

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

6-1-1951

### Paul's Concept of Christ as the Wisdom of God

Bernhard Kurzweg

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_kurzwegb@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Kurzweg, Bernhard, "Paul's Concept of Christ as the Wisdom of God" (1951). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 344. <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/344>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

PAUL'S CONCEPT OF CHRIST

AS THE WISDOM OF GOD

---

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

---

by

Bernhard Kurzweg

June 1951

Approved by: William F. Arndt  
Advisor

Victor Baetling  
Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. A LEXICOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE TERM SOPHIA . . . . .	4
Classic Greek . . . . .	4
Old Testament Septuagint . . . . .	7
The Septuagint Apocrypha . . . . .	11
Philo . . . . .	12
The New Testament . . . . .	12
III. THE INFLUENCE OF JUDAISM UPON PAUL'S WISDOM THEOLOGY . . . . .	18
Introduction . . . . .	18
Origin of the Personification of Wisdom . . . . .	20
Functions of the Personified Wisdom . . . . .	22
Wisdom's Relation to the Father . . . . .	23
Wisdom's Relation to Mankind . . . . .	27
IV. THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM AND THE JEWISH-ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL UPON PAUL'S WISDOM THEOLOGY . . . . .	31
Paul and Stoicism . . . . .	31
Relationship Between the Chokmah, the Logos, and the Sophia . . . . .	34
Relationship Between Paul and Jewish-Alexandrian Thought . . . . .	37
V. CHRIST THE SOPHIA IN RELATION TO THE FATHER . . . . .	40
Christ, the Wisdom, Was Begotten of God Before the World Was Created . . . . .	42
Christ, the Wisdom, Was Installed or Appointed by God Either to Rule or to Be an Associate With Him in His Rule . . . . .	50
Christ, the Wisdom, Was a Master Artificer Whose Plans for the Creation Were Shared by Jahve, Being Co-Creator with Jahve . . . . .	53
Christ, the Wisdom, Is an Associate of Jahve in Whom He Has Constant Delight . . . . .	55
VI. CHRIST THE SOPHIA IN RELATION TO MANKIND . . . . .	58
Christ's Message and Functions are Particularly Concerned with Mankind: He Reveals the Way of Life and Righteousness . . . . .	58

Christ's Dwelling or House Has Seven Pillars . . . . .	62
Christ Is Contrasted With Folly, and What He Bestows Is Compared With What Folly Offers: the Ways of Folly Are Death . . . . .	65
The Character of Christ's Message Is a Proclamation of Truth, Righteousness, Knowledge, and Judgment, Justice, or Law . . . . .	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	76

... the government, seems to have caught the close relationship that exists between Jesus the Logos of God and Jesus the Son of Man. With regard to the same truth he writes: "A word of the kingdom is higher than an eagle." This relation is significant, especially when viewed in the light of the personified Wisdom, or Sophia, of the Old Testament.

Such has been said and written on the personal logos of the Word, Wisdom. The origin and the adaptation of the term by St. John has been the subject of intensive research and wild speculation.

Less emphasis has been laid on the Wisdom, Sophiaology of St. Paul. In fact, scholars have denied that Paul propounded a Wisdom theology. Others have allowed the presence of a Wisdom theology, but have refused to admit that the apostle consciously personified his Sophia in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Logos Sophia has been identified definitely by various scholars with the personified Wisdom, or Deborah, of Proverbs, Chapter eight. The characters of the two have been compared and shown to be practically identical. The Greek Sophia equals logos, equals Christ.

The personal Sophia of Paul, on the other hand, has seldom been identified with the Old Testament Deborah. This appears to be rather strange since the two terms, *logos* and *sophia* are so closely synonymous. The Septuagint regularly translates Deborah with Sophia.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

William How, the hymn-writer, seems to have caught the close relationship that exists between Jesus the Logos of God and Jesus the Sophia of God. With one and the same breath he writes: "O word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high." This relation is significant, especially when viewed in the light of the personified Chokmah, or Wisdom, of the Old Testament.

Much has been said and written on the personal Logos of the Fourth Gospel. The origin and the adaptation of the term by St. John has been the subject of intensive research and wild speculation.

