that he might by all means save some,[1] did the Apostle to the Gentiles also become an Epicurean to the Epicureans that he might save some Epicureans? Is there any Epicurean terminology in the Letters of St. Paul? To many of Christian sentiment such thoughts seem hardly respectable, although similarities between Christian doctrine and classical philosophy, however shall and inconsequential, are often felt to be flattering and gratifying.

By way of an historical survey of Hellenistic Greece and of Epicurean expansion, coupled with a comparison of Epicurean and Pauline teaching, this thesis will attempt to show that it is not only possible but very probable that Epicurean catchwords do exist in the writings of St. Paul, and that such terminology was emptied of its former connotation, refilled with Christian meaning, and redirected against the Epicureans.

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1. I Corinthians 9:22.

I. A Survey of Greece and Epicurean Expansion

A. Historical and Philosophical Background

1. Greece at the Time of Epicurus

Epicurus was born into a world of expansion and change. As a result of the Peloponnesian Wars and the Macedonian conquests, the period of city-states and independent republics was succeeded by a period of fusion and confusion. The Alexandrian conquests introduced a new spirit into Greek living and thinking. It was a spirit which forced the Greek world to surrender its exclusiveness, its city-state rivalries, its class distinction, and its contempt for the "barbarian" and the foreigner. The ideals of pure democracy fell to pieces, power and authority changed hands, and secondary states came to the fore. The individual city as such was no longer sovereign but subject to the rule of a foreign king.

People of alien race freely mingled with the Greeks. Cosmopolitanism was now a reality and resulted in a loose unity. Athens, previously an exclusive Greek city, now admitted many foreigners within her walls. In short, the Hellenistic period was under way, and brought with it numerous problems.

In the political field there was a marked change in

attitude over against former political life. A country to live and die for hardly existed. The glory that was Greece had long since past. Municipal government under the Macedonian regime was a farce. To undertake a government position was no longer an honor but merely a duty. The cosmopolitan citizenry was not interested in war and politics, as were their forefathers; but practised instead a way of life which has given this period the name "Hellenistic", a term to denote deflation and inferiority.

There was also a change in the realm of the arts. The Classical Period in Greece (450-400 B.C.) had reached its height in the Periclean Age. Euripides and Sophocles were then active. The comedy of Aristophanes had as its scenes the centers of the political life of his day. Towards the end of this period came Socrates, who greatly influenced the later philosophic system of Plato. In sculpture, architecture and painting there were such notables as Iktinos and Kallicrates, the designers of the Parthenon; Phidias, the world-famous sculptor; Mnesicles, the architect of the Propylaea; Polykleitos, the perfector of "the walking motif"; Polygnotos, the greatest painter of the fifth century; and Midias, a renowned vase painter. By contrast, the fourth century appears to be somewhat of a let-down. Demosthenes presents a different type of literature. Public life in the new comedy of Menander and Philemon are unknown. Perpetual themes from the family and

social life, such as the accounts of lovers, drunken captains, parasites, and revolutionists, came into prominence. There was a great difference between the age of Plato and that of Epicurus.

Antagonism to the religious conventions of the times also prevailed. With the coming of the Macedonians, people became realists and began to doubt the validity of their old nationalistic cults. To complicate matters, foreign deities, mainly of Oriental origin, were introduced and became serious rivals to the traditional gods of the Greeks.

Into such a world Epicurus was born. There is much conflicting testimony regarding the life of this philosopher. Diogenes Laertius, in the tenth book of his Lives of Eminent Philosophers, furnishes most of the biographical data. Epicurus was probably born at Samos in 341 B.C., about five years after the death of Plato. At the age of thirty he became a teacher of philosophy in Mitylene and later in Lampsacus. In 306/5 B.C., he moved to Athens and established his school in a garden outside the city walls. His death in 270 B.C. was mourned by many followers who had accepted his doctrine as virtually final.

2. The World of Plato and Aristotle

When Epicurus established his "Garden" at Athens, he took his place alongside several other philosophies. The Academy of Plato had been in existence for many years.

Zeno was expounding Stoicism to his circle in the Porch. The Lyceum of Aristotle was headed by Theophrastus.

A consideration of Epicureanism, which in a large measure formulated Greek and, later, Roman philosophic speculation, must include a brief examination of Platonism; for there are both curious and important relationships between the two. Plato's concept of naturalistic ethics; his theories in political science; and his idealism in metaphysics are basic for a proper appreciation of Epicureanism.

The most significant feature of Platonism is its doctrine of the Ideas. In trying to discover the plan and meaning of the world as the home of humanity, Plato looked upon everything in nature and in humanity as the realization of an Idea. To him, there were two worlds: the universe of Ideas and the universe susceptible to our sense experience. The realm of the Ideas is non-spacial, non-temporal, and exists apart from the realm of the real. In the world of reality everything which exists, every act of ours, every form of conduct, is but an expression of an Idea. To exist, for Plato, meant to express an idea or plan. The world is a stage in the unfolding of a ruling principle.

To the people of his day, this theory was functional. Oates has expressed the advantages this way:

> 1. It provides a theory of universals on the basis of which the phenomena of prediction can be explained. 2. It offers an answer to the ontological problem when it says that the ideas are real, and that all else, in varying degrees, is relatively less real. 3. In the face of the epistemological problem, it holds that knowledge, strictly speaking, is possible only of the ideas, that is, of that which does not change, while it is only possible to have opinion with regard to objects in the phenomenal world which are in continual flux. 4. It submits an answer to the problem of value, for indeed there are ethical and aesthetic ideas, such as courage and beauty, which function as objective norms in the realm of value.[1]

The theory of the Ideas had its religious and theological implications. Being hierarchically arranged according to genus and species, teleologically, the ideas looked forward to a final cause, an ultimate. This Plato termed the ultimate Good. To this Good he ascribes most of the attributes which the Christian assigns to God, though Plato knew nothing of the graciousness of God and the forgiveness of sins. No pagan writer ever reached the heights attained by Plato in speaking about God.

Plato viewed the soul as a reality, pre-existent and post-existent, and the cause of all law, harmony, order, life, and justice in the universe. In its pre-existent state the soul saw all pure ideas in a realm of perfect ideas. Entering the body of a person the soul cannot get these perfect ideas, but is imprisoned in and debased by the body. The soul never loses sight of the world of the

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1. Whitney J. Oates, The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers, Random House, New York, 1940, p.xv.

Ideas. Throughout the life span of a man it seeks to be free to once again recall the pure ideas of its pre-existent state in a post-existent realm. In the measure in which the soul is successful in carrying out the virtues of justice, wisdom, courage and temperance, in that measure it shortens its period of transmigrations on earth and will that much sooner return to its final resting place in Mt. Olympus. Such contemplation makes for virtuous living among men.

Knowledge is inherent. Ideas drawn from the mind are the true standard by which experience must be judged. Man receives all knowledge as a result of sense experience. Only in the degree in which the soul recaptures the vision of the Ideas as they are in the world of the Ideas does one acheive knowledge.

Greek philosophy reached its perfection in Plato and Aristotle, men who perfected the Socratic theory of conceptions. The idealism of Plato was expounded with extraordinary brilliancy, and had been tried and tested by Aristotle. Aristotle, however, revolted against Plato's doctrine of the Ideas, that they exist apart from the real. To "the Stagirite" the world of the Ideas and the world of things are inseparably bound together. Nevertheless both Plato and Aristotle were idealists and contributed much to this view which was such an important element in the glory that was Greece.

Yet the views of Plato and of Aristotle had their imperfections and limitations. Trusting implicitly to conceptions, Plato and Aristotle failed to enquire how these conceptions arose, and whether they would stand. They had attached undue prominence to mental criticism, neglected observation, and supposed that out of ordinary beliefs and current language conceptions expressing the very essence of things could be obtained by pure logic.[2]

There were over-hasty attempts to enthrone idealism as the knowledge of conceptions. There was always present the desire to accept one's own notions of things as being real and actual. In spite of his brilliancy, Aristotle had failed to blend the elements out of which his system was composed into one harmonious whole. Such defects were apparent, even in the greatest and most brilliant achievements of the Greeks, and nothing short of a revolution in attitude would avail in correcting these faults.

3. Materialism Versus Idealism

The failure to reconcile all the elements within the individual systems of Plato and Aristotle, the entry of cold reason as a reaction to dualism, and the political conditions of the day introduced the teachings of the post-Aristotelian schools.

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2. E. Zeller, The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, translated by Oswald J. Reichel, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1870, p.4.

The two schools which inherited the Academy and the Peripatos used only fragments of their former masters. Concerning the Academy Wallace says:

> The Academic school came more and more to lean towards critical and logical tendencies. The New Academy, inspired by the influence of its contemporary, Pyrrho, the great sceptical philosopher of the ancient world, became the main arsenal where were forged the weapons of a universal destructive criticism. It was the spirit which denies, the reason which rends in pieces its own construction, that prevailed in the Academic school.[3]

And with regard to the immediate followers of Aristotle he writes:

> Aristotle's immediate followers Theophrastus and Strato of Lampsacus soon left the metaphysical idealism of their master. The logical and the physical departments were made the predominant feature in the tradition of the school. There was nothing left but "positive" science. In the next generation Aristotelianism sank into greater stagnation; became more positive and less philosophical; it passed into scholasticism, and put learning in the place of wisdom and research.[4]

Extreme views in opposition to Plato and Aristotle were expressed by the Cyrenaics and the Cynics. These men were hostile to all conventions and were outrageous realists. They were, to quote Wallace, "a practical protest against the dominant tendency to sacrifice the individual to the community."[5]

The idealism of Plato and Aristotle in expressing the

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3. William Wallace, Chief Ancient Philosophies: Epicureanism, Pott, Young, and Co., New York, 1880, p.6.
4. Ibid., p.7.
5. Ibid., p.12.

Socratic idea of conceptions had apparently proved to be a failure in the Hellenistic age. Aristotle attacked Plato's transcendentalism. He in turn was superseded by scepticism. A new moral outlook on the problems of the world and of man was needed. Such a view had to be materialistic, and had to prove its worth in the midst of sceptics. Epicureanism met these requirements.

Both Stoicism and Epicureanism summed up and drew out the conclusions to which the past had furnished the premises. Each had its contacts with Plato, but in expressing itself each followed a growing tendency towards individualism-- the outstanding feature of Hellenistic culture as opposed to Hellenic culture.

Epicurus dealt with man, not as a fragment of society, but solely as an individual "who can, if he thinks it desirable, make terms with society but who had a prior and natural right to live and progress for himself."[6] A man's sole duties were towards himself. Ethics was Epicurus' end and goal, an ethics which looked only to the interest of the individual.

Knowledge was no longer valued for its own sake, but employed only in so far as it tended to produce a clear self-centered judgment and gave some principle for the regulation of personal conduct. Combined with this was the

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6. Ibid., p.15.

conviction that the real is the material, the corporeal--that which can be seen and touched.

On the contrast between Epicurean materialism and former philosophy, DeWitt writes:

> He [Epicurus] believed himself to be perpetuating no school but to be establishing philosophy, including religion, upon a fresh and firmer footing. He accepted atomism but he rejected the old, unmoral atomism; it was a new and reformed atomism that he set out to preach, which should emancipate man from the bondage of inexorable Necessity and make room for freedom of the will and moral responsibility (Compare Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, X.134, and Lucretius II.251f.). He accepted hedonism but he rejected the old, immoral hedonism. It was a new and purified hedonism that he set out to promulgate, which should take the offensiveness out of pleasure and cause it to hinge upon conformity to the demands of justice, honor, and reason.[7]

In short, Epicurus offered a dogma to follow. He presented a way of life for man as man, and practically abandoned the idealism of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. His reality was matter, his knowledge was sense experience, and his peace was liberation of man's will from nature's law. This was the materialistic realism which confronted Paul in the Apostolic Age.

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7. Norman W. DeWitt, "The New Piety of Epicurus," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Section II, 1944, p.79.

B. Extent of Epicureanism

1. Geographical

Epicureanism began in the regions around the Aegean Sea. Strabo, the geographer, presents a short but interesting account of the early years of Epicurus:

> The Athenians at first sent Pericles as general and with him Sophocles the poet, who by a siege put the disobedient Samians in bad plight; but later they sent two thousand allottees from their own people, among whom was Neocles, the father of Epicurus the philosopher, a schoolmaster as they called him. And indeed it is said that Epicurus grew up here and in Teos, and that he became an ephebos at Athens, and that Menander the comic poet became an ephebos at the same time.[8]

When Epicurus was about thirty years of age he founded a school of philosophy in Mitylene and Lampsacus.[9] Epicurus regarded Lampsacus, a ferry town of the Dardanelles opposite to the modern town of Gallopoli (the city of Callias), almost as his country.[10] His foremost disciple, Metrodorus, came from Lampsacus.[11] Another pillar of his school was Polyaenus, a notable mathematician, also from Lampsacus.[12] Additional followers from this city are Leonteus and his wife Themista; Idomeneus, the husband of Batis; and Colotes, against whom Plutarch wrote a tract and

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8. Strabo, Geography XIV.1.18.
9. Cf. Cicero, De Finibus II.101; Pliny, Natural History XXXV.5; Athenaeus VII.298D; Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers X.15.
10. Strabo XIII.I.19.
11. Cf. Seneca, Epistulae 52.3; Diogenes Laertius, op. cit., X.23.
12. Cf. Cicero, Acad.Pro. 106; De Finibus I.20; Seneca, Epistulae 18.9; Diogenes Laertius, op.cit.,X.24.

a rejoinder. From Mitylene came Hermarchus, the successor of Polyaenus.[13]

Five years after Epicurus founded his philosophy in Mitylene and Lampsacus, he moved to Athens, where he established his "school" in a garden. Here his doctrine and teachings flourished for centuries. His teachings aimed at awakening interest and popularity, and a dogma of this kind is perhaps especially appropriate to the sunny south and to the alert Greek in particular. Diogenes Laertius traces the historical development of the Epicurean school at Athens after the death of its founder.[14] In 79 B.C., Cicero spent six months at Athens among the philosophers, chiefly attending the lectures of Zeno of Sidon on Epicureanism. This was still a popular philosophy after more than two centuries. In the days of the Early Empire we find frequent allusion to characteristic Epicurean tenets. The school at Athens was still frequented. Apollonius of Tyana, who visited the various sects at Athens, heard a course on Epicureanism, "for even it he did not disdain to study."[15] Aulus Gellius, who studied philosophy at Athens while Herodes Atticus was there hardly alludes to Epicureanism, except to quote the bitter words of Hierocles the Stoic: "Pleasure is the end, is a harlot's doctrine: no

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13. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.23.
14. Ibid., X.
15. Philostratus, Apoll. Tyana, 6.

providence is not even a harlot's doctrine."[16] Finally, Longinus, who visited Athens to study philosophy about 240 A.D., does not even mention the Epicureans.[17] Yet, if Epicureanism was not in good standing at the University of Atnens, it would be a mistake to infer that it had been reduced to silence at this time. Epicureanism continued for another century and Athens was no exception.

The teachings of "the Garden" found the field most favorable for expansion in the East, especially in Asia and Palestine.[18] This was inevitable because of the world situation. The eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean were cut off from one another. Struggles between Rome and Carthage frequently turned the whole West into a war area. To the East the situation was different. The conquests of Alexander the Great had opened the doors towards the orient. This challenged the adventurous spirit of the Greeks, as well as offering new hope for the down-trodden and politically oppressed. Tens of thousands of Greeks migrated eastward, founding new cities from the western coast of Asia Minor to the very doors of India. Under Seleucus, one of the successors of Alexander the Great, upwards of one hundred forty new cities were founded. It is no wonder, then, that Cicero declares that not merely Greece and Italy, but the barbarian

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16. Aulus Gellius, VIII.5.8.
17. Porphyrius, De Vita Plotini, 20.
18. Norman W. DeWitt, "Notes on the History of Epicureanism", Transactions of the American Philological Association, Vol.LXIII, 1932, p.166.

world lying around soon felt the influence of Epicureanism.[19]

There are numerous evidences testifying to the spread of Epicureanism in Asia Minor. Lampsacus and Mitylene have already been mentioned. It was in remote Oenoanda, in Lycia, that a faithful disciple of Epicurus, Diogenes by name, built his monument (a portico), to which was affixed the marble slab bearing his famous Greek Epicurean inscription for all to read who passed that way.[20] A certain Asclepiades, hailing from Bithynia, founded an Epicurean school of medicine at Rome.[21] And Athenaeus presents an interesting account of Dionysius of Heracleia:

> And though old enough to know better, he [Dionysius of Heracleia] deserted the doctrines of the Porch and leaped over to embrace Epicurus. Of him Timon said not unwittingly: "Now when his sun ought to be declining, he begins to recline in the lap of pleasure; it's high time he were loving, high time he were marrying, and high time that he stopped."[22]

Additional information on the influence of Epicureanism in Asia Minor is given by Lucian, a writer of the second century after Christ and in a distant part of the world. He tells of the activities of Alexander the false prophet, who

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19. De Finibus, II.49.
20. George Hadzsits, Lucretius and His Influence, Longmans, Green, and Co., New York, 1935, p.195.
21. Pauly-Wissowa, s.v.
22. Athenaeus VII.281. The original of Timon's statement reads: ἡνίκ' ἔχρῆν δύνειν, νῦν ἄρχεται ἡδύνεσθαι ὥρη ἐρᾶν, ὥρη δὲ γαμεῖν, ὥρη δὲ πεπαύσθαι. Cf. Athenaeus 427E for a more complete description of the godless actions of Dionysius of Heracleia.

issued "a promulgation designed to scare them [his enemies], saying that Pontus was full of atheists [that is, the Epicureans] and Christians who had the hardihood to utter the vilest abuse of him."[23] Epicureans in general were the avowed enemies of superstition and priestly deception, suspicious of all secret worship and mysteries. This position made them allies with the Christians against Alexander, whose fame was spreading far and wide throughout Paphlagonia. His deceits and tricks were exposed to pilgrims making their way to his oracle at Abonutichos by the Epicureans who, according to Lucian, were numerous in the provinces bordering the Euxine. Alexander appealed to the fanaticism of the province to destroy his opponents. "If any atheist, Christian or Epicurean, has come to spy the sacred rites, let him depart."[24] And as the herald called "Away with the Christians", the people responded, "Away with the Epicureans."[25] Of all the opponents of Alexander, he "hated Amastris most of all the cities in Pontus because he knew that the followers of Lepidus and others like them were numerous in the city."[26]

Epicurean influence was felt also in Tarsus, the city of St. Paul's birth and education. An Epicurean philosopher named Lysias came to be tyrant of Tarsus. "Refusing

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23. Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet, 25.
24. Loc.cit.
25. Loc.cit.
26. Loc.cit.

to give up his office he made himself tyrant of the city. He then distributed the goods of the rich among the poor, murdering many who did not offer them of their own accord."[27] Three centuries later, during the reign of Alexander Balas, this same city produced the famous Epicurean writer, Diogenes. Tarsus must have been a center of Epicureanism over a long period of time.

In the second century B.C., we learn from one of the Herculanean rolls of the vogue of Epicureanism in the great city of Antioch.[28] Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), the God manifest, was converted to Epicureanism through one Philonides, who not only sojourned in favor at this court, lived in a building across from the palace, but also maintained this position during the reign of his successor, Demetrius Soter (162-150 B.C.), the Savior.[29]

Syria produced a number of outstanding Epicureans, a testimony again to the spread of the teachings of "the Garden". Lucian, the satirist, has been mentioned. He hailed from the inland Syrian town of Samosata, and shows both intimate knowledge of Epicureanism and also great sympathy with it. Mithras, the steward of Lysimachus, king of Thrace, was an Epicurean from Syria. Suetonius informs us that a professor of Greek, Pompilius Andronicus, who must have been a

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27. Athenaeus V.215.
28. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism", The Classical Journal, May, 1949.
29. Loc.cit.

contemporary with Lucretius, was by birth a Syrian. He spoiled his chances as a teacher of literature by his devotion to Epicureanism. It was supposed that his creed would make him indolent in his teaching and less able to maintain discipline; and so the poor man saw himself distanced in the competition by inferior men.[30]

Traces of Epicureanism are found in Palestine and neighboring territories. Zeno, a leader of "the Garden" at Athens, came from Sidon.[31] Philodemus, the outstanding Epicurean in Rome in the days of Cicero, came from Gadara, a city on the outskirts of the Anti-Libanus. It is natural to believe that the doctrines of Epicurus were common knowledge to the inhabitants of the cities of the Decapolis. These were a federation of cities marked by Hellenistic organization and culture. Pliny lists the following cities belonging to the Decapolis: Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, and Canatha. Ptolemy, a second century writer, names eighteen.[32]

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30. De Grammaticis 8.
31. Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.59.
32. If Jesus worked with his father as a carpenter from boyhood until the beginning of his public ministry, he no doubt labored in the vicinity of Nazareth, his home city. It was the custom of his day, as it is to this day, for labor crews to band together and travel from city to city in carrying out their work. These bands of workmen must operate within walking distance of their home base, as they had families to look after and support. Within a comfortable walking distance of Nazareth are four of the original cities of the Decapolis: Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, and Pella. It is very likely, then, that Jesus encountered the

Mesopotamia knew of Epicureanism already in the second century B.C. Seleucia, in Mesopotamia, was the home of Diogenes, the Epicurean in the court of Alexander Balas, the successor of Demetrius Soter.

The appeal of Epicurean doctrine reached Egypt also. Colotes, who published a little book entitled, That According to the Opinions of the Other Philosophers One Cannot as Much as Live, and dedicated it to King Ptolemy, was an Epicurean.[33] According to Diogenes Laertius there was also a second Ptolemy mentioned as an adherent to this group.[34] In condemning their teachings, Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (?-265 A.D.), gave mute testimony to their extent.

Record of persecution is also evidence of the wide and rapid dissemination of Epicureanism.[35] Suidas mentions two examples: Lyttos and Messene. According to him some Epicureans moved to the town of Lyttos, or Lyctos, in Crete. A decree at once demanded the expulsion "of those who had invented a womanish and ignoble and disgraceful philosophy, and who were enemies of the gods."[36] If they returned, a worse fate awaited them. Since Lyttos was destroyed around

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Epicurean philosophy on his visits to these various cities while working as a carpenter, and that He was well acquainted with their doctrine. Norman W. DeWitt, author of "Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism", The Classical Journal, May, 1949, holds to this view, an observation which seems very tenable.

33. Plutarch, Against Colotes, 1.
34. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit.,X.25.
35. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects.....".
36. Suidas, under Lyttos.

200 B.C., this persecution must have taken place sometime in the third century B.C. Similarly the people of Messene thrust out the Epicureans as defilers of the temples and as a disgrace to philosophy through their atheism and indifference.[37]

In the last half of the second century B.C., the new creed swung westward. The earliest expositor of Epicureanism in Latin was one Amafinius, who published much literature of the sect.[38] Of him Cicero says:

> To fill the gap their [the refined philosophers] silence left came the voice of C. Amafinius, and by the publication of his works the crowd had its interest stirred, and flocked to the teaching he advocated in preference to any other, whether because it was so easy to grasp, or because of the seductive allurements of pleasure, or possibly also because, in the absence of any better teaching, they clung to what there was. After Amafinius again there came a number of imitators of the same system and by their writings took all Italy by storm.[39]

After Amafinius a host of writers sprang up in the West. Through their efforts Epicureanism spread throughout Italy and beyond. Gaius Catius, an adherent to this creed, was an Insubrian Gaul. Furthermore, Epicureanism seems to have thrived in Caesar's camp in Gaul, from which site the young Trebatius announced his conversion to Epicureanism in 53 A.D.[40]

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37. Suidas, under Messene. The date of this incident is conjectural but has been placed around the middle of the second century B.C.
38. Cicero, Acad.Post.,I.5; Tusc.Disp.,IV.6, II.7; De Finibus, III.40.
39. Tusc. Disp., IV.6.
40. Cicero, Fam., VII.12.1.

It is impossible to say when Epicureanism reached Rome. It was known there in the days of Ennius.[41] About the middle of the second century an obscure statement tells us that two Epicureans, Alcius and Philiscus, were expelled from Rome on the ground of immoral influence on the young.[42] It is certain that about that time "the Roman government made some ineffectual attempts to check the corruption of manners and the decline of faith, which accompanied the conquest of the transmarine provinces. The decree against the Bacchanalia in 186 B.C. and the general order given to the executive in 161 B.C. to keep a sharp eye on philosophers and rhetoricians, betray uneasiness in the governing circles at Rome."[43] Cicero makes several comments on their numbers and activity in Rome.[44] This philosophy of "pleasure" was undoubtedly winning converts steadily.

In the vicinity of Naples, there was the Epicurean garden school of Siro, as well as of Siro's famous friend, Philodemus. At the city of Tarentum Polyarchus, an envoy sent by Dionysius the Younger, addressed the men of that city on Epicureanism as follows:

To me at least, gentlemen, it has often before

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41. Cf. Cicero, De Div., I.58.132; II.50.104; De Natura Deorum, III.32.79; cf. prologue to Plautus', Mercator.
42. Athenaeus, XII.68.
43. William Wallace, op.cit., p.250.
44. De Finibus, I.7.25; II.15.49; Tusc. Disp., II.3.7.; Pro Caelio, 17.41.

> this appeared plain, as I considered the question, that the whole system which sets up these virtues is quite absurd, and far removed from nature's intent. For when nature speaks in her own voice, she bids us follow our pleasures, and declares that this is the right course for a man of sense, but to resist them, to subjugate the appetites, is the mark of one who is neither prudent nor happy nor comprehends the composite character of human nature.[45]

At the time of St. Paul this self-extending gospel of the tranquil life had spread to most parts of the Graeco-Roman world. Wherever Paul went to preach the Gospel of Christ he must have found himself facing audiences "liberally interspersed with burgeois Epicureans."[46] DeWitt notes: "In all my reading I have never encountered anywhere the claim that Platonists or Peripatetics or even Stoics were numerous but in every century may be found evidence that Epicureans were prominent."[47]

Epicureanism was a wide-spread belief and one which must have been seriously taken into consideration by Paul. One dare not overlook this powerful group when studying New Testament history, nor dare one merely look upon the Epicureans as a weak sister philosophy to the Stoics. These followers of Epicurus faced Paul wherever he went, and taught doctrines, some of which insidiously paralleled Christianity and others again which bitterly opposed Christ's basic teachings. For these reasons Epicureanism was a major enemy against which Paul and the early Church had to contend.

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45. Athenaeus, XII.544-545.
46. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of...".
47. Loc.cit.

C. Adherents

A philosophy of the millions
A philosophy for beggar and king

The past pages have shown that Epicureanism spread throughout the Graeco-Roman world. This must have been a philosophy of the millions.

In the generation after Epicurus, the Stoic Chrysippus "devoted his life to demolishing the Epicurean doctrine and even went so far as to have his statue erected in the Cerameicus so postured, as he thought, as to be a refutation of that creed."[48] The new doctrine was exploited by Menander and ridiculed by other comedians. Already in the days of Arcesilaus, who was a later contemporary of Epicurus, men asked why there were so many deserters to Epicureanism from other schools, while no Epicurean ever became a renegade. To this Arcesilaus sarcastically replied: "A man may become a eunuch, but a eunuch can never become a man."[49] These evidences point to the immense popularity of the Garden philosophy in Athens in the later lifetime of Epicurus and the years immediately following.[50]

Another interesting statement as to the number of adherents of Epicureanism appears in Diogenes Laertius:

> For our philosopher has abundance of witnesses to attest his unsurpassed goodwill to all men--his

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48. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".
49. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., IV.6.43.
50. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".

> native land, which honored him with statues in bronze; his friends, so many in number that they could hardly be counted by whole cities, and indeed all who knew him, held fast as they were by the siren-charms of his doctrine....[51]

DeWitt takes this to mean that "while whole cities could be described as Epicurean in faith, this statement fell short of the truth, because rural districts also had been permeated by that creed."[52] Diogenes Laertius further mentions that "while nearly all the others [schools] have died out, the school itself continues forever without interruption through numberless reigns of one scholarch after another."[53]

Various phrases in the writings of Cicero indicate that the Epicureans were numerous.[54] Other information which sheds light on this creed of the millions is supplied by Plutarch and indirectly by Tertullian. Plutarch, in addition to incidental references scattered through his writings, has devoted two of his essays to a keen criticism of the Epicurean views, in the course of which he refers to many points in the history of the sect to show that material

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51. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.9.
52. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".
53. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.9-10.
54. "Again, as to the question often asked, why so many are Epicureans..." (De Finibus, I.7); "...let us pass in review the system of Epicurus, which to most men is the best known to any" (Ibid., I.5); "But, you tell me, Epicurus himself had many friends" (Ibid., II.25); "Such a provision ill became one whose 'intellect roamed' over unnumbered worlds and realms of infinite space, without shores or circumference" (Ibid., II.31). In the speech Pro Caelio, dated 56 B.C., Cicero informs us that at that time no philosophy except "voluptas cum dignitate" was then being taught in Rome (Pro Caelio, 41).

on that topic was in his time abundant.[55] Tertullian, inveighing against the pagan philosophies of his day asks the following questions: What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?[56] Tertullian could well be referring also to the Epicureans, for this creed was a powerful enemy of the Church in his day.

In asking "Why so many followers?" one necessarily inquires into the type of people to whom this creed appealed.

Platonism as a creed was always aristocratic and in favor in the royal courts. Cicero wrote: "I prefer to agree with Plato and be wrong than to agree with those Epicureans and be right." Stoicism, which steadily extolled virtue, logic, and divine providence, was no less acceptable to hypocrites than to saints. The Stoics advocated a philosophy which became popular with the upper classes and which Horace consequently calls a "silken-cushion" philosophy. Epicureanism, on the contrary, offered no bait to the silk-cushion trade,[57] for this was not a creed for the socially and politically ambitious. It eschewed all social distinction, appealing thereby to a wider public than did Plato or Aristotle. Epicurus "spoke to the man and not merely to the citizen, to the common man and not merely to the rea-

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55. William Wallace, op.cit., p.76.
56. Tertullian, Against Heresies, chapter 7.
57. Norman W. DeWitt, "Epicurus: Philosophy for the Millions", The Classical Journal, January, 1947, pp.196-197.

son."[58] The advice of Epicurus was to have only so much regard for public opinion as to avoid unfriendly criticism for either sordidness or luxury.

In the place of the old nationalism in Greek life, cosmopolitanism found expression with Epicurus. He disregarded differences of nationality, sex, and social status. Irrespective of country or government, he introduced a new design for living which was applicable everywhere. "He had emancipated himself from the obsessions of his race, political separatism, and the exclusive faith in political action. The whole world was a single parish."[59]

The immediate and intimate friends of Epicurus demonstrate the cosmopolitan appeal of his philosophy. Hermarchus of Mitylene, second president of the school, was the son of a poor man.[60] Polyaenus was a notable mathematician.[61] Idomeneus, to whom Epicurus wrote a letter, was a minister of state who exercised a rigorous authority and had important affairs in hand. Apollodorus was a conspicuous exponent of this creed in Athens, while Zeno of Sidon, a pupil of Apollodorus, appears as the next distinguished leader. Another unnamed follower was a drill-sergeant.[62]

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58. William Wallace, op.cit., p.16.
59. Norman W. DeWitt, "Epicurus: Philosophy for the...", p. 198.
60. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.24.
61. Plutarch mentions a second mathematician. "At this point Boethius the mathematician entered into the conversation. You know that the man is already changing his allegiance in the direction of Epicureanism"(Moralia, 396E).
62. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.26.

And Menander the comic poet should be mentioned as an intimate friend of Epicurus.[63]

Epicureanism, like Christianity, in competing for popular support, made an appeal to the fairer sex. Women and children were admitted. Themista, the wife of Leonteus of Lampsacus, Leontion the wife of Epicurus, Batis the sister of Epicurus, and one Mammaron are four female members of the sect. DeWitt comments: "Even Mary Magdelene would not have been excluded."[64]

The first Roman converts to Epicureanism seem to have been gentlemen. Among the circle of Cicero's friends there were many Epicureans--more perhaps than members of any other sect. Atticus, a wealthy, cultured, and kindly man; Verrius; Papirius, Paetus; Trebatius Pansa; and Cassius, one of the assassins of Caesar.[65] Phaedrus and Patro were also shining lights in this system. Phaedrus, the illustrious member of the sect around 90 B.C. gave young Cicero his first philosophical lessons. Their friendship term-

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63. Other names of Epicurean followers are listed in William Wallace's, Chief Ancient Philosophies: Epicureanism, and E. Zeller's, The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics.