Less emphasis has been laid on the Wisdom Christology of St. Paul. In fact, scholars have denied that Paul propounded a Wisdom theology. Others have allowed the presence of a Wisdom theology, but have refused to admit that the Apostle consciously personifies his Sophia in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Johannine Logos has been identified definitely by various scholars with the personified Wisdom, or Chokmah, of Proverbs, Chapter Eight. The functions of the two have been compared and shown to be practically identical. The Chokmah equals Logos, equals Christ.

The personal Sophia of Paul, on the other hand, has seldom been identified with the Old Testament Chokmah. This appears to be rather strange since the two terms, chokmah and sophia are so closely synonymous. The Septuagint regularly translates Chokmah with Sophia.

As we shall see in our word study of Chapter II, the two words are consistently used to express identical concepts.

Our purpose, then, will be an objective comparison of the functions of Paul's Sophia with the personal Chokmah. The Logos of John will frequently enter in by way of comparison. The close relationship between the three will be evident throughout.

To get a clear picture of the term sophia itself Chapter II will contain a philological study based chiefly upon the material under sophia in the eleventh edition of Gremer-Koegel's Biblich-theologisches Woerterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Graezitaet. Its usage and development in classic, Septuagint, and New Testament Greek should serve to give a background for its usages in Paul.

The third chapter is a brief collation of material on the origin and development of the Old Testament Chokmah. The first half deals with the various theories regarding the influence of Israel's neighbors upon her wisdom movement. The difference between Israel's Wisdom and that of other nations will be emphasized. In the second half of Chapter III an outline by O. S. Rankin, summarizing the functions of the Chokmah of Proverbs Eight, will be expatiated upon very briefly.

Chapter IV contains a brief commentary on the possible influence of Hellenism upon Paul's Wisdom theology. Included will be the comparison of John's Logos with Paul's Sophia. Their close relationship will be emphasized.

In the fifth and sixth chapters we shall discuss, respectively, the personal Sophia of God in relation to His Father and the personal

Sophia of God in relation to the children of men. Interesting to note is the fact that in these two chapters we shall use the same outline which was used in Chapter III to outline the functions of the personal Chokmah. Our purpose in this is to show the close relationship between the Chokmah and the personal Sophia of Paul.

The reader will notice by the foregoing and by the chapter headings of Chapters V and VI that we are proceeding on the assumption that Paul regards Christ as the personal Sophia of God. Our aim will be the substantiation of that assumption.

Nothing will be said of the emphasis on Christ as the Sophia which prevailed after the time of Paul. It may be well to mention here the recognition by the early Eastern Church of the Sophia of God. The church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople and others in Byzantium and Slavonic countries dedicated to the Christ-Sophia serve as evidence of the personification of God's divine Wisdom revealed in the incarnate Son of God.

In agreement with the early church, then, we shall proceed with our study of the Apostle Paul's conception of Christ as the Sophia of God.

## CHAPTER II

### A LEXICOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE TERM SOPHIA

To codify the many facets of sophia into a limited number of categories is difficult and treacherous. On the other hand it is a job that must be done. A word must be studied in its various contexts and its philological development considered to gain a clear picture of its usage in any given author. It will be the purpose of Chapter I to outline briefly the use of sophia and its development up to the time of Saint Paul.<sup>1</sup>

#### Classic Greek

1. Among the Greek classic authors sophia, like the adjective sophos, is used first of cleverness or skill in the handicrafts and arts, as, for example, in carpentry. Homer already employs it in this sense: τέκτονος, ὃς ῥά τε πάσης εἶδῆ σοφίας.<sup>2</sup> Pindar uses it to describe the Telchines.<sup>3</sup> Xenophon mentions the skill (i.e.,

---

<sup>1</sup>The bulk of material for this chapter is a free translation of the study of sophia in Cremer-Koegel, Biblisch-theologisches Woerterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Graezitaet (11th ed.; Gotha, 1923), pp. 1006-10.

Also the following work was freely consulted: Liddell & Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, Revised and Augmented by Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press), II.

References to Greek authors, borrowed from these works, have been incorporated into the thesis as footnotes.

<sup>2</sup>Iliad 15. 412.

<sup>3</sup>Pi. Od. 7. 53.



sophia) of Daedalus and Palamedes.<sup>4</sup> Plato uses it in this sense only occasionally.