64. Norman W. DeWitt, The New Piety of Epicurus, p.82. Even courtesans were admitted (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.4).

65. "Indeed it is also said that at the death of Caesar Cassius, turning his eyes toward the statue of Pompey before the attack began, invoked it silently, although he was much addicted to the doctrines of Epicurus; but the crisis, as it would seem, when the dreadful attempt was now close at hand, replaced his former cool calculations with divinely inspired motion" (Plutarch, Lives: Caesar, 66.2). Cf. Plutarch, Lives: Brutus, 37.

inated with the death of Phaedrus.[66] Patro was head of the group in 51 B.C.[67] To both of these men Cicero expresses his great respect and deep affection. Of Siro and Philodemus, Cicero writes that they were gentlemen of highest quality.[68] In the De Natura Deorum one reads that the chief Epicurean adherent in Rome in the days of Cicero was Velleius, a member of the Senate.[69]

In Caesar and Catullus, and still more in Virgil and Horace one can detect features of Epicureanism. In the Georgics of Virgil there is a parallel in the spirit of Epicurus and Lucretius.[70] Horace's own philosophy was a blend of Epicureanism, Stoicism, and his own good practical sense.[71] It is thought that Ovid knew his Lucretius per-

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66. On Phaedrus, cf. Cicero, De Finibus, I.5.16; V.1.3.; De Natura Deorum, I.33.93; Epis. ad Fam., XIII.1.

67. On Patro, Cf. Cicero, Epis. ad. Fam., XIII.1.2.; Epis. ad Att., V.11.6.

68. Cicero describes Piso the counsel as a barbarous Epicurus, an Epicurus from the pigsty, an Epicurus molded out of potter's clay and mud. Cicero then contrasts Philodemus as a person of refinement. This Greek, unlike other professors of Epicureanism, is at home in literature (cf. William Wallace, op.cit., p.255).

69. Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.6.15. Cf. De Or., III. 21.78; De Natura Deorum, I.21.58.

70. Cf. Aulus Gellius, Noct. Att., I.21.7: "We see that Virgil not only adopted single words of Lucretius but also followed very many verses and passages, almost in their entirety." (Norman W. DeWitt,"Virgil and Epicureanism", The Classical Weekly, XXV, 1932, pp.89-96).

71. Cf. Epistles, I.1.13-19. Horace had an intimate acquaintance with Lucretius' De Natura Rerum (Cf. W.A. Merrill, "On the Influence of Lucretius on Horace", University of California Publications, Classical Philology, 1905, I. 111-129). Cf., e.g., Horace, Sat., I.1.119 and Lucretius, III.938; Odes, II.16.20 and Lucretius, III.1068 (Hadzsits, Lucretius and His Influence, note p. 39).

fectly well.[72]

Yet the appeal of Epicureanism was not limited to the educated alone.[73] Statements from the writings of Seneca and Cicero bear this out. Wrote Seneca: "There is Epicurus, for example. Mark how greatly he is admired, not only by the more cultured, but also by this ignorant rabble."[74] Cicero, in three different works, either directly or indirectly mentions the Epicureans as people of only moderate learning, thereby exerting but little influence on the community. One reads in the Tusculan Disputations (II.7):

> For there is a class of men, who wish to be called philosophers, and are said to be responsible for quite a number of books in Latin, which I do not for my part despise, for I have never read them; but as on their own testimony the writers claim to be indifferent to definition, arrangement, precision and style I forbear to read what affords no pleasure. What followers of this school say and what they think is not unknown to anyone of even moderate learning.

He writes in the De Finibus (II.25): "But he won many disciples. Yes, and perhaps he deserved to do so; but still the witness of the crowd does not carry much weight." The Academica gives the following information (I.5):

> I judged that any person from our nation that felt an interest in the subject [that is, philosophy], if they were learned in the teachings of the Greeks, would sooner read Greek writings, than ours, and if on the other hand they shrank from the science and systems of the Greeks, they would not care even for philosophy,

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72. Cf. Amor., I.15.23-24: "The verses of Lucretius, the sublime, will perish only when one day the world will be given over to destruction."

73. Cf. E. Zeller, op.cit., pp. 413-415 and Norman W. DeWitt, "Notes on the History of Epicureanism", T.A.P.A., LXIII, 1932, pp.166-176, for additional names.

74. Seneca, Epistulae, LXXIX.15.

> which cannot be understood without Greek learning: and therefore I was unwilling to write what the unlearned would not be able to understand and the learned would not take the trouble to read. But you are aware (for you have passed through the same course of study yourself) that we Academics cannot be like Amafinius or Rabirius, who discuss matters that lie open to the view in ordinary language.

Quintilian seems to have been chiefly struck by Epicurean hostility to liberal culture.[75]

Many Epicureans came from rural areas. Again Cicero is our authority. "As for that, your sect argues very plausibly that there is no need for the aspirant to philosophy to be a scholar at all. And you are as good as your word. Our ancestors brought old Cincinnatus from the plough to be dictator. You ransack the country villages for your assemblage of doubtless respectable but certainly not very learned adherents."[76] Cicero also states that Epicureanism took all Italy by storm. DeWitt sees in this a polite sneer at Epicureans "as 'rustics' and hints that converts are readily recruited from the back township."[77]

The words of Wallace form a brief and fitting summary to this section:

> Epicureanism addressed itself to a frailer and humbler multitude, who neither in circumstances nor

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75. Quintilian, II.7.16; XII.2.24.
76. Cicero, De Finibus, II.4.
77. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of...". Confirmation of this interpretation is afforded by Cicero's contemporary Philodemus who wrote On the Management of an Estate, which is composed for the guidance of Epicureans engaged in farming or planning to do so (Loc.cit.).

in personal endownments were equal to making the world comport itself to their demands. It proposed to enable them, by discipline, to gain all that the others acquired by wealth, position, and innate force. It preached that pleasure was not restricted to the rich or to the mighty, but was equally attainable by the poor and the lowly. It levelled all ranks and equalized men, by showing that it is the variety and superficial glitter of pleasure and not its essence which imposed upon the powerful and their admirers.[78]

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78. William Wallace, op.cit., p.152.

D. The Appeal

Epicureanism was a missionary philosophy. The Epicurean said: "Laugh while you philosophize; take care of your property; do your duty to your family; and never cease to proclaim the tenets of the true philosophy."[79] What is more, Epicurus composed many texts for home-study courses, a practice later followed in Italy by Amafinius. Extension of this method from disciple to disciple continued long after it ceased in other schools.[80] Such a personal appeal produced results similar to those attained by the Christians.

One dare not forget the historical circumstances in the age of Epicurus, for they help to account for the popularity of his doctrine. The successors of Alexander, the chaos of Greek politics, and the careers of tyrants and secondary powers, as well as the general Hellenistic attitude pervading at that time are all a practical and illustrative commentary on the morals and theology of Epicureanism. To minds wearied by the strife of politics and harassed by wars and rumors of wars, a creed which released men from the bondage of political life could not be but welcome. Epicureanism was such a non-political religion, connected

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79. Gnomologium Vaticanum, 41.
80. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism", The Classical Journal.

with no government or court. Its appeal was essentially to the individual. This creed spoke for the benefit of the individual man "as a being for whom life is pregnant with possibilities of pain and pleasure."[81] In the midst of the world's confusions, it offered man peace and inner calm. Thus it afforded the human soul a guide to the practical problems of life. Its end was purely practical, not a mere theoretical doctrine. "Live unknown" was their maxim for living a simple life, a maxim which included a withdrawal from an active participation in life. Such teaching found widespread favor.

Furthermore, Epicureanism was not a profound philosophical or scientific system, as were the systems of the Academy and the Lyceum. It did not trouble itself with the work done by the Museum and Library of Alexandria, whether in natural history or in literary criticism. Nor were its teachings influenced by the great mathematicians and astronomers, such as Euclid and Aristarchus. Its aim and character were designed to awaken interest and win popularity. Its principles were simple and the precepts easy to follow. The Epicurean had merely to apprehend and remember the precepts and principles enunciated by the founder of the sect. According to Cicero, "their arguments are stated without precision, because their doctrine is easily grasped and appealing to the taste of the unlearned. This is one of the

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81. William Wallace, op.cit., p.157.

main reasons for its support."[82]

Whereas Stoicism represented man as the creature and subject of divinity, Epicureanism taught that man was the master of his fate and the captain of his soul. In opposition to the doctrine of a judgment to come,[83] and of a Hades where wicked men paid the penalty of their wrongdoing--beliefs common to a large part of the ancient world--Epicureanism supplied a safeguard. In the system of Epicurus neither the gods, nor death, nor a hereafter were to be feared. His declarations set man free, as it were, from all controlling powers in the heavens, and in the dim hereafter. In its place he advocated a concentration on the present life with no thought of the consequences beyond the tomb. Many eagerly accepted these teachings, for in them they found a workable way of life and an answer to their spiritual inquiries.[84]

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82. Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, IV.6. "And this much he says in the words I have quoted, so that anyone you please may realize what Epicurus understands by pleasure" (Ibid., III. 18.42). "What should prevent me from being an Epicurean, if I accepted the doctrine of Epicurus? Especially as the system is an exceedingly easy one to master" (De Finibus, I.8).

83. The vulgarity of Epicureanism seems to have been on the mind of Augustine, when in unregenerate days he would have given Epicureanism the palm, if only immortality had not turned the scale (Confessions, VI.16).

84. In antiquity one of the principal charges against Epicurus was that of destroying religion, the same charge that caused the death of Socrates. His chief accusers were Cicero and Plutarch, who lived at a safe distance in time and space (Norman W. DeWitt, The New Piety of Epicurus, p.79). Cf. Cicero, De Div., II.17.40; De Natura Deorum, I. 44.123. The pious and bigoted Aelian, who lived towards the

"Pleasure is the end of life" is the Epicurean motto.

To this statement Wallace comments:

> If we remember too that according to the Epicurean theory pleasure is defined as the complete removal of the painful state, and that, once achieved the pleasure can never be intensified, but only varied by any subsequent additions, we can understand

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close of the second century B.C., wrote a work on Providence, in which the Epicureans largely figured. It was a work full of divine judgments on unbelievers and of miraculous conversions (Suidas, under Aelian). Lucian said "he knew not what blessing that book [the catechism and articles of Epicurus] brings to those who come to it, what peace and tranquility and freedom it works within them, setting them free from terrors and spectres, and portents, from vain hopes and superfluous desires, putting within them truth and understanding and truly purifying their souls, not by torch and squills, and such idle ceremonials but by right understanding, and truth and openmindedness" (Alexander the False Prophet, 25, 38, 47). Josephus mentions in a scornful manner that the Epicureans deny providence and the divine government of the world (Antiquities, X.7). In later rabbinical literature the word retained this stigma and was taken over in bulk by them as a common term of reproach for the unbelievers. Specifically the Hebrew transliteration of this word (the Greek name with the Hebraic plural) denoted one who refused to believe in the life after death or in the divine origin of the law and the prophets. The Jews applied this term to denote a freethinker, loose liver, and transgressor of the Mosaic law. In one place we read: "The apostates, the informers, and the apikorsim are punished in hell forever" (Norman W. DeWitt, Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism). Korah, who headed the movement against Moses, and the serpent who tempted Eve, are both described by the Hebrew commentators as Epicureans (Wallace, op.cit., p.260). Of interest is a reference by Dante. "In the sixth circle of his inferno the guide reveals a strange cemetery of lidless coffins. These were prepared for Epicurus and his followers. Within these coffins at the day of judgment their resurrected bodies were to be imprisoned under seal along with their souls to all eternity, and presumably subjected to the higher temperatures. Doomed to a tortured immortality" (Norman W. DeWitt, Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism). Adds DeWitt: "Dare one utter without irony the prayer requiescat in pace?" (Loc.cit.).

> how Epicurus bids his friends to rest content with simple fare. Costly fare only gives a character of variety and multiplicity to the enjoyment which it cannot increase.[85]

The Epicurean ethics attempted to inculcate plain living, not as a duty, but as a pleasure.[86] Such moral living was one of the reasons for the large following Epicurean dogma enjoyed.[87] But too often followers overstepped the basic principles of the founder of the sect. Gluttony and greed were often the case, instead of moderation.[88] This is natural for "even if the pleasure Epi-

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85. Wallace, op.cit., p.51.

86. Gregory Nazianzen speaks of Epicurus in a fairer tone than some critics, by showing that by his temperate life the pleasures Epicurus preached were not the vulgar delights of licence (Carm. Iamb., XVII). "We ought, says Epicurus, to be on our guard against any dishes, which, though we are eagerly desirous of them beforehand; yet leave no sense of gratification behind after we have enjoyed them" Porphyry, De Abstinentia, I.53). "This fellow is bringing in a new philosophy: he preaches hunger, and disciples follow him. They get but a single roll, a dried fig to relish, and water to wash it down" (Philemon in Clem.Alex., Strom., II.493).

87. "Again, as to the question asked, why so many men are Epicureans, though it is not the only reason, the thing that most attracts the crowd is the belief that Epicurus declares right conduct and moral worth to be intrinsically and of themselves delightful, which means productive of pleasure" (Cicero, De Finibus, I.7).

88. This is exemplified in Athenaeus where a man in his gluttony hastily ate an eel and then a hot flat-cake and almost burned up inside (VII.298). Further lack of moderation is shown by the same author where we read: "With Epicurus there is no libation, no preliminary offering to the gods. On the contrary, it is like what Simonides says of the lawless woman: 'Ofttimes she eats up the offerings before they are consecrated'" (V.179). "Of Epicurus, Timon says in his Satires, third book: 'Indulging his belly, than which nothing is more greedy'. For it was, in fact, for the sake of the belly and the pleasures of the flesh in general that this man flattered Idomeneus and Metrodorus" (Athenaeus, VII.279F).

curus meant was not one what vulgar sensualists understood by the word, the name was one that did not repel that numerous class who could not understand why happiness should be treated as intrinsically meritorious."[89] The attraction of profligates perhaps caused Cicero to remark that the whole book of Epicurus was a brimful of pleasures and should be flung away.[90] The Epicureans were often accused of voluptuary living.[91] Lucian cleverly satirizes them on two occasions. In personifying Epicureanism he says:

> Epicurean, I want you now. Who will buy him? He is a pupil of the laughter yonder and of the drunkard, both of whom we put up a short time ago. In one way, however, he knows more than they, because he is more impious. Besides, he is agreeable and fond of good eating.[92]

And in his discussion on the parasite Lucian writes:

> Again, it is not only in this way that pleasure is foreign to Epicurus, but in another way. This

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89. Wallace, op.cit., p.240. Seneca writes: "So I am all the more glad to repeat the distinguished words of Epicurus, in order that I may prove to those who have recourse to him through a bad motive, thinking that they will have in him a screen for their own vices, that they must live honorably no matter what school they follow" (Epistulae, XXI.9).

90. Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, III.44.

91. Writes Plutarch: "Thus the Epicureans reproach the other philosophers, that by their wisdom they bereave man of his life; whilst the others on the contrary accuse them of teaching men to live degenerately and like beasts" (Against Colotes, 2). The Epicurean philosopher Diogenes is mentioned by Athenaeus as follows: "Well, Alexander paid him high regard, although he lived a depraved life, and moreover had a slanderous and bitter tongue, not even sparing the royal house if he could provoke a laugh" (Athenaeus, V.211).

92. Lucian, Philosophies for Sale, 19.

> Epicurus, whoever the learned gentleman is, either has or has not his daily bread. Now if he has not, it is not a question of living a life of pleasure. He will not live! But if he has, he gets it either from his own larder or that of someone else. Now if he gets his daily bread from someone else, he is a parasite and not what he calls himself; but if he gets it from his own larder, he will not lead a life of pleasure.[93]

This doctrine appealed, then, both to those who saw in it a way to live nobly and simply in the midst of confusion and to those who saw in this creed an excuse for "riotous living". But between the Epicurean voluptuary and the Epicurean ascetic "neither popular opinion nor serious legislation was likely to make a distinction."[94]

Another appealing factor in favor of Epicureanism was the remarkable harmony which prevailed within the school.[95] No wonder that it has often been compared with the early Christian Church. "Self-centered without selfishness, kindly without intensity or passion, wise without pedantry, Epi-

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93. Lucian, The Parasite, 12.

94. Norman W. DeWitt, Notes on the History of Epicureanism, p.172. Julius Caesar enacted laws against both riotous living and new collegia (Suet., Jul., 43). It is likely that both of these resulted in the dispersal of the Epicureans.

95. The value of friendship became a tradition, and veneration of the founder, in his life-time found eloquent expression, and later also, in the verses of Lucretius. Cf. Kuriai Doxai, 27. Cicero remarks: "Yet Epicurus in a single house and that a small one maintained a whole company of friends, united by the closest sympathy and affection; and this still goes on in the Epicurean school"(De Finibus, I. 20). And Seneca: "It was not the classroom of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaenus (Epistulae, VI.6).

curus naturally had many friends and adherents."[96] Cicero and Lucian both comment on this characteristic of Epicurus--a characteristic which must have been appealing to many besides themselves.[97]

Hadzits summarizes the practical doctrine of Epicureanism as follows, which further brings forth secrets of their successes and popular appeal:

> All matters of dispute aside, Epicureanism soon came to mean to all men 1) a physical doctrine of atomism; 2) an ethical philosophy that regarded 'pleasure' as the summum bonum; 3) a denial of immortality; 4) a new interpretation of religion that conceived of gods as far removed from this world and, far from exercising Providence toward mankind, as quite indifferent to our happiness or to our suffering.[98]

Lactantius in his Divine Institutes (III.17) enumerates a number of secondary causes which may account for the spread and appeal of "the Garden" philosophy:

> It tells the ignorant they need study no literature; it releases the niggardly from the duties of public beneficence; it forbids the loun-

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96. Wallace, op.cit., p.240.

97. Cicero writes: "And to my mind the fact that Epicurus himself was a good man and that many Epicureans both have been and today are loyal to their friends, consistent and high-principled throughout their lives, ruling their conduct by duty and not by pleasure--all this does but enforce the value of moral goodness and diminish that of pleasure" (De Finibus, II.25). "...and, suppose I resist the Epicureans, that crowd of friends of my own, so worthy and so affectionate a set of men" (Cicero, Academica, II. 36). Lucian relates: "The followers of Aristippus and Epicurus were in the highest favor among the heroes because they are pleasant and agreeable and jolly good fellows" (A True Story, II.18).

98. Hadzsits, op.cit., p.13.

> ger to serve the State, the sluggard to work, and the coward to fight. The godless are told that the gods are indifferent; the selfish and malevolent is ordered to give nothing to any one--because the wise man does everything for his own sake. The recluse hears the praises of solitude; and the miser learns that life can be supported on water and polenta. The man who hates his wife is presented with a list of the blessings of celibacy; the parent of a worthless offspring hears how good a thing is childlessness; the children of impious parents are told that there is no natural obligation upon them. The weak and luxurious are reminded that pain is the worst of all evils; and the brave man, that the sage is happy even in tortures. Those who are ambitious are bidden to court the sovereign; and those who shrink from worry are directed to avoid the place.

Plutarch, as did many others, saw no influential men stemming from this group:

> But out of the school of Epicurus, and from among those who follow his doctrine, I will not ask what tyrant-killer has proceeded, nor yet what man valiant and victorious in feats of arms, what lawgiver, what prince, what counselor, or what governors of the people; neither will I demand, who of them has been tormented or has died for supporting right and justice.[99]

Opponents to the system of Epicurus find apt expression for their contempt of Epicurus in the words of Alexander the false prophet: (About Epicurus, moreover, he delivered himself of an oracle after this sort; when someone asked him how Epicurus was doing in Hades), he replied: "With leaden fetters on his feet in filthy mire he sitteth."[100]

In spite of hostility to his teachings, the creed had

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99. Against Colotes, 33.
100. Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet, 25.

tremendous popular appeal. Throughout the Mediterranean regions from Italy to Mesopotamia, from Pontus to Egypt, this hedonistic system found favor with millions. Its appeal was so wide that hardly a person could fail to find something which did not meet with his approval. Rich and poor alike saw in Epicureanism a light in a world of darkness.

It took more than human strength to oppose this philosophy and emerge victorious. With the help of the Holy Spirit Paul did this. Although this chapter has pointed out the extent, influence, and appeal of Epicureanism, the original question of this thesis still remains unanswered: Are there any Epicurean catchwords in the Pauline letters, Epicurean catchwords employed by St. Paul in his dealings with this philosophy?

II. The Ethical System of Epicureanism

A. Pleasure--the Alpha and Omega of a Blessed Life.

What was for Plato and Aristotle a part of an entire philosophic system became for the Epicureans the central problem of their thinking. Aimed at giving mankind a peace which the world could neither give nor remove, this philosophy of salvation stressed human happiness as the chief good and subordinated everything else to this--metaphysical speculation, justice, virtue, learning, the arts, and culture in general. The extreme measures taken to obtain the chief good mark the teachings of Epicurus as a reaction to the unreasoning conservatism of the past, which had suggested no amelioration to the individual as an individual. The goal of all human happiness for Epicurus was the greatest amount of pleasure in the long run.[1] Pleasure was the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Diogenes Laertius writes:

> It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge every good thing. And since pleasure is our first and native good, for that reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but ofttimes pass over many pleasures

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1. Cf. Athenaeus, VII.279A, 280A; Cicero, De Finibus, I.9 (Compare Sophocles, Antigone, 1165ff.).

> when a greater annoyance ensues from them. And oft-times we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us a consequence of greater pleasure.[2]

By measuring one pleasure against the other, calculating the advantages and disadvantages, one formulated an opinion.[3] However, Epicurus is careful to point out that pleasure as the chief good and ultimate aim in life does not mean the pleasures of the profligate and the prodigal.[4]

In his treatise On the Ethical End, Epicurus writes: "I know not how to conceive the good, apart from the pleas-

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2. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.129. Cf. Cicero, De Finibus, I.10; Athenaeus, XII.546F-547A (Compare Plutarch, Moralia, 1088 B where Metrodorus uses the same words for physical pleasure). Wallace comments: "Many before Epicurus had condemned pleasure and opposed it to virtue... Some said and asserted an incompatibility of pleasure and virtue ... Pleasure was the concomitant of action when the perfect agent found a perfect medium for his action. But the character of the active power made a profound difference in the estimate to be formed of the pleasure. There were higher pleasures and there were lower pleasures. This distinction of the worth or worthiness of different pleasures rests upon the presumption that there is a hierarchical system of ends in life, that some acts or things are intrinsically worth more than others, quite apart from the pleasure which individuals may derive from them" (Wallace, op.cit., pp. 136-137). "The word pleasure is rather vague. It denotes not merely the abstract and general relation in virtue of which an act or object is termed pleasant, but also the particular objects or acts themselves which give pleasure to some, or perhaps to the majority of mankind" (Ibid., p. 140). "The individual susceptible to pains and pleasures is the starting-point and the standard. Nothing exists outside him which should thwart and check the claims of his person to enjoyment, nothing of an ideal kind, at any rate" (Ibid., p.139).

3. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.130.

4. Cf. Cicero, De Finibus, I.10. "Epicurus used to say only what I am saying now. If everybody lived the life which I am living, nobody would be a profligate or an adulterer--no, not one" (Athenaeus, VII.279 C).

ures of taste, sexual pleasure, the pleasures of sound and the pleasures of beautiful form."[5] Again, to quote Athenaeus on the words of Epicurus: "The beginning and root of all good is the satisfaction of the belly and all wise and notable things have in this their standard of reference."[6] Metrodorus, a devoted pupil of Epicurus, wrote Timocrates: "Yes, Timocrates, devoted to the study of nature as you are, it is indeed the belly, the belly and nothing else, which any philosophy that proceeds according to nature makes its whole concern."[7]

The Epicureans, in the interest of gastronomy, emphasized a simple table and proper tablemates. Epicurus himself practised this.[8] Diocles speaks of the Epicureans

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5. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.6. Compare Athenaeus, XII.546 E where is added: καὶ τὰς διὰ μορφῆς καὶ ὄψιν ἡδείας κινήσεις. Also cf. Athenaeus, VII.280 A and for a shorter version, VII.278 F. Compare Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, III.41. Wallace comments: "Of course this does not mean that pleasure merely lies in these things. But it does assert that a pleasure from which they have all been excluded as unreal and incompatible, is to Epicurus an impossible and fanciful conception--a mere dream of the idealist. It is here that Epicurus is directing his remarks against the idealist philosophers, who made their heaven a life of intellectual vision of truth" (Wallace, op.cit., pp. 154-155). It may be that Epicurus is merely enumerating four typical examples of intense pleasures under the heads of the four senses: taste, touch, hearing, and seeing.

6. Athenaeus, VII.280 A.

7. Ibid., VII.279 A (Cf. Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I. 40).

8. "Epicurus, the Gargettian, cried aloud and said: 'To whom a little is not enough, nothing is enough. Give me a barley cake and water, and I am ready to vie even with Zeus in happiness" (Aelian, Var.Hist., IV.13). "Send me a little pot of cheese, that, when I like, I may fare sumptuously" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.11).

as living a very simple and frugal life, and with Bato calls them "water-drinkers".[9] Seneca's description of the Garden hospitality represents ideal Epicurean views and practices:

> Go to his Garden and read the motto carved there: "Stranger, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure." The caretaker of that abode, a kindly host, will be ready for you; he will welcome you with barley meal and serve you water also in abundance, with these words: "Have you not been well entertained?" "This Garden", he says, "does not whet your appetite; it quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst by a natural cure--a cure that demands no fee. This is the pleasure in which I have grown old."[10]

Prior to the search for something to eat, one should find proper tablemates. "To feed without a friend is the life of a lion and a wolf."[11]

The ἡ τῆς γαστρὸς ἡδονή view brought much censure to the Epicureans. Chrysippus claims that Archestratus, the "forerunner of Epicurus and those who adopt his doctrine of pleasure", is the cause of all corruption.[12] Athenaeus, on the other hand, views the Gastrology of Archestratus as a noble epic which all philosophies given to hearty eating claim as their Theognis.[13] He further states that propriety and understanding must be exercised if

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9. "At all events they were content with half a pint of thin wine and were, for the rest, thorough-going water drinkers" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.11). "Your water drinking makes you useless to the state; whilst by my potations I increase the revenue" (Bato in Athenaeus, IV.163).
10. Seneca, Epistulae, XXI.10.
11. Loc.cit.
12. Athenaeus, VII.278.
13. Ibid., VII.104.

gratification is to be derived from eating.[14] Timocrates, the prodigal son of the Garden, asserts:

> ...that Epicurus vomited twice a day from over-indulgence, and goes on to say that he himself had much ado to escape from those notorious midnight philosophisings and the confraternity with all its secrets; further, that Epicurus' acquaintance with philosophy was small and his acquaintance with life even smaller; that his bodily health was pitiful, so much so that for many years he was unable to rise from his chair; and that he spent a whole mina daily on his table.[15]

We have no proof as to the validity of this assertion.

Contrary to popular opinion,[16] the Epicureans frowned upon sexual promiscuity. "No one was ever the better for sexual indulgence, and it is well if he be not the worse."[17] According to Epicurean ethics, the man who is truly wise will neither fall in love, nor marry and rear a family, although marriage is permitted under certain conditions.[18]

One need not be rich to experience pleasure.[19] Stress

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14. Ibid., VII.102.
15. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.6-7. Plutarch mentions that Epicurus was afflicted with dropsy (Moralia, 1097 E).
16. "But to divert fair achievements to pleasure as their final end, and then to sport and wanton at the head of Aphrodite's train, as a sequel to wars and fightings, was not worthy of the noble Academy, nor yet of one who would follow Xenocrates, but rather of one who leaned towards Epicurus" (Plutarch, Lives: Lucullus and Cimon, I. 3).
17. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.118.
18. Ibid., X.119.
19. "Happiness and blessedness do not consist in vast possessions or exalted occupations or offices or authority, but on impassivity, calmness, and a disposition of the soul that sets its limitations to accord with nature" (Plutarch, Moralia: How to Study Poetry, 97)(Cf. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.139, 141, 144).

on the value of a simple life indicates this. Riches profit nothing.[20] Riches according to nature are of limited extent, easily procured, but the wealth craved after by vain fancies knows neither end nor limit.[21] Man's greatest riches, states Lucretius, is to live on a little with contented mind, for a little is never lacking.[22] Athenaeus eulogizes Epicurus with these words:

> Ye toil, O men, for paltry things and incessantly begin strife and war for gain; but nature's wealth extends to a moderate bound, whereas vain judgments have a limitless range. This message Neocles' wise son heard from the Muses or from the sacred tripod at Delphi.[23]

The summum bonum for Epicurus was not only the positive enjoyment of pleasure, but also the absence of pain.[24] Again, to quote Epicurus:

> When once the pain arising from deficiency has been removed, the pleasure in the flesh admits of no further augmentation, but only of variation; and similarly the limit of the pleasure of the mind is

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20. "If you wish to make Pythocles rich, do not add to his store of money, but subtract from his desires" (Seneca, Epistulae, XXI.8). "Wherefore since treasures profit nothing for our body, nor noble birth nor the glory of royalty, therewithal we must think that for the mind also they are unprofitable" (Lucretius, II.37-39).

21. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.144-146.

22. Lucretius, V.1117-1119.

23. Athenaeus, Anth.Plan., IV.43 (quoted in Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.12).

24. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.131-132; Lucretius, II.20-21. "The pleasure we pursue is not that kind alone which directly affects our physical being with a delightful feeling, a positively agreeable perception of the senses; on the contrary, the greatest pleasure according to us is that which is experienced as a result of the complete removal of pain (Cicero, De Finibus, X.6).

> reached, when the causes of our principal mental fears have been removed.[25]

The devoted Epicureans calmly viewed intense pain as being of short duration, while continual pain had no magnitude and therefore was no problem.[26] Even on the rack the wise man is happy.[27]

Epicurus placed supreme value on the love of friends in human society. "Of all the treasures that wisdom secures for the blessedness of the well-rounded life, the greatest is the possession of friendship."[28] A wise man, according to Epicurus, alone will feel gratitude (χάρις) towards friends, present and absent alike, and will show it by word and deed.[29] On occasion he will die for a friend.[30]

Antiquity was almost unanimous in its praise of the

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25. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.144.
26. Ibid., X.140. "And on the words of Aeschylus, Fear not, great stress of pain is not for long, we ought to remark that this is the oft repeated and much admired statement originating with Epicurus, namely, 'that great pains shortly spend their force, and long continued pains have no magnitude'" (Plutarch, Moralia: How to Study Poetry, 36).
27. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.118.
28. Ibid., X.148.
29. Ibid., X.118. "Love goes dancing around the world, proclaiming to us all to awake to the blessedness of the happy life" (Vatican Collection, 52). "Of all the treasures that wisdom secures for the blessedness of the well-rounded life, the greatest is the possession of love" (Ibid., 13). As regards a wise man: "...nor will he punish his servants; rather he will pity them and make allowance on occasion for those who are of good character" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.118). "As regards women, he [the wise man] will submit to the restrictions imposed by the law" (Loc.cit.).
30. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120.

friendly affection which prevailed in the communities of the Epicureans.[31] Such a prevailing spirit of friendship knitted its members together in every part of the world. A common life supplemented a common doctrine. Such practice emphasized the "better to give than to receive" concept,[32] but did not tolerate communism.[33]

Christianity also placed heavy emphasis on the value of friendship. Yet the Christian motive for helping one's neighbor was foreign to the Epicurean. Epicurean friendship was based upon utility. Fellowship helps to lighten sorrows and heighten joys. It is, in the final analysis, prompted by one's needs. How antithetical to Christianity's concept of love.[34]

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31. Cf. Cicero, Academica, II.115; De Finibus, I.20.65. "The followers of Aristippus and Epicurus were in the highest favor among the heroes because they are pleasant and agreeable and jolly men" (Lucian, A True Story, II.18).

32. "And yet Epicurus, who places happiness in the deepest quiet, as in a sheltered and landlocked harbor, says that it is not only nobler, but also more pleasant, to confer than to receive benefits. For chiefest joy doth gracious kindness give" (Plutarch, Moralia, 778 C).

33. Epicurus rejected the suggestion of communism as savoring of distrust and as laying a restraint on freewill offerings (Wallace, op.cit., p.62).

34. Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "The Epicurean Doctrine of Gratitude", American Journal of Philology, Vol. LVIII, 1937, pp. 320-328.

B. The Nature of God

If materialistic considerations were so important to the achievement of the summum bonum, what was the Epicurean attitude toward God and religion? The answer is a simple one if one bears in mind that to attain the highest pleasure, the Epicurean sought to rid himself of all fears, two in particular: the fear of the gods and the fear of death.

Lucretius, the Latin exponent of Epicureanism, looks on religion as oppressive and repressive.[35] The burden of religion, threatening prodigals with punishment and evil-

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35. "When man's life lay for all to see foully grovelling upon the ground, crushed beneath the weight of religion, which displayed her head in the regions of heaven, threatening mortals from on high with horrible aspect, a man of Greece was the first that dared to uplift mortal eyes against her" (Lucretius, I.62-66). "For if men saw that a limit has been set to tribulation, they would have some degree of strength to defy religious fears and the threatenings of the priests" (Ibid., I.107-109). "Whereas on the contrary too often it is that very religion which has brought forth criminal and impious deeds" (Ibid., I. 82-83). "...and I proceed to loose the mind from the close knots of religion" (Ibid., I.932). "Do not nations and peoples tremble, do not proud kings huddle up their limbs smitten with fear of the gods, lest for some base deed or proud word the solemn time of punishment be now at hand?" (Ibid., V.1222-1225). "Besides, whose mind does not shrink up with fear of the gods?" (Ibid., V.1218). Compare Cicero who states: "...and so have saddled us with an eternal master, whom day and night we are to fear; for who would not fear a prying busybody of a god, who foresees and thinks of and notices all things, and deems that everything is his concern... But what value can be assigned to a philosophy which thinks that everything happens by fate?" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.20).

doers with justice, had to be removed. Religion engendered fear and presented a block to the attainment of pleasure. To the Epicurean who sought a materialistic, self-centered, and individualistic way of life, religion had no place.

But the Epicurean attack on religion is not justified. Without the influence of religion, civil and moral conditions would become unspeakable. Plutarch writes:

> When then will our life become savage, unsocial, and bestial? When the laws being taken away, there shall be left doctrines inciting men to pleasure; when the world shall be thought not to be ruled and governed by Divine Providence; when those men shall be esteemed wise who spit at honesty if it is not joined with pleasure; and when such discourses and sentences as these shall be scoffed at and derided: "For justice had an eye which all things sees", and again: "God near us stands, and views whate'er we do", and once more: "God, as antiquity has delivered to us, holding the beginning, middle and end of the universe, makes a direct line, walking according to nature. After him follows justice, a punisher of those who have been deficient in their duties by transgressing the divine law." For they who contemn these things as if they were fable, and think that the sovereign good of man consists about the belly, and in those other avenues by which pleasure is admitted, are such as stand in need of the law, and fear, and stripes, and some king, prince, or magistrate, having in his hand the sword of justice.[36]

Contrary to the views of many, removal of the fear of the gods did not mean that the Epicureans denied their existence.[37] Epicurus and Lucretius both accepted their

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36. Plutarch, Against Colotes, 30.

37. "Had but Epicurus learnt that twice two are four, he certainly would not talk like that; but while making his palate the test of the chief good, he forgets to lift up his eyes to what Ennius calls the palate of the sky" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, II.18).

existence.[38] But ultilitarianism and expediency rather than devotion and spiritual motivation prompted them to acknowledge the existence of the gods.

Although the Epicureans admitted existence of gods, worshipped the gods of the community and of the age, participated in the observance of festival pageantry, and instituted services to commemorate the names of some of the beloved dead;[39] yet they so minimized the importance of the gods and so emptied belief in them of practical significance, that in popular opinion the Epicureans were regarded as anti-Providential.[40] Admitting the existence of the gods

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38. "The wise man will set up votive images" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120). "There are gods but not such as the multitude believes" (Ibid., X.123). "Positive evidence for the belief that the gods did show favor or partiality to human beings is evidenced by no less an authority than Lucretius (I.26-27). What is more, he prays for the favor of Venus for himself (I.24,40), and peace for mankind; and this fact is a block of stumbling which alone might cause the advocates of divine indifference to step varily" (Norman W. DeWitt, "The New Piety of Epicurus", p.84). "For nature, which bestowed upon us the idea of the gods themselves..." (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.17).

39. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120, writes: "The wise man will also feel grief."

40. "As for the scoffing and sneers of the Epicureans, which they dare to employ against Providence also, calling it nothing but a myth, we need have no fear. We, on the other hand, say that their 'Infinity' is a myth, which among so many worlds has not one that is directed by divine reason, but will have them all produced by spontaneous generation and concreation" (Plutarch, Moralia, 420 B). "An atheist, and an Epicurean--which indeed, was their strongest term of abuse" (Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet, 46). "How do they acknowledge the gods? Even in the same manner as they do an oath, prayer, and sacrifice, and the adoration of the gods. Thus they adore by word and mouth, only naming and feigning that which they by their

may be expedient, in a large measure, to avoid public reproach.[41]

Epicurus denied the validity of divination, rejected "the stone age doctrine of bargain and barter by means of vow and sacrifice", and paid no reverence to dreams and oracles.[42] Lucian's account of the hostility of Alexander the false prophet to both the Epicureans and the Christians beautifully exemplifies this.[43] It is no wonder that the

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principles they totally take away and abolish" (Plutarch, Against Colotes, 11). Cf. Lucretius, V.1; Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.54).

41. "He [the wise man] will pay just as much regard to his reputation as not to be looked down upon" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120). "I personally am acquainted with Epicureans who worship every paltry image, albeit I am aware that according to some people's views Epicurus really abolished the gods, but nominally retained them in order not to offend the people of Athens. Thus the first of his selected aphorisms or maxims, which you call the Kyriai Doxai, runs I believe thus: That which is blessed and immortal neither experiences trouble nor causes it to anyone" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.30). "It is doubtless therefore true to say, as the good friend of us all, Posidonius, argued in the fifth book of his On the Nature of the Gods, that Epicurus does not really believe in the gods at all, and that he said what he did about the immortal gods only for the sake of deprecating popular odium" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.44). "...he [Epicurus] only does not venture to deny their existence so that he may not encounter any ill feeling of reproach" (Ibid., III.1).

42. Norman W. DeWitt, "The New Piety of Epicurus", p.80. Cf. Vatican Collection, 24. Also cf. Plutarch, Against Colotes, 11.

43. "On the first day, as at Athens, there is a proclamation, worded as follows: 'If any atheist, or Christian, or Epicurean has come to spy upon the rites, let him be off and let those who believe in the god perform the mysteries under the blessing of heaven.' Then, at the very outset, there was an expulsion in which he took the lead, saying: 'Out with the Christians', and the whole multitude chanted in response: 'Out with the Epicureans'" (Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet, 38). "An Epicurean rebuked Alexander.

Epicureans would also oppose St. Paul who preached of Christ, prophesied by men in days of old, revealed by God in His Word, and proclaimed by disciples who were led by the Holy Spirit.

Prayers and vows, as envisioned by the Epicureans, were out of place. The gods are neither weak enough to be biased by human offers, nor malicious enough to seek to injure man. Aloof from the world, they live for themselves and do not care for man.[44] Beyond the pressure and problems of this world, the gods enjoy perfect happiness and blessedness.[45] Wholly in harmony with themselves by reason of their particular virtues, welcoming those like themselves, and regarding all that is not such as alien, the

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Indignant at the exposure and unable to hear the truth of the reproach, [he] told the bystanders to stone him, or else they themselves would be accursed and would bear the name of Epicureans" (Ibid., 45).

44. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.207. "For the very nature of divinity must necessarily enjoy immortal life in the deepest peace, far removed and separated from our troubles; for without any pain, without danger, itself mighty by its own resources, needing us not at all, it is neither propitiated with service nor touched by wrath" (Lucretius, II. 646-651). "...also engraved on our minds the belief that they are eternal and blessed. If this is so, the famous maxim of Epicurus truthfully enunciates that 'that which is blessed and eternal can neither know trouble itself nor cause trouble to another, and accordingly cannot feel either anger or favor, since all such things belong only to the weak'" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.17).

45. The gods have no abode in the visible universe: their abodes, like their bodies, are attenuated. They did not make the world for man. What profit could it bring to them or us? (Cf. Lucretius, V.146-175). Wallace comments: "Epicurean heaven was the perfect blessedness of the gods. There was no Epicurean hell" (Wallace, op.cit., p.203).

gods have a sort of fellowship to offer to good men, but have no dealings with evil doers.[46]

Eliminating belief in divine providence, Epicurus sought to free mankind from superstition and fear which is so often a concomitant with religion.[47] In his Letter to Herodotus Epicurus discusses man's relation to the celestial beings:

> And besides all these matters in general we must grasp this point, that the principal disturbance in the minds of men arises because they think that these celestial bodies are blessed and immortal, and yet have wills and actions and motives inconsistent with these attributes; and because they are always expecting or imagining some everlasting misery, such as is described in legends, or even fear the loss of feeling in death as though it would concern them themselves: and again, because they are brought to this pass not by reasoned opinion, but rather by some irrational presentiment, and therefore, as they do not know the limits of pain, they suffer a disturbance equally great or even more extensive than if they had reached this belief by opinion. But peace of mind (ἡ ἀταραξία) is being delivered from all this, and having a

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46. Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "The New Piety of Epicurus", pp. 87-88.

47. "If we sought to attain nothing else beside piety in worshipping the gods and freedom from superstition, what has been said had sufficed; since the exalted nature of the gods, being both eternal and supremely blessed, would receive man's pious worship (for what is highest commands the reverence that is its due); and furthermore, all fear of the divine power or divine anger would have been banished (since it is understood that anger and favor alike are excluded from the nature of a being at once blessed and immortal, and that these being eliminated we are menaced by no fears in regard to the powers above)" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.17). "But Epicurus has set us free from superstitious terrors and delivered us out of captivity, so that we have no fear of beings who, we know, create no trouble for themselves, and seek to cause none to others, while we worship with pious reverence the transcendent majesty of nature" (Ibid., I.20).

> constant memory of the general and most essential principles.[48]

Lucretius, in keeping with the spirit of his teacher, writes:

> Unless you spew all these errors out of your mind, and put from you thoughts unworthy of the gods and alien to their peace, their holy divinity impaired by you will often do you harm; not that supreme power of the gods is open to insult, so that it should in wrath thirst to inflict sharp vengeance, but because you yourself will imagine that they, who are quiet in their placid peace, are rolling great billows of wrath, you will not be able to approach their shrines with placid heart, you will not have the strength to receive with tranquil peace of spirit the images which are carried to men's minds from their bodies, declaring what the divine shapes are.[49]

Such a view which explained away the popular religion and theology was one of the most striking, but also one of the darkest in the Epicurean system.[50] Denying the providence of God they removed the fear of God from their lives, but only at the expense of losing the love of God also. To the Apostle of the Gentiles, fired with the message of the Cross, such action cost more than it was worth. Paul most certainly opposed this philosophical religion which looked upon man as the beginning and end of his own salvation.

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48. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.81-82.
49. Lucretius, VI.68-78.
50. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.107.

C. The Universe: Its Making and its Meaning

If the gods do exist, but are separate from, and indifferent to, mankind, what role if any did they play in the creation of the world?

Without divine revelation the ancient pagans appealed to the world of nature, its harmony and beauty, as a proof for the working of a divine plan. Against Velleius Cicero wrote:

> Then you censured those who argued from the splendor of the beauty of creation, and who, observing the world itself, and the parts of the world, the sky and earth and sea, and the sun, moon, and stars that adorn them, and discovering the laws of the seasons and their periodic successions, conjectured that there must exist some supreme and transcendent being who had created these things, and who imparted motion to them and guided and governed them.[51]

Lucretius and Plutarch also refer to this argument from nature.[52]

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51. Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.36. Also, "...for according to your school nothing in the universe was caused by design" (Ibid., I.32).

52. "But some in opposition to this, knowing nothing of matter, think that without the gods' power nature cannot with so exact conformity to the plans of mankind change the seasons of the year, and produce crops, and in a world all else which divine pleasure, the guide of life, persuades men to approach... But when they imagine the gods to have arranged all for the sake of men, they seem to have departed widely from true reasoning every way" (Lucretius, II.167-179). "And now Epicurus comes to your aid, apparently with what he said or wrote three hundred years ago; but it does not seem to you that the god, unless he should transport himself and incorporate himself into everything and be merged with everything, could initiate movement or cause anything to happen to any existent object" (Plutarch, Moralia, 398 C).

In answer to this argument Lucretius points to the world's flaws and imperfections, claiming that the world is too ill-adjusted to be worthy of divine creation.[53] Epicurus, to preserve the full majesty of the gods, writes:

> Furthermore, the motions of the heavenly bodies and their turnings and eclipses and risings and settings and kindred phenomena to these, must not be thought to be due to any being who controls and ordains or has ordained them and at the same time enjoys perfect bliss together with immortality (for trouble and care and anger and kindness are not consistent with a life of blessedness, but these things come to pass where there is weakness and fear and dependence on neighbors). Nor again must we believe that they, which are but fire agglomerated in a mass, possess blessedness and voluntarily take upon themselves these movements. But we must preserve their full majestic significance in all expressions which we apply to such conceptions, in order that there may not arise out of them opinions contrary to this notion of majesty. Otherwise this very contradiction will cause the greatest disturbance in men's souls.[54]

The maxim Ex nihilo nihil fit occupies a prominent position in the Epicurean system. Consequently, both creation and annihilation are equally impossible. Throughout the whole of his explanation of the origin of the world, Epicurus carefully excludes any reference to divine

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53. To say that for men's sake the gods had the will to prepare the glorious structure of the universe, and that therefore it is an admirable work of the gods is to Lucretius the assertion of a fool (Lucretius, V.156-166). The world was not made for man by divine power: so great are the faults wherewith it stands endowed (cf. Ibid., V.195-199). For an almost exact parallel, compare Lucretius, II.177-181.

54. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.77.

action.[55] There was neither design nor predetermined plan to the world, a teaching clearly echoed by Lucretius.[56]

It is here that the physical system enters the realm of the ethical. The world came into existence, not by design, but by a chance movement of the atoms.[57] Atomism, by tradition founded by Leucippus and developed by Democritus, provided Epicurus with the necessary metaphysic to construct his hedonistic materialism.[58] Oates observes:

> Such cardinal beliefs as that "nothing can come from nothing" and that "all that exists is atoms and void" had strong empirical sanction and by very convincing rational arguments integrated well with the notion that pleasure is the highest human good.[59]

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55. "Nothing is created out of that which does not exist; for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds" (Ibid., X.39). "For he who taught us all the rest has also taught us that the world was made by nature, without needing an artificer to construct it, and that the act of creation, which according to you cannot be performed without divine skill, is so easy, that nature will create, is creating, and has created worlds without number" (Velleius against Cotta in Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.20).

56. Cf. Lucretius, V.855-861. "...that no thing is ever by divine power produced from nothing (nullam rem e nilo gigni divinitus umquam). For of a surety a great dread holds all mortals in bond, because they behold many things happening in heaven and earth whose causes they can by no means see, and they think them to be done by divine power (Ibid., I.150-154). "Therefore we must confess that nothing comes from nothing, since all things must have seed, from which each severally being created may be brought forth into the soft air" (Ibid., I.205-207). "For certainly it was no design in the first beginnings that led them to place themselves each in its own order with keen intelligence..." (Ibid., V.419-420).

57. Cf. Lucretius, V.187-194, 416-431.

58. Cicero calls Democritus the fountain from which Epicurus derived the streams that watered his little garden (De Natura Deorum, I.43). Cf. Ibid., I.6; I.23; I.25; Plutarch, Against Colotes, 3.

59. Whitney J. Oates, op.cit., p.xvii.

According to Epicurus, the atoms are solid, impenetrable, indivisible, and therefore indestructible.[60] One day the world will crash into ruins, but matter will not be destroyed.[61] The doctrine of the indestructibility of matter is fundamental to a proper understanding of the Epicurean ethical system.

One immediately raises the questions as to man's place in the universe and the relation of free will to determinism.

According to Lucretius, man comes from celestial seed.[62]

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60. To show that nothing is destroyed, Epicurus writes: "If that which disappears were destroyed into that which did not exist, all things would have perished, since that into which they were dissolved would not exist" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.39). Cf. Lucretius, I.221, 236, 239, 245.