2. More frequently sophia is regarded as "understanding" and "skill" in Art, particularly poetry and music.<sup>5</sup> Painting and sculpture may also be included, but with less frequency. Xenophon writes in his Anabasis: ἐνταῦθα λέγεται Ἀπόλλων ἐκδεῖραι Μαρσύαν, νικήσας ἐρίζοντά οἱ περὶ σοφίας.<sup>6</sup> In his Memorabilia Xenophon eulogizes as men admired ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ: Homer, Sophocles, Polycleitus, and Zaudis.<sup>7</sup> In several instances the word denotes skill in medicine or surgery,<sup>8</sup> or even divination, for example: δυσθάντων ὑπὸ σοφίας εἰς γῆρας ἀφίκετο.<sup>9</sup>

3. In later times sophia is identified with skill in matters of the common life, sound judgment, intelligence, and practical wisdom, as found in the seven sages. Plato writes: εἴ τι τέχνης ᾗν ἐχόμενον ἐπουδαίας εὐρημένον ἢ πολιτικῆς ἢ καὶ σοφίας τινὸς ἑτέρας.<sup>10</sup> In this connection it is also used to denote cunning, shrewdness, crafts.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Xen. Mem. 4. 2. 32.

<sup>5</sup>h. Merc. 483; cf. 511; Sol. 13. 52; Pl. Od. 1. 117.

<sup>6</sup>Xen. Ana. 1. 2. 8.

<sup>7</sup>Xen. Mem. 1. 4. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Pl. Rep. 406b.

<sup>9</sup>Pl. P. 3. 54.

<sup>10</sup>Leges 3. 677,C.

<sup>11</sup>Herodotus 1. 68.

4. Finally, it denotes deeper insight into the cause and connection of things, into the meaning and duties of life. Often it is associated with *σωφροσύνη*, giving its possessor a position of detachment and superiority.<sup>12</sup> In this sense it is most usually called "philosophia", so that *sophia* appears as more practical and ethical in character, *philosophia* as more intellectual: *πάντα ἐπιτετήμη χωριζομένη δικαιοσύνης καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἀρετῆς πανουργία, οὗ σοφία φαίνεται.*<sup>13</sup>

In Aristotle *sophia* does occur as speculative wisdom.<sup>14</sup> In one instance he defines it as *θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἐπιτετήμη*;<sup>15</sup> and again, as knowledge of natural philosophy and mathematics.<sup>16</sup>

Plato attaches to *sophia* a spiritual significance: "Through love all the intercourse and speech of God with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual; all other wisdom, such as that of arts and handicraft, is mean and vulgar."<sup>17</sup>

It would appear, then, that among the classic writers the word receives its highest and noblest meaning in Plato, becoming for him the

<sup>12</sup>Xen. Mem. 4. 6. 7; 3. 9. 4; 4. 5. 6; Plut. *de iusto* 375, C; Arist. *Metaph.* 1. 1: τὴν διτομαζομένην σοφίαν περὶ τὰ πρῶτα αἰτία καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ὑπολαμβάνουσι πάντες.

<sup>13</sup>Plato *Menex.* 247A.

<sup>14</sup>*Metaph.* 1141<sup>a</sup>19; *Metaph.* 982<sup>a</sup>2.

<sup>15</sup>*Stoic.* 2. 15.

<sup>16</sup>*Metaph.* 1005b.

<sup>17</sup>"Symposium", 203.

highest attribute and the greatest emanation of the divine nous.

Old Testament Septuagint<sup>18</sup>

In the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament sophia is used for the Hebrew chokmah. There are some exceptional cases where phronesis, sunesis, or epistemees occur in its stead. It is to be noted that chokmah is never translated with gnosis.

1. Like the adjective sophos the Hebrew chacam is used to denote first of all cunning or skill in the arts. I Chronicles 28:21: πᾶς πρόθυμος ἐν σοφίᾳ κατὰ παγὰν τέχνην. (cp. Is. 3:3; 40:20; II Chron. 2:6,12).

2. A second meaning indicates a measure of talent, intelligence, and experience above the average, enabling its possessor to give an account of all things (I Kings 4:30 ff.), to know and bring to light the hidden things (II Sam. 14:20). A wise man is therefore sensible, judicious, endowed with reason and using it (Deut. 4:6; 32:6; Prov. 10:1; 13:1; Hos. 14:10). He is sagacious, shrewd, never at a loss (II Sam. 13:3; Jer. 18:18; Is. 19:11; 29:14). He is wise from the experience of life and human affairs (Prov. 1:6; Eccl. 12:11).

A man was considered wise also when he was skilled in divine things, in the faculty of prophesying and interpreting dreams (Gen. 41:8). Magicians and enchanters were "wise men" (Dan. 5:11; Ex. 7:11).

Sophia included the skill to judge, to be "wise" in judging

<sup>18</sup>The following work was freely consulted: Wm. Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, translated by Edward Robinson (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1882).

(I Kings 2:9,12); hence, to be cunning and artful (II Sam. 13:3; Job 5:13), to be firm and consistent (Is. 31:2).

The wide circle of virtues and mental endowments which the Hebrews included under this facet of chokmah is best gathered from the history of those whose wisdom became proverbial among them, e.g., Solomon (I Kings 5:12), Daniel (Ezra 28:3), the Egyptians (I Kings 1.c.). Of this ascription of wisdom to rulers and great men Rylaarsdam says:

One of the reasons for the ascription of wisdom to Solomon and to other Oriental monarchs may be due to the fact that they were all considered to be possessors of special divine powers because of their position as anointed rulers. Solomon's wisdom as a judge made people fear him, for they saw that "the wisdom of God was in him". Leaders like Moses and Joshua and their aids possessed the "spirit of wisdom" (Deut. 34:9; 1:13; Num. 11:16). Humbert feels that the ascription of Ecclesiastes to Solomon is an adoption of the pattern followed in Egypt, where the wise also attributed their words to rulers.<sup>19</sup>

The wisdom of Solomon is manifested in his acute judgment (I Kings 3:16sq.; 10:1sq.); in his knowledge of very many objects, especially of nature (I Kings 4:33); in the multitude of verses and sentences which he either composed or retained in his memory (I Kings 4:32).

3. Wisdom for the Jew, above all, was the understanding of God's righteousness and will as constituting the foundation and support of all things. It gives security and preëminence to a nation; it brings its possessor to a good end. Proverbs 28:26: *ὅς πέποιθε θρασύα*

*καρδία δ τοιοῦτος ἄφρων, ὅς δὲ πορεύεται σοφία σωθήσεται; Job 28:28: ἴδοὺ ἡ θεοσέβεια ἐστὶν σοφία, τὸ δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι ἀπὸ κακῶν ἐστὶν*

---

<sup>19</sup>J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 13.

ἐπιετήμη ; Ps. 111:10: ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου. Of special significance is the section in Proverbs 8:1 ff.<sup>20</sup>

Essentially this is a religious wisdom. It is connected with paideia (in its Biblical sense) and as such it counteracts sin in itself and in others; it preserves man. At the same time wisdom does not exclude the other areas of man's conscious life from her activity. She places all one's life and conduct under her religious and moral discipline, equipping man for leadership and mastery.

Frequently the chacam of the Hebrew Old Testament occurs in connection with the Hebrew בִּלְ, placing the seat of wisdom in the heart. This expression, בִּלְ-כַחַמִּי, has been translated various ways in the Greek Septuagint. In Exodus 28:3 the Septuagint reads: τοῖς σοφοῖς τῆς καρδίας. In the same book, chapter 31, a portion of verse 5 in the Hebrew reads: וְגַבְרִיָּהוּ בִּלְ-כַחַמִּי. The Septuagint translates this: καὶ παντὶ συνέτῳ καρδία δέδωκα σύνεσιν. In Exodus 35:10 the same expression, בִּלְ-כַחַמִּי, is translated: πᾶς σοφός τῆς καρδίας.

It would appear from the above Septuagint readings that sunesis and sophia are equated. This is not the case. Scholars are agreed that a definite distinction must be made between sophia, proneesis, epistemees, and sunesis as they occur in the Septuagint.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Infra: Chapter III.

<sup>21</sup>The difference is indicated, e.g., in Exodus 31:3: καὶ ἐπέληθα αὐτὸν πνεῦμα θεῶν σοφίας καὶ συνέσεως καὶ ἐπιετήμης ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ. Here choikmah, or sophia, appears first, probably indicating its importance above the others and strengthening its concept.