61. "Add to this, that nature resolves everything again into its elements, and does not reduce things to nothing" (Lucretius, I.215-216). "Therefore things do not utterly pass away that seem to do so, since nature makes up again one thing from another, and suffers not one to be born, unless aided by another's death" (Ibid., I.262-264). "For that which once came from earth, to earth returns back again" (Ibid., I.999-1000). "Observe first of all sea and earth and sky, this threefold nature...one day shall consign to destruction, the mighty and complex systems of the universe, upheld through many years, shall crash into ruins" (Ibid., V.91-96). "Yet I do not forget how novel and strange it strikes the mind that destruction awaits the heavens and the earth, and how difficult it is for me to prove this by argument" (Ibid., V.97-99). "Wherefore let them believe as they please that earth and sky will remain incorruptible, given to trust to life everlasting" (Ibid., VI.601-602).

62. "We are all sprung from celestial seed; all have that same father, from whom our fostering mother earth receives liquid drops of water, and then teeming brings forth bright corn and luxuriant trees, and the race of mankind" (Lucretius, II.991-996). Likewise Epicurus: "We must believe that worlds, and indeed every limited compound body which continuously exhibits a similar appearance to the things we see, were created from the infinite, and that all such things,

Placed in a world where all creation groans for deliverance, man's life is one long struggle in the dark.[63]

The problem of necessity was of far greater importance to Epicurus. In following the atomic theory of Democritus, he was in danger of making freedom of the individual impossible. If man, as all nature, is merely a result of the chance collection of atoms and disappears when these atoms separate, then man would be subject to the atom. If Democritan atomism were completely followed such determinism would contradict Epicurus' philosophy of emancipation, liberation, and freedom of the individual. Man is his own master, states Epicurus, and as such must be able to move and act as he wills.[64]

To retain the spontaneity of individual action and the superiority of man to circumstances, and yet not deviate too far from the principles of Democritus, Epicurus introduced his teachings of the clinamen, or παρέγκλισις, of the molecules.[65] As the atoms are carried downward by their

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greater and less alike, were separated off from individual agglomerations of matter" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X. 73).

63. Lucretius, II.54. Compare Lucretius, V.195-215.

64. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.133.

65. "As for the outrageous doctrines of Democritus, or perhaps of his predecessor Leucippus, that there are certain minute particles, some smooth, others rough, some round, others angular, some curved or hook-shaped, and that heaven and earth were created from these, not by compulsion of any natural law, but by a sort of accidental colliding--this is the belief to which you, Gaius Velleius, have clung all your life long, and it would be easier to make you

own weight in a straight line through the void, they occasionally swerve a little from their course. This ability to swerve is the cause of freewill in living beings. This is, unquestionably, the weakest link in the entire chain of his argument. If you accept the teaching of the clinamen, the Epicurean ethical system is practically foolproof. Epicurus can produce no supporting evidence for his assumption of the παρέγκλισις, and consequently the whole structure falls if one refuses to accept this point.[66]

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alter all your principles of conduct than abandon the teachings of your master; for you made up your mind that Epicureanism claimed your allegiance before you learned these doctrines: so that you were faced with the alternative of either accepting these outrageous notions or surrendering the title of the school of your adoption" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.24). Cf. Cicero, De Finibus, I.19. Also Lucretius, II.217-220, 251, 257.

66. "This is a very common practice with your school. You advance a paradox, and then, when you want to escape censure, you adduce in support of it some absolute impossibility; so that you would have done better to abandon the point in dispute rather than to offer so shameless a defence. For instance, Epicurus saw that if the atoms travelled downwards by their own weight, we should have no freedom of the will, since the motion of the atoms would be determined by necessity. He therefore invented a device to escape from determinism. [The point had apparently escaped the notice of Democritus.] He said that the atom while travelling vertically downward by the force of gravity makes a slight swerve to one side. This defence discredits him more than if he had had to abandon his original position" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.25). Oates remarks: "How crucial it is to the system can be realized when we remember that it is the capacity to swerve which in the first place brings the atoms into contact with one another and secondly, it is this capacity which accounts for the phenomena of free will, the atom of the innermost soul 'swerving' and, by transmission of this motion, putting the body in action. One further difficulty deserves mention. The Epicurean must always be embarassed by the problem of

D. Death

1. Reasons why men fear death.
2. Relation of body and soul.
3. The soul is mortal.
4. The soul is dispersed at death.
5. Fear of death is abolished.

"Why does untimely death stalk about?" Quare mors inmatura vagatur?[67] Writers from antiquity to the present day have treated this subject. More directly, fear of death, as a concomitant of death itself, is discussed. Why is death to be feared? Where does such fear lead men?

Epicurus and Lucretius were careful to point out a number of actions and conditions resulting from the fear of death.[68] Avarice and lust for fame are fanned by this fear.[69] Dreading death, men often choose suicide and dash madly towards that very state they seek to avoid.[70]

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quality. It can never be an easy task to explain how an object which has such a quality as color can possess it if it is composed of atoms which merely have weight, shape, and solidity" (Whitney J. Oates, op.cit., p.xix).

67. Lucretius, V.221.

68. Lucretius describes the cruelty to which men go because of their fear of death (Lucretius, III.65-75).

69. "Moreover, avarice and the blind lust of distinction, which drive wretched men to transgress the bounds of law, and sometimes by sharing and scheming crime to strive night and day with exceeding toil and climb the pinnacle of power, these sores of life in no small degree are fed by the fear of death" (Ibid., III.59-64).

70. The wise man "when he has lost his sight, will not withdraw himself from life [i.e., by suicide] "(Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.119). "But in the world, at one time men shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time choose it as a respite from the evils of life" (Ibid., X.125). "And often it goes so far, that for fear of death men are seized by hatred of life and of seeing the light, so that with sorrowing heart they devise their own death,

Such a fear, along with the fear of the gods, stood in the way of the summum bonum. To eliminate this fear, Epicurus pointed out on the basis of his atomism that the soul was corporeal, mortal, and disintegrated at death.[71] By abolishing immortality, eliminating the fear of death, and inculcating a spirit of courage to meet death, Epicurus prepared the way for the carpe diem concept in his hedonism.[72] It is with this same thought in mind that Lucretius composed his De Natura Rerum. From the premise that nothing can come out of nothing, and that nothing exists save atoms and void, Lucretius constructed a rational process which endeavored to liberate men from fear. Oates comments: "Rarely, if ever, has a system been built which is so nearly water-tight."[73]

Since the Epicureans based their metaphysics on the

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forgetting that this fear is the fountain of all care" (Lucretius, III.79-82). "Epicurus says: 'It is absurd to run towards death because you are tired of life, when it is your manner of life that has made you run towards death.' Again: 'Men are so thoughtless, nay, so mad, that some, through fear of death, force themselves to die'" (Cicero, Epistulae, XXIV.23).

71. Lucretius, III, lines 526-829 deal with the mortality of the soul. "Now since in this case [when a man dies piecemeal] the spirit is divided and does not issue forth whole at one time, it must be held to be mortal" (Ibid., III.531-532). "The things that are told of the immortality of the soul and of the heavens are not the fictions of dreaming philosophers, or such incredible tales as the Epicureans mock at, but the conjecture of sensible men" (Cicero, The Republic, VI.3.3).

72. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.109.

73. Whitney J. Oates, op.cit., p.xix.

work of Democritus, they were logically bound to hold that the soul was also composed of atoms. A typical view is expressed in Epicurus' Letter to Herodotus:

> The soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure, and most resembling wind with a certain admixture of heat, and in some respects like to one of these and in some to the other. There is also the part which is many degrees more advanced even than these in fineness of composition, and for this reason is more capable of feeling in harmony with the rest of the structure as well... Furthermore, you must grasp that the soul possesses the chief cause of sensation; yet it could not have acquired sensation unless it were in some way enclosed by the rest of the structure.[74]

To the Epicurean the soul is composed of very fine atoms, or seeds, interlaced through the veins, flesh and sinews.[75] These fine particles composing the soul are fewer in number than the particles which compose the body, being a complex of air, fire, a vital wind, and a fourth unnamed element.[76]

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74. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.63.

75. "Accordingly, the whole spirit must consist of very small seeds, being interlaced through veins, flesh, and sinews" (Lucretius, III.216-217). "Wherefore again and again I say, we may understand the substance of mind and spirit to be made of very minute seeds, since in departing it takes nothing from the weight" (Ibid., III.229-230). "Even as commingled in our frame and in all our body the force of mind and the power of spirit lies hidden, because it is composed of small and scanty elements" (Ibid., III. 276-278).

76. "There is therefore within the body itself a heat and a vital wind which deserts our frame on the point of death" (Ibid., III.128-129). "For as the elements of spirit are much smaller than those which compose our body and flesh, so they are fewer also in number and are dispersed only at rare intervals through the frame" (Ibid., 374-377). "Do you not see also how the most thin essence of the spirit sustains our body for all its great weight, just because it is so joined together and knit up with it

The flesh (σάρξ) is, according to Epicurus, the natural and unconscious self in us and looks neither before nor after; it pines for nothing and has no prospects of coming joy. It is buried within itself.[77] To this σάρξ is joined the soul. From the moment of conception the two are inseparably bound together; their atoms being woven into one web and their union endowned with a common existence. The soul is dispersed through the entire body and is as much a part of man as the hand, the foot, or the eye.[78] Lucretius, however, pictures the body as the container, or the vessel, of the soul, a concept to be more thoroughly treated in the final chapter of this thesis.[79] The soul is impris-

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into one?" (Ibid., V.556-558). Cf. Ibid., III.241-245; and Stobaeus, Ecl., I.226.

77. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.154.

78. "Next, that you may recognize that the spirit also lies within the frame and that it is not harmony that causes the body to feel..." (Lucretius, III.117-118). "The rest of the spirit, dispersed abroad through the whole body, obeys and is moved according to the will and working of the intelligence" (Ibid., III.143-144). "This nature is contained in every body, being itself the body's guardian and source of its existence: they cling together with common roots, and manifestly they cannot be torn asunder without destruction" (Ibid., III.323-326). Cf. Ibid., III.161-162. "Undoubtedly because their first beginnings [mind and spirit] are held in by the whole body, commingled throughout veins and flesh, sinews and bones, and cannot leap freely apart through wide intervals" (Ibid., III.566-568). "This same reasoning teaches that the nature of mind and spirit is bodily" (Ibid., III.161-162). Lucretius, III.702-712 is a description of the spirit contained in and dispersed throughout the body. "Therefore when the mind so bestirs itself that it wishes to go and step forward, at once it strikes all the mass of spirit that is distributed abroad through limbs and frame in all the body" (Ibid., IV.885-888).

79. Cf. Ibid., III.434-442; III.554-557; V.134.

oned in the body and is mortal.[80]

According to Epicurus, disembodied spirit is an impossibility. The incorporeal is the same as the non-existent. Body and soul are indissolubly united in life and when separated death sets in for both.[81]

If the soul is mortal, what happens at death? Does it perish together with the body, "visit the gloom of Orcus and his vast chasms, or by divine ordinance find its way into animals in our stead"?[82] "No one awakens or rises whom the cold stoppage of life has once overtaken."[83] The soul, leaving the limbs cold in the chill of death,[84]

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80. "This same reasoning teaches that the nature of mind and spirit is bodily" (Lucretius, III.161-162). "Be so good as to apply both these names to the thing; and when for example I speak of spirit, showing it to be mortal, believe me to speak also of mind, inasmuch as it is one thing and a combined nature" (Ibid., III.421-424). "You must confess that the spirit is mortal" (Ibid., III.766-767). "Does it fear to remain imprisoned in a putrifying corpse?" (Ibid., III.773).

81. "Moreover, when the whole frame is broken up, the soul is scattered and has no longer the same powers as before, nor the same motions; hence it does not possess sentience either" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.65). "So it is not easy to draw out mind and spirit from the whole body without the dissolution of all" (Lucretius, III.329-330). "Nor thus I say can the frame endure disruption apart from the spirit which has left it; but it is utterly undone, torn to pieces along with it, and along with it rots away" (Ibid., III.344-346). "And in their discourses concerning the soul and the gods, they hold that the soul perishes when it is separated from the body, and that the gods concern not themselves in our affairs" (Plutarch, Against Colotes, 2). Compare Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I. 18; I.46.

82. Lucretius, I.115-117.

83. Ibid., III.928-930.

84. Ibid., III.398-401.

departs into the air, and is dispersed as mist or smoke.[85] When the body, as a containing vessel of the soul, has been shattered, the soul is dispersed and returns to its first elements.[86]

Death, then, to the Epicureans, is not to be feared. The doctrine of soul-mortality has prepared and conditioned the Epicurean to face death calmly and enjoy life while he has it. Epicurus writes:

> Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not. It is nothing then, either to the living or to the dead, for with the living it is not and the dead exist no longer.[87]

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85. "It follows therefore that the whole nature of the spirit is dissolved abroad like smoke into the high winds of the air..." (Ibid., III.455-456). For a similar thought, cf. Lucretius, III.598. Cf. Ibid., III.434-442. Plutarch records an interesting incident: "But Colotes, as if he were speaking to some ignorant and unlettered king, again attacks Empedocles for breathing forth the same thought:

> 'I've one thing more to say. 'Mongst mortals there
> No nature is; not that grim thing men fear
> So much, called death. There only happens first
> A mixture, and mixt things asunder burst
> Again, when them disunion does befall.
> And this is that which men do nature call.'

For my part, I do not see how this is repugnant and contrary to life or living, especially amongst those who hold that there is no generation of that which is not, nor corruption of that which is, but that the assembling and union of the things which are is called generation, and their dissolution and disunion named corruption and death" (Against Colotes, 10).

86. Cf. Lucretius, IV.26-28. Compare Ibid., III.434-442.

87. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.125. "Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply sentience, and death is the privation of all sentience; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not

E. Role of Reason and the Senses

In keeping with his materialism, Epicurus turned to the senses as the criterion of truth. All knowledge comes through the senses which are infallible.[88] Error enters through a mistake in judgment. The Epicurean denied

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by adding to life an illimitible time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality" (Ibid., X.124-126). "Foolish therefore is the man who says that he fears death, not because it will pain when it comes, but because it pains in the prospect" (Ibid., X.124). "Death is nothing to us; for the body, when it has been resolved into its elements has no feeling, and that which has no feeling is nothing to us" (Ibid., X.139). "Nor does death so destroy as to annihilate the bodies of matter, but it disperses their combination abroad, and then conjoins others with others" (Lucretius, II.1002-1004). "Therefore death is nothing to us" (Ibid., III.830). "...we may be sure that there is nothing to be feared after death" (Ibid., III.866). "Therefore they thought them to be pre-eminent in happiness, because the fear of death troubled none of them, and at the same time because in sleep they saw them perform many marvellous feats and felt no distress therefrom" (Ibid., V.1179-1182). "They [hearers] are less confused and disquieted upon hearing at the lectures of the philosophers that 'Death is nothing to us' and 'The wealth allowed by nature is definitely limited'..." (Plutarch, Moralia: How to Study Poetry, 97).

88. "Now in The Canon Epicurus affirms that our sensations and pre-conceptions and our feelings are the standards of truth; the Epicureans generally make perceptions of mental presentations to be also standards" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.31). Cf. Ibid., X.37, 73, 82, 152; Lucretius, III.931ff. "The criterea of reality he places in sensation; once let the senses accept as true something that is false, and every possible criterion of truth and falsehood seems to him to be immediately destroyed..." (Cicero, De Finibus, I.7). "Epicurus feared that if a single sensation were admitted to be false, none would be true. He therefore said that all the senses give a true report" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.25). On mental presentations, cf. Lucretius, II.740ff; Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.54; Sextus Empiricus, Adv. Math., VII. 203-216.

revelation and trusted implicitely to reason, thus ridding themselves of the terrors of the mind.[89]

89. "If you hold fast to these convictions, nature is seen to be free at once and rid of proud masters, herself doing all by herself of her own accord, and having no part nor lot in the gods. For I appeal to the holy hearts of the gods, which in tranquil peace pass untroubled days and a life serene" (Lucretius, II.1090-1095). "For as soon as thy reasoning born of a divine intelligence begins to proclaim the nature of things, away flee the mind's terrors" (Ibid., III.14-16).