Of the difference between sophia and sunesis Girdlestone, in discussing chacam and bin, says:

Chacam . . . is used to represent the discernment of good and evil, prudence in secular matters, skill in arts, experience in divine things, and even dexterity in magic. . . . The general rendering of the LXX is sophia, which is used in the same largeness of sense in the New Testament. It is moral rather than intellectual; it is the adaptation of what we know to what we have to do. . . . The understanding is most generally represented by the word bin, to perceive, to be intelligent, . . . to consider, discern, feel, know, look, mark, perceive, view. The Septuagint usually represents this word by sunesis, but occasionally by episteme and phronesis.<sup>22</sup>

Gremer-Koegel substantiate this view when they point out that sunesis is more particularly the faculty of quick apprehension and evaluating reflection.

As to the difference between sophia and phronesis Gremer-Koegel state that the former is distinguished from phronesis as "wisdom" from "prudence".

It appears that episteme is closer in meaning to sophia than either phronesis or sunesis. This similarity is very evident in Exodus 36. In verse 1 the expression קָלָאֵי אִשׁוּרָאִים וְלֵב is translated with πᾶς σοφὸς τῆς διαβολῆς. In verse 2 the Hebrew has:

וְכָל אִשׁוּרָאִים וְלֵב ; in Greek it becomes: ἕδωκεν  
θεὸς ἐπιτετήκεν ἐν τῆ καρδίᾳ.

In the Septuagint sophia is always a higher concept than episteme, gnosis, sunesis, or phronesis. It is never without these, itself producing them and not produced by them. Proverbs 10:23: ἡ σοφία

<sup>22</sup>Robert Baker Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 74.

ἄνδρὶ τίκτει φρόνησιν. Kohel. 1:18: ἐν πλῆθει σοφίας  
πληθὺς γνώσεως.

5. A final observation on the Septuagint use of sophia indicates that wisdom belongs primarily to God from Whom all wisdom comes. It is that quality of God which is active in His consciously purposeful creation and preservation of the world, in the execution of His will, in the guidance of history and events (Jer. 10:12; 51:15). Wisdom is the basis of moral order, a moral power that will have its way (Proverbs 8:1 ff).

#### The Septuagint Apocrypha

In the Wisdom of Solomon God's wisdom asserts itself in the history recorded in Holy Scripture through rectification of the wrongs caused by sin; and God's wisdom also becomes the possession of those who recognize and understand God's ways and working and follow the pattern He has given (Wisdom 10). In Ecclesiasticus human wisdom appears as "prudence", growing out of fear of God, and even becomes synonymous with law (Ecclesiasticus 17:11; 1:26; 15:1; 19:20; 45:5; cp. also 4. Esdras 3:12; Apoc. Baruch 38:2; 44:14). In this connection Rylaarsdam says:

The Law, then, is the sum of wisdom, and wisdom is the consummation of the Law. . . . The surrender of the Jewish wisdom movement to the Law, beginning with Ben Sira, results ultimately, as we shall see later, in a shift from reliance upon human reason to a dependence upon divine grace and transcendent faith.<sup>23</sup>

God's wisdom, in connection with His omniscience, is declared above the

<sup>23</sup>Rylaarsdam, op. cit., p. 31.

need of a counsellor, as is proved by the *μεγαλειὰ τῆς σοφίας αὐτοῦ*.

In the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus the Old Testament concept of wisdom as operative in the "Heilsgeschichte" is weakened. In the former it is not only thrown together with the divine pronoia, but even regarded like the Stoic "World-soul" (7:22 ff). In Ecclesiasticus wisdom finally appears as plain, selfish prudence.

The great religious and moral energy of Wisdom in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes gives way to calm, comfortable reflection, until in IV Maccabees wisdom is described in terms making it more like the Greek philosophia than the old Biblical sophia. The chief emphasis rests upon the intellectual side of wisdom (cp. also Josephus Ant. 11, 5, 11 and 1 Esdras 8:23; 11:6,11).

#### Philo

According to Gremer-Koegel nothing remains of the old Biblical wisdom in the writings of Philo. Wisdom operative in history evaporates in allegories; the moral energy of wisdom given to men becomes apathetic asceticism.

#### The New Testament

The New Testament returns to the genuine Old Testament idea of wisdom, although it is not used in the same broad range.

It is but a sharpening and concentration of Old Testament ideas, when, in the New Testament, Wisdom is seen operative primarily in God's saving activity with reference to His people or His Church. What He does for His own He does knowingly, and for such final ends



and with such means as are beyond all cavil and criticism.

Closest to the Old Testament mode of expression is Revelation 7:

12: ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία  
καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχύς τῷ θεῷ ὑμῶν.