F. Attitude Toward Culture

Epicurus sought in nature a help against fashion and civilization. To him it meant nothing if one cast away the rags of superstition without ridding himself of the artificial vestments of human culture. At war with the artificialities of life, Epicurus sought to avoid culture, all culture.[90] The wise man would leave written words behind him, but would not compose panegyric.[91] He would be able to converse correctly about music and poetry without actually writing poems. He would found a school, but not in such a manner as to draw a crowd after him. He would give readings in public, but only by request. He would be a dogmatist, but not a sceptic.[92] With his rational planning Epicurus nullified the importance of the Greek poets as moral teachers. Homer and the tragic drama were cast out.[93] In general a very passive attitude was taken towards culture.

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90. Cf. Wallace, op.cit., p.145. Compare Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.6; Plutarch, Non posse vivere..,XIII.1.
91. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120.
92. Loc.cit.
93. Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "Epicurus: Philosophy for the Millions", The Classical Journal, p.199.

G. Attitude Toward Government

The Epicureans held that all social life is based on the self-interest of the individual. One becomes a member of a social group simply because in such a group he gets more for himself, and such a group offers better protection from one's enemies. Laws are simply rules which the group accepts and by which the members are willing to live. When obedience to the laws affords no help, one may break the laws, if he can escape punishment.

The Epicureans did not believe that participation in public life would contribute to the happiness of the individual. A wise man would shun public office and public responsibility as much as possible.[94] This position is one

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94. "He [Epicurus] carried deference to others to such excess that he did not even enter public life. He spent all his life in Greece, notwithstanding the calamities which had befallen her in that age. When he did once or twice take a trip to Ionia it was to visit his friends there" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.10). Cf. Plutarch, Demetrius, 34, and Usener, Epicurea, fragment 176. Regarding the wise men: "Nor will he drivel when drunken; nor will he take part in politics, nor make himself a tyrant; nor turn Cynic; nor will he be a mendicant" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.119). "Again, at supper, where all sorts of topics were discussed, and particularly that of Greece and her philosophers, Cineas happened somehow to mention Epicurus, and set forth the doctrines of that school concerning the gods, civil government, and the highest good, explaining that they made pleasure the highest good, but would have nothing to do with civil government on the ground that it was injurious and the ruin of felicity..." (Plutarch, Lives: Pyrrhus, XX.3). "And for some persons, even inactivity itself often leads to discontent, as in this instance: Iliad, I.488ff. And he himself [Achilles] is greatly disturbed and distressed at this and says: 'But here I sit beside my ships a useless burden to the earth.' For this reason not even Epicurus believes

of pure individualism and selfishness, totally in keeping with their hedonistic materialism. Yet the Epicurean participated in state festivals, went to court if necessary, and looked to the state for protection for his property.[95] Such enlightened self-interest and passive attitude toward the state practiced by millions of adherents to the Epicurean creed must have had an unwholesome and demoralizing effect on the world in which they lived.

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that men who are eager for honor and glory should lead an inactive life, but that they should fulfil their natures by engaging in politics and entering public life, on the ground that, because of their natural dispositions, they are more likely to be disturbed and harmed by inactivity if they do not obtain what they desire. But he is absurd in urging public life, not to those who are able to undertake it, but to those who are unable to lead an inactive life; tranquility and discontent should be determined, not by the multitude or the fewness of one's occupations, but by their excellence or baseness; for the omission of good acts is no less vexatious and disturbing than the commission of evil acts, as has been said" (Plutarch, Moralia, 465 F - 466).

95. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.120.

H. Tranquility of Mind

Abolishing the fears of the gods and of death and viewing wealth and public life as a threat to happiness, Epicurus arrived at peace of mind.[96] This was for him the sum and end of a blessed life.[97]

Peace of mind determined their general outlook on life. Belief in the limit and end of the flesh and the denial of the life after death produced such ἀταραξία, which resulted in a concentration on the values of this present world. Carpe diem became a fitting definition of Epicurean eagerness to seize life before it slipped away.[98] There was a

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96. "But mental tranquility means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths" (Ibid., X.82). "We on our part deem happiness to consist in tranquility of mind and entire exemption from all duties" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.20). "For not only does 'he who has least need of the morrow', as Epicurus says, most gladly advance to meet the morrow, but also wealth and reputation and power and public office delight most of all those who least fear their opposites. For the violent desire for each of these implants a most violent fear that they may not remain, and so renders pleasure in them weak and unstable, like a fluttering flame" (Plutarch, Moralia, 474 C).

97. "He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquility of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.128). Diogenes Laertius also mentions that peace of mind and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest (Ibid., X.136); and that the just man enjoys the greatest peace of mind (Ibid., X.124). "...and nothing at any time impairs their peace of mind" (Lucretius, III. 24).

98. Hadzsits, op.cit., p.137.

stress on urgency, to enjoy life while one could, before it was too late.[99] The idea of "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die" can be fittingly applied to this creed.[100]

Teachings which were contrary to popular opinion were numerous. To quote Wallace:

> To the writers of the Roman classical period the charges against Epicureanism were drawn from its denial of the divine providence, its open proclamation of pleasure as the chief good, its opposition to a merely literary and intellectual culture, its withdrawal of its followers from political interests and occupations, and the grotesque features in some of its physical and physiological speculations. Its unscientific character and its studied indifference, and even hostility to the prevailing literary and logical as well as mathematical investigation of the epoch, were probably the chief charges in the count.[101]

Differences from Christianity were equally fundamental, though on the surface there are numerous parallels to the teachings of Christ. Epicureanism taught the concepts of faith, hope and charity, but not the faith, hope, and charity of I Corinthians 13. Their faith was not a faith in God, but a faith in the truth of philosophy and the loyalty of friends.[102] Their hope was not a hope of eter-

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99. "And in his correspondence he replaces the usual greeting 'I wish you joy' (χαίρειν) by wishes for welfare and right living. 'May you do well' (εὖ πράττειν) and 'Live well' (σπουδαίως ζῆν)" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.13).
100. I Corinthians 15:32 ironically expresses this idea.
101. Wallace, op.cit., p.85.
102. Cf. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.63, 85.

nal life, but a hope for the good things to come in this world and a hope linked with patience.[103] Their love was not a self-denying love aimed at fulfilling the law of God and conforming to His will, but a love of expediency to aid the individual in attaining the summum bonum. From start to finish their ethical principles are not self-giving, but self-seeking.

Out and out enemies of Christianity are easily distinguished. But an ethical system such as the Epicurean creed, which often approximated Christian principles, could easily mislead weak and faltering Christians. Could Paul, then, have afforded to disregard the tremendous impact of this philosophy altogether and dismiss it as insignificant and unworthy of his consideration? Hardly so.

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103. On hope, cf. Sent.Vat., 33, 39. On patience, cf. Cicero, Ad Famil., IX.17.3.

III. Epicurean Catchwords in the Pauline Letters

To this point the writer has attempted to show the extent of Epicurean diffusion, the number of adherents, the social and intellectual status of the Epicurean follower, Epicurean appeal, and a dogmatics of their ethics. The way has thus been paved for the inference that certain Epicurean catchwords may have found their way into the writings of St. Paul.[1] The body designated as a vessel (σκεῦος), the sting of death (κέντρον) and the ἄτομος of I Corinthians 15, and the εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια concept of I Thessalonians are the more important terms to be considered.

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1. Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism", The Classical Journal.

A. The Body as a σκεῦος.

To Epicurus the designation of the body as a vessel was more than a convenient metaphor. It was an integral part of his system. By nature body and soul are material. This, states DeWitt, is the major premise. "As for the soul, in nature it resembles smoke or vapour, the component atoms being so mobile and volatile, as to be unable to cohere or contain themselves.[2] This is the minor premise."[3] In conclusion, the body serves as a containing vessel (σκεῦος) for the soul.[4]

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2. Cf. Lucretius, VI.598, where the spirit is described as a smoke which is dispersed. At death, when the human frame is broken up, the soul is scattered (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.65). So also Lucretius: "There is therefore within the body itself a heat and vital wind which deserts our frame on the point of death" (Lucretius, III. 128-129). "It follows therefore that the whole nature of the spirit is dissolved abroad like smoke into the high winds of the air..." (Ibid., III.455-456). Lucretius elaborates the original metaphor in comparing the escape of the soul from the body to the spilling of water from a shattered vessel (Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects of Epicureanism"). "Now, therefore, since when vessels are shattered you perceive the water or liquid spilt all abroad, and since cloud and smoke disperses abroad into the air, believe that the spirit also is spread abroad and passes away far more quickly and is more speedily dissolved abroad into its first bodies as soon as it has departed withdrawn from the limbs. In fact, if the body, which is in a way its vessel, cannot contain it when once broken up by any cause and rarefied by the withdrawal of blood from the veins, how could you believe that any air could contain it? How could that which is more rarefied than our body contain it?" (Lucretius, III.434-442).

3. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".

4. Lucretius pictures the soul as being composed of minute seeds, contained in and dispersed throughout the body (Lucretius, III.229-230; III.554-557; III.702-712).

No actual examples have survived from the writings of Epicurus,[5] but the figure is employed a number of times by Lucretius.[6] Cicero, who in his teens was instructed in philosophy by Phaedrus the Epicurean, writes: "For the body is as it were a vessel or sort of shelter for the soul (aliquod animi receptaculum)."[7] Plutarch, one of the foremost sources of information regarding Epicureanism, ridicules the term at length.[8] This term became one of the Epicurean catchwords. "The body was a vessel. Therefore the human being is a vessel."[9]

In Pauline theology the term became a figure of speech to designate the body of a man in which his personality is lodged.[10] The use of σκεῦος is comparatively rare in Pauline terminology but in each case the meaning is the same:

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5. Epicurus does, however, portray the body as a "containing sheath" for the soul (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.65).

6. E.g.: "In fact if the body, which is in a way its vessel, cannot contain it when once broken up by any cause.." (Lucretius, III.440). "So the mind cannot be by itself without body or without the man himself, which body seems to be a kind of vessel for it, or any other similitude you may choose for a closer conjunction, since in fact the body does cling closely to it" (Ibid., III.554-557). Cf. Ibid., III.434-440. "But if the force of the mind could be in the head or shoulders by itself, or down in the heels, and be born in any part, yet it would still abide in the same man, the same vessel (eodem vase manere)" (Ibid., V.134-137).

7. Cicero, Tusculan Disputations, I.22.

8. Cf. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".

9. Loc.cit.

10. "The Greek interpreters (except Theodore of Mopsuestia), as also Tertullian, Calvin, Beza refer to the body of a man as the vessel of himself..." (Thessalonians, edited by G.G.Findlay, Cambridge Greek Testament, Cambridge University Press, 1904, note on I Thessalonians 4:4).

1. Romans 9:21-23

ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν; εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλέους, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν, ——

This is an extension of the views expressed by Lucretius.

A remarkable parallel to Romans 9:21-23 is found in the Wisdom of Solomon:[11]

καὶ γὰρ κεραμεὺς ἁπαλὴν γῆν θλίβων ἐπιμόχθως πλάσσει πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ἡμῶν ἕκαστον ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πηλοῦ ἀνεπλάσατο τά τε τῶν καθαρῶν ἔργων δοῦλα σκεύη, τά τε ἐναντία, πάντ' ὁμοίως.

Such a close parallel to Pauline thought in an apocryphal writing does not necessarily exclude the σκεῦος term as an Epicurean catchword. Both Paul and the writer of the pseudepigraph could easily have appropriated this term from a common source flavored with Epicurean meaning.[12]

2. 2 Corinthians 4:7

Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα

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11. Wisdom of Solomon 15:7. This was written in Greek sometime between 150 B.C. and 50 B.C.

12. This does not militate against plenary inspiration. Paul undoubtedly found himself in a similar situation to that of St. Luke (Cf. Luke 1:1-4).

ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ᾖ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

3. I Thessalonians 4:3-5

Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ ἁγιασμὸς ὑμῶν, ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας, εἰδέναι ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ, μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν, ——

A parallel to this passage is found in I Peter 3:7:

Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

In both instances the wife is not called a σκεῦος in virtue of her sex, but man and wife alike are termed σκεύη of the Divine Spirit, the latter being the ἀσθενέστερον of the two.[13]

4. 2 Timothy 2:20-21

Ἐν μεγάλῃ δὲ οἰκίᾳ οὐκ ἔστιν μόνον σκεύη χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ξύλινα καὶ ὀστράκινα, καὶ ἃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν ἃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν· ἐὰν οὖν τις ἐκκαθάρῃ ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τούτων, ἔσται σκεῦος εἰς τιμήν, ἡγιασμένον, εὔχρηστον τῷ δεσπότῃ, εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον.

"St. Paul's thoughts are not merely of a difference in use between the vessels, for all service may be honorable in itself, but of the sorrowful fact that some are destined εἰς ἀτιμίαν as unworthy of being εἰς τιμήν."[14]

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13. G.G. Findlay, op.cit., note on I Thessalonians 4:4.
14. J.H. Bernard, The Pastoral Epistles, in Cambridge Greek Testament, Cambridge University Press, 1899, note on 2 Timothy 2:20-21. Cf. I Corinthians 15:34.

It would be an unjustified inference to conclude that the denomination of the body as a σκεῦος is peculiar to Epicurean terminology. Seneca, the Stoic, and Polybius both employ this term.[15] Similar uses are found in the extra-Pauline writings of Revelation and Acts.[16] Jeremiah 22:28 and Hosea 8:8 show the use of the image already in the eighth century before Christ, five hundred years before Epicurus appeared on the scene. Two passages from the Epistles of Barnabas further employ σκεῦος in this sense.[17]

Although σκεῦος in this special sense was not Epicurean in origin, it was in the Epicurean system that it took on real and pregnant meaning. The value of such a metaphor meant far more in the Epicurean system, as has been previously shown, than it ever did in Jeremiah, Hosea, Seneca, or Polybius, where it is merely employed as a convenient figure of speech. It is my opinion that the Apostle Paul, in using this term, had in mind the Epicurean flavoring.

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15. "What is man? A vessel that the slightest shaking, the slightest toss will break" (Seneca, Ad Marciam, XI.3). Polybius uses σκεῦος in the base sense of an assistant in accomplishing evil deeds (Polybius, XIII.5.7.; XV.25.1).

16. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he [Paul] is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles..." (Acts 9:15). "...to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" (Rev. 2:27).

17. "And the Lord commanded this because he himself was going to offer the vessel of the spirit as a sacrifice for our sins..." (Epistles of Barnabas, VII.3). "And again another prophet says, And the land of Jacob was praised above every land. He means to say that he is glorifying the vessel of his spirit" (Ibid., XI.9).

This is well in keeping with his desire to be all things to all men. Paul took over this catchword and refilled it with Christian content. To him the body meant more than a mere container of a mortal soul which, upon the death of the body, leaves the corpse, disintegrates like a smoke, and returns to its original elements. The body, for Paul, was a vessel wherein lies an immortal soul, both waiting to be reunited with its Maker.[18]

In general there seems to be a two-fold purpose in using this term. There is in the first place a conscious effort on the part of Paul to warn the faithful against any false conception regarding the nature and destiny of the soul; and at the same time there may be implied an appeal to the interested and contemplating Epicurean to accept Christianity, but in doing so a complete reevaluation of the ἀφθαρσία τῆς ψυχῆς was necessary.

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18. For parallel thoughts, cf. Romans 8: 9-11; I Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:1-6.

B. κέντρον and ἄτομος of I Corinthians 15.

Paul's 15th chapter of I Corinthians is one of the greatest masterpieces ever written on the nature of the resurrection. Its thoughts are so noble and so sublime that human words fail adequately to express these glorious concepts.