5:12: ἄξιός ἐστιν τὸ ἄρνιον. . . λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ  
πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν κτλ. Similarly, Romans 11:13: ὁ βάθος πλοῦτος  
καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ .

From here there is an easy transition to the remaining Pauline passages in which the Wisdom of God appears in the execution of His saving plan in Christ: I Cor. 2:7; 1:21; Ephesians 3:10. In the light of these passages Christ as *θεοῦ δύναμις* and *θεοῦ σοφία* (I Cor. 1:24) must be interpreted.

Corresponding to this concentration of divine Wisdom upon its saving activity are the passages dealing with human wisdom. There are only a few passages where sophia has no special religious significance (Matt. 13:42; Luke 11:31; Acts 7:22; Rev. 13:18; 17:19). In the Old Testament sense of the understanding of the will and ways of God and the ability to testify thereto: Matthew 13:54: *πόθεν τούτῳ ἡ σοφία αὐτῆ;* Mark 6:2: *τίς ἡ σοφία ἡ σοφία τούτῳ;* Luke 2:40, 52. The sophia of the boy Jesus is the cause of His sunesis and apokriseis. How definitely the ability for independent action, speech, witness, etc., lies in sophia is seen in Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10; 6:3; 7:10; Col. 1:28; 3:16.

For passages in the New Testament which connect Wisdom with the way of salvation, see: Eph. 1:8 f; Col. 1:9; 2:3; I Cor. 1:30; II Pet. 3:15. More of this connection will be presented in a later chapter.

For the "practical meaning" of sophia for proving one's Christian state Col. 4:5 has: Ἐν σοφία περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω, τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι. Following the Old Testament Chokmah in its New Testament direction is James 1:5; 3:13,15,17: ἡ ἄρθθεν σοφία. On Wisdom coming from God, see also Mark 6:2; Acts 6:3; I Cor. 12:8; Eph. 1:8,17; Col. 1:9.

In addition to divine and human wisdom there is a wisdom known as the wisdom of men, fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this age, the wisdom of the world. James 3:15: σοφία ἐπίγειος ψυχικὴ δαιμονιώδης; II Cor. 1:12: σαρκικὴ; I Cor. 2:5: ἀνθρώπων; 2:13: ἀνθρωπίνη; I Cor. 2:6: τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. For σοφία τοῦ κόσμου see: I Cor. 1:20; 3:19 (cf. 1:17,19,21; 2:1,4; Col. 3:16).

Something ought to be said at this juncture concerning the distinction between sophia and its related words in the New Testament, particularly gnosis. In the Old Testament Septuagint (supra) there was a close connection between sophia and sunesis, while gnosis was never used for Chokmah. In the New Testament it will be necessary to consider closely the difference between sophia and gnosis.

Of this distinction Trench says:

There have been various attempts to divine to each its own proper sphere of meaning. These, not always running in exactly the same lines, have this in common, that in all sophia is recognized as expressing the highest and noblest.<sup>24</sup>

The similarity between sophia and sunesis in the New Testament poses no problem. Vincent, calling them wisdom and prudence, re-

---

<sup>24</sup>R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1915).

spectively, says: "Wisdom is the more general; mental excellence in its highest and fullest sense. Prudence is the special application of wisdom; its critical adjustment to particular cases."<sup>25</sup>

Of the New Testament difference between sophia and phronesis Trench seems to hold that it is the same as that of Philo when he said: σοφία μὲν γὰρ πρὸς θεραπείαν θεοῦ, φρόνησις δὲ πρὸς ἀνθρωπίνου βίου διοίκησιν.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis in phronesis, then, would be on the practical character, as in Aristotle, over against the critical faculty of sunesis.

Our chief concern, however, is the difference between sophia and gnosis. Bengel has this to say:

. . . at present we doubt of the meaning and distinction of the very words. This is certain, that when they are ascribed to God, they differ only in their objectives; . . . when they are attributed to believers, wisdom reaches further, wider, deeper, and higher than knowledge. Knowledge is, so to speak, sight; wisdom, sight with taste. Knowledge is of things to be done; wisdom, of things eternal; hence also, wisdom is said not to pass away (I Cor. 13:8), and knowledge is more frequent.<sup>27</sup>

In the Strack-Zoeckler commentary on Romans 11:33 we find:

Sophia praktisch, Vermoegen der rechten Beurteilung, also das richtige zu treffen, fuer den entsprechenden Zweck die entsprechenden Mittel zu finden. Gnosis theoretisch, durchschauende u. Liebende Erkenntnis des Vorliegenden—also insonderheit des Menschen in seiner Beduerftigkeit—um danach in

<sup>25</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), III, 191.