A closer investigation of this resurrection chapter reveals the usage of two words, κέντρον (verses 55 and 56) and ἄτομος (verse 52), which are peculiar to the writings of St. Paul and seem to have been Epicurean catchwords. Throughout the entire Epistle the concept of flesh and spirit, the doctrine of the resurrection, the nature of death, and the immortality of the soul are all basically opposed to Epicurean belief. Could it be that the 15th chapter of I Corinthians was particularly directed against Epicurean adversaries? Examining these various concepts of I Corinthians in the light of the Epicurean creed, one is able to make observations which are nothing short of amazing, observations which certainly allow the possibility of κέντρον and ἄτομος of the 15th chapter as Epicurean terms. There are several items in I Corinthians 15 to consider:

1. God and Creation.

Paul writes:

> For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods 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.[19]

By contrast Lucretius states:

> For certainly it was no design of the first-beginnings that led them to place themselves each in its own order with keen intelligence...but because many first-beginnings of things in many ways struck with blows and carried along by their own weight from infinite time unto this present, have been accustomed to move and to meet in all manner of ways... At length those come together which being suddenly brought together often become the beginnings of great things, of sea and sky and the generation of living creatures.[20]

> Again, whence was there implanted in the gods a pattern for making things, or even a conception of mankind, so as to know what they wished to make and to see it in the mind's eye? Or in what manner was the power of the first-beginnings ever known, and what they could do together by change of order, if nature herself did not provide a model for creation? For so many first-beginnings of things in so many ways, smitten with blows and carried by their own weight from infinite time unto this present, have been wont to move and meet together in all manner of ways, and to try all combinations, whatsoever they could produce by coming together, that it is no wonder if they fell into such movements, as this sum of things now shows in its course of perpetual renovation.[21]

Epicurus and Lucretius further maintain that the world could not have been created, since nothing comes from nothing. To them all things of necessity spring from

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19. I Corinthians 8:5-6. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). Those who deny that there is an all-powerful God are without excuse (Cf. Romans 1:20-22).

20. Lucretius, V.416-431.

21. Ibid., V.187-194.

seeds.[22] Paul employs an analogy of seeds, an analogy probably familiar to his readers from Epicurean discourses, but Paul makes God the Creator of all seeds:

> And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed (σπέρματα) his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial...[23]

2. The flesh opposed to the spirit.

The Epicureans equated flesh and spirit. To them both were σῶμα and both were mortal. Nevertheless a distinction was made, though not nearly as marked as the Christian distinction. DeWitt remarks:

> Epicurus equated the partnership of flesh and spirit. But a difference remains: the grosser part feels hunger, thirst, cold, and the desires. To denote this difference, therefore, the logical and practical necessity existed of selecting a term and the word used very appropriately was "flesh".[24]

To Paul, σάρξ denotes man "either in the perishable, corruptible part of his nature, or in his incompetence as

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22. "Nothing is created out of that which does not exist; for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds (τῶν σπερμάτων)" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.39). "Therefore we must confess that nothing comes from nothing, since all things must have seed (semine), from which each severally being created may be brought forth into the soft air" (Lucretius, I.205-207). "Lastly, we are all sprung from celestial seed (semine)" (Ibid., II.991). The Vulgate translation of τῶν σπερμάτων is seminum.

23. I Corinthians 15:37-40.

24. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".

contrasted with the power of God."[25] The σάρξ is an ally of sin and as such cannot enter into the kingdom of God.[26] In the employment of the term there is a direct warning to the reader that following Epicurean hedonism necessarily excluded him from heaven.

Under such circumstances could anyone desire the Epicurean creed? Striking at one of the very pillars of their system that ἀρχὴ καὶ ῥίζα πάντος ἀγαθοῦ ἡ τῆς γαστρὸς ἡδονή Paul apparently quotes a slogan of the Corinthian libertine when he writes: "Meats for the belly and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them."[27]

By contrast Athenaeus writes concerning Epicurus:

> The wise Epicurus when someone asked him to explain what the chief good is that men are always seeking, replied: "Pleasure... In fact, there is no good at all better than eating...for the chief good is a property of pleasure."[28]

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25. George Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1921, p.341.

26. "But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed..." (I Corinthians 15:50). "For this corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality" (Ibid., 15:53). "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).

27. I Corinthians 6:13. Compare: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:18-19).

28. Athenaeus, VII.279 A.

> He [Epicurus] used to maintain with a shout: "The beginning and root of all good is the satisfaction of the belly and all wise and notable things have in this their standard of reference."[29]

It is well in keeping with Paul's thought to exclaim: "If after the manner of man I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die",[30] and to further warn his Corinthian readers: "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners."[31]

With no fear of death, immortality having been explained away, the Epicurean laid stress on life as it unfolded before him. "Make the most out of life while you have it", was the Epicurean cry. "Eat, drink, and be merry! Enjoy life now! If we die tomorrow, what is that to us? Death is nothing to us, for where we are death is not, and where death is we are not." Such eating, drinking, and merrymaking need not be that of the profligate, but could be that of the true and consecrated Epicurean who carefully

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29. Ibid., VII.280 A. "He [Timocrates, the brother of Metrodorus] asserts that Epicurus vomited twice a day from over-indulgence...and that he spent a whole mina daily on his table" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.6-7). "Had but Epicurus learned that twice two are four he certainly would not talk like that; but while making his palate the test of the chief good, he forgets to lift up his eyes to what Ennius calls the palate of the sky" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, II.28). "They [the Epicureans] cry out that man's sovereign good lies in his belly, and that they would not purchase all the virtues together at the expense of a cracked farthing, if pleasure were totally and on every side removed from them" (Plutarch, Against Colotes, 2).

30. I Corinthians 15:32.

31. Ibid., 15:33.

calculated advantage and disadvantage. It is very probable, then, that this maxim employed by St. Paul was directed against the Epicurean opponents of the Corinthian church.[32]

3. The sting of death.

Although the term κέντρον τοῦ θανάτου is found in Hosea, it was in the Epicurean system that it found favor and received its popularity. A comparison of St. Paul, Lucretius, and Epicurus will reveal that this metaphor was most likely an Epicurean catchword. St. Paul writes: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."[33]

The Vulgate version reads: "Ubi est mors victoria tua? Ubi est mors stimulus tuus? Stimulus autem mortis peccatum est, virtus vero peccati lex."

Lucretius states:

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32. Findlay comments: This "citation might have served for the axiom of popular Epicureanism. Hn. describes ancient drinking-cups, recently discovered, ornamented with skeleton figures wreathed in roses and named after famous philosophers, poets, and gourmands, with mottoes attached such as these: τὸ τέλος ἡδονή, τέρπε ζῶν σεαυτόν, σκηνὴ βίος, τοῦτ' ἄνθρωπος (written over a skeleton holding a skull), ζῶν μετάλαβε τὸ γὰρ ἀθρίον ἅδηλόν ἐστιν. Cf. our own miserable adage, 'A short life and a merry one'" (G.G.Findlay, First Corinthians, The Expositor's Greek Testament, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.932).

33. I Corinthians 15:55-56. A similar spirit is shown in other Pauline passages. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Ibid., 7:24). "For the carnally minded is death; but the spiritually minded is life and peace" (Ibid., 8:6).

> Accordingly when you see a man resenting his fate, that after death he must either rot with his body laid in the tomb, or perish by fire, or the jaws of wild beasts, you may know that he rings false, and that deep in his heart is some hidden sting (stimulum), although himself he deny the belief in any sensation after death.[34]

> But in this life there is fear of punishment for evil deeds, fear as notorious as the deeds are notorious, and atonement for crime, prison, and the horrible casting down from the Rock, stripes, torturers, condemned cell, pitch, red-hot plates, firebrands: and even if these are absent, yet the guilty conscience, terrified before aught can come to pass, applies the goad (stimulos) and scorches itself with whips, and meanwhile sees not where can be the end to its miseries or the final limit to its punishment, and fears at the same time that all this may become heavier after death.[35]

Epicurus says: "Injustice is not in itself an evil, but only in its consequence, viz. the terror which is excited by apprehension that those appointed to punish such offences will discover the injustice."[36]

By employing such a catchword Paul again makes a fervent appeal for Christianity to the Epicureans. No wonder he writes: "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."[37]

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34. Lucretius, III.870-875.
35. Ibid., III.1014-1022.
36. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.151. Of interest is a passage from Seneca: "What is so absurd as to seek death, when it is through fear of death that you have robbed your life of peace?" (Seneca, Epistulae, XXIV.23).
37. I Corinthians 10:33.

4. Resurrection of the dead.

To the Epicurean death meant the end. The soul was mortal. Immortality was impossible.[38] They based their hope on this life entirely, and it is to a person with Epicurean tendencies that Paul could well have directed these words: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."[39]

Paul further points out that death for the Christian holds out no fear. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."[40] "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."[41] Without the resurrection of Christ, there is no hope and the fear of death haunts us. But because Christ was raised from the dead, there is hope. The Christian is confident, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus."[42]

Throughout the course of the argument Paul carefully and methodically destroys the last vestige of Epicurean hope, showing them that only by appropriating Christ and His message to their lives is there real and abiding hope. Once more Paul, knowing the terror of the Lord against

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38. E.g., Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.67; X.124, passim.
39. I Corinthians 15:19.
40. Ibid., 15:26.
41. Ibid., 15:21-22.
42. 2 Corinthians 4:14.

unbelief, "persuades men", in this case the Epicureans.[43]

5. ἄτομος of I Corinthians 15.

There may be an echo of a second Epicurean catchword in I Corinthians 15:52. Found only here in the New Testament and used by Paul in this remarkable resurrection chapter, this word was common terminology to Lucretius and Epicurus, though not used by Paul in its characteristic Epicurean sense.

Epicurus writes: "For every quality changes, but the atoms (αἱ ἄτομοι) do not change (οὐδὲν μεταβάλλουσιν)."[44]

Paul replies: "We shall all be changed (ἀλλαγησόμεθα), in a moment (ἐν ἀτόμῳ), in the twinkling of an eye."[45]

This seems to be another case where Paul takes over a term common to the Epicureans, gives it Christian meaning in a Christian context, and employs this term as an integral part of his message. One more example of making the most of a given situation in his zeal to gain souls for Christ, the Epicureans being no exception.

Paul was undoubtedly bitterly opposed by many Epicureans because of his teachings. They may well have been the adversaries mentioned in I Corinthians 16:9. Yet in spite

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43. I Corinthians 5:11.
44. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.54. "He [Epicurus] put forward as his own the doctrines of Democritus about atoms (περὶ τῶν ἀτόμων) and of Aristippus about pleasure (περὶ τῆς ἡδονῆς)"(Ibid., X.4); "Epicurus wrote 'Of atoms and void' (Περὶ ἀτόμων καὶ κενοῦ)"(Ibid., X.27); passim.
45. I Corinthians 15:52.

of all hostility the Apostle could confidently exclaim: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me...."[46]

46. Ibid., 16:9.

C. The εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια of I Thessalonians

In I Thessalonians 5:3 St.Paul writes: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Are these words, in the light of the general context, part of the popular Epicurean terminology?

Later in the fifth chapter the Apostle Paul warns his readers: "Despise not prophesyings."[47] Was there any special reason for this? There seems to be. St.Paul was speaking of the second coming of Christ, when the faithful should be received up into glory. Such speaking in specie aeternitatis, and prophesying in general, was contemptuously derided by the Epicureans. Epicurus wrote: "No means of predicting the future really exists."[48] The Epicurean hostility to Alexander the false prophet is an isolated example of their utter contempt for prophecy.[49]

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47. I Thessalonians 5:20. "To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy" (I Corinthians 11:10). "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe" (Ibid., 14:22).

48. Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.135. Cf. Ibid., X.147.

49. Lucian notes: "On the first day, as at Athens, there is a proclamation, worded as follows: 'If any atheist or Christian or Epicurean has come to spy upon the rites, let him be off and let those who believe in a god perform the mysteries under the blessing of heaven.' Then, at the very outset, there was an expulsion in which he [Alexander the false prophet] took the lead, saying: 'Out with the Christians', and the whole multitude chanted in response: 'Out with the Epicureans'" (Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet, 38). At another time an Epicurean exposed Alexander,

With eyes fixed on this world, the Epicureans emphasized peace and safety, and safety in particular.[50] Peace to them was not the εἰρήνη which came from God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, but the ἀταραξία of the mind which was the sum and end of a blessed life.[51]

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revealed his method of prophecy, and rebuked the false prophet. "Indignant at the exposure and unable to hear the truth of the reproach, he [Alexander] told the bystanders to stone him, or else they themselves would be accursed and would bear the name of Epicureans" (Ibid., 45).

50. A typical view of Biblical commentators is expressed by John Eadie: "εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια is perhaps a reference of Ezekiel 13:10, 16: '...saying peace, and there was no peace.' The first term may be inner quiet and the second outer tranquility, nothing within or without disturbing..." (John Eadie, Commentary on I Thessalonians, McMillan and Co., London, 1877, note on I Thessalonians 5:3).

51. "He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquility of mind (τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀταραξίαν), seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.128). "But mental tranquility (ἡ ἀταραξία) means being released from all these troubles and cherishing a continual remembrance of the highest and most important truths" (Ibid., X. 82). "By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul (ταράττεσθαι κατὰ ψυχήν)" (Ibid., X.131). "Exercise thyself in these and kindred precepts day and night both by thyself and with him who is like unto thee; then never, either in waking or in dream, wilt thou be disquieted (διαταραχθήσῃ), but wilt live as a god among men" (Ibid., X.135). "Peace of mind (ἡ ἀταραξία) and freedom from pain are pleasures which imply a state of rest" (Ibid., X.136). "The just man enjoys the greatest peace of mind (Ὁ δίκαιος ἀταρακτότατος), while the unjust is full of the utmost disquietude (πλείστης ταραχῆς μεστός)" (Ibid., X. 144). "And nothing at any time impairs their peace of mind (animi pacem)" (Lucretius, III.24). "It is no piety to show oneself often with covered head...but rather to be able to survey all things with mind at peace (pacata mente)" (Ibid., V.1194-1203). "Unless you spew all these errors out of your mind, and put far from you thoughts unworthy of the gods and alien to their peace, their holy trinity impaired by you will often do you harm; not that the supreme power of the gods is open to insult...but because you your-

By safety Paul means what nowadays we speak of as security. The term occurs a number of times in the Κύριαι Δόξαι of Epicurus.[52] Here Epicurus presents ways and means of attaining such security. To this concept DeWitt remarks:

> Add to this that according to Epicurus the function of justice was to insure the safety of the individual, already shown, and we seem to have arrived at a certainty, namely, that the people whose catchwords to Paul were "peace" and "safety" are the Epicureans.[53]

In short, the words εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια easily find meaning in the Epicurean system, although the actual word, εἰρήνη, apparently does not occur. The contextual stress on the παρουσία and on the validity of prophecy seem to be pointedly directed against Epicurean scoffers.[54] Of the

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self will imagine that they, who are quiet in their placid peace (placida cum pace), are rolling great billows of wrath, you will not be able to approach their shrines with placid heart (placido cum pectore), you will not have the strength to receive with tranquil peace of spirit (animi tranquilla pace) the images which are carried to men's minds from their holy bodies..." (Ibid., VI.68-78). "We on our part deem happiness to consist in tranquility of mind and entire exemption from all duties" (Cicero, De Natura Deorum, I.20).

52. E.g.: "Some men have sought to become famous and renowned, thinking that thus they would make themselves secure (ἀσφάλειαν) against their fellow men" (Diogenes Laertius, op.cit., X.141). "When tolerable security (ἀσφάλειας) against our fellow men is attained..." (Ibid., X.143). "There would be no advantage in providing security (ἀσφάλειαν) against our fellow men, so long as we were alarmed by occurrences over our heads or beneath the earth or in general by whatever happens in the boundless universe" (Ibid., X.143).

53. Norman W. DeWitt, "Some Less Familiar Aspects...".

54. "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thessalonians 1:10). "Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (Ibid.,

various concepts discussed to this point the εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια of I Thessalonians are most definitely Epicurean catchwords.

2:19). "...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (Ibid., 3:12). Cf. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1:10; et.al.

Conclusions

The question "Are there Epicurean catchwords in the Pauline letters?" has been raised to see whether Paul in being all things to all men that he might by all means save some was also an Epicurean to the Epicureans that he might by all means save some Epicureans.

A geographical and historical survey easily admitted the possibility of an affirmative answer. A discussion of the type and number of adherents to the Epicurean creed demonstrated that they were too numerous and powerful to be ignored by Paul as inconsequential and non-influential. A consideration of their ethical system clearly brought to light that though some aspects of their ethics often paralleled Christian teaching, they were nevertheless at basic odds with Paul and his message. Paul, therefore, could not have afforded to overlook this "philosophy of the millions".

Finally, a careful examination of those sections in the Epistles of Paul where possible Epicurean catchwords are located has led me to believe that there are definitely several such catchwords in his Letters; and that Paul in being a missionary to the Gentiles was at the same time a missionary to the Epicureans.

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