<sup>26</sup>Trench, op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>27</sup>John Albert Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament, Translated by Lewis and Vincent (Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, New York: Sheldon & Company, 1862), II, 235.

seiner Weisheit Zweck und Mittel zu bestimmen.<sup>28</sup>

That sophia is particularly concerned with man's moral character, while its related words are not, is common opinion. Vincent clearly brings this out in his comments on the sophia-gnoosis distinction. He says:

It is agreed on all hands that wisdom is the nobler attribute, being bound up with moral character as knowledge is not. Hence sophia is ascribed in Scripture only to God or to good men, unless it is used ironically (I Cor. 1:20; 2:6) . . . As applied to human acquaintance with divine things, gnoosis is the lower, sophia the higher stage. Knowledge may issue in self-conceit. It is wisdom that builds up the man (I Cor. 8:1).<sup>29</sup>

Cremer-Koegel have an interesting note on the difference between logos sophias and logos gnoosecos (I Cor. 12:8). The logos sophias implies a measure of understanding of God's saving counsel and will beyond anything previous, which is then applied by the logos gnoosecos. Otherwise expressed: logos sophias conveys a total view of God's saving will (in Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians almost identical with Weltanschauung), while logos gnoosecos penetrates into points of detail.

In conclusion Cremer says that sophia in the New Testament looks two ways, accordingly as it appears influenced by either Greek or Jewish thought. In the latter case, as in James and part of Paul, it refers to the practical conduct of life and the practical moral judgment. In the former case it approaches the Greek idea of philosophia,

<sup>28</sup>Strack-Zoekler, Die Briefe an die Thessaloniker, Galater, Korinther, und Roemer (Muenchen: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894), s. 518.

<sup>29</sup>Vincent, op. cit., p. 131.

in the sense of a total world view orientated in God, resulting from a penetration into God's plan of salvation for the world. This furnishes, in the eyes of the New Testament writers, the key for the proper understanding of the world and its history.

It is natural and logical to assume that the heredity and environment of Saint Paul, under the Holy Spirit's direction, played an important role in the development of his theology. The extent of this hereditary and environmental influence has long been debated. It is believed by some that the Apostle was influenced chiefly by his contact with Judaism. Others hold that his theology reflects the operation of Hellenistic thought.

It must be remembered on this subject that no matter what terminology or philosophical concepts Paul may have assimilated into his thinking, his thinking was something entirely new and different. Saint Paul, like Jesus, had very distinct concepts and views, and filled them with new meaning. He introduced terms for his new Hellenistic, Jewish, Islamic, and other ideas. The vision of existence revealed to him a specific Hellenistic and a specific Islamic.

To determine just how Paul's vision of God differed from all previous or contemporary conceptions of God, it will be necessary to review the idea of a personal God current in Paul's day. How did Paul conceive of this Father God? What were the conceptions of pre-Christian Judaism and Hellenistic syncretism concerning God?

It is important with the Paul that the Apostle Paul was a Jew, and a Jew of the Jews. He was the offspring of a Jewish

### CHAPTER III

#### THE INFLUENCE OF JUDAISM UPON PAUL'S WISDOM THEOLOGY

It is natural and logical to assume that the heredity and environment of Saint Paul, under the Holy Spirit's direction, played an important role in the development of his theology. The extent of this hereditary and environmental influence has long been debated. It is believed by some that the Apostle was influenced chiefly by his contact with Judaism. Others hold that his theology reflects the syncretism of Hellenistic thought.

It must be remembered at the outset that no matter what terminology or philosophical concepts Paul may have assimilated into his thinking, his theology was something entirely new and different. Saint Paul, like John, took over current concepts and terms, and filled them with new meaning. Righteousness became for him a new Righteousness. Wisdom became a new Wisdom. The vision of Damascus revealed to him a specific Righteousness and a specific Wisdom.

To determine just how Paul's Wisdom of God differed from all previous or contemporary conceptions of Wisdom, it will be necessary to review the ideas of a personalized Wisdom current in Paul's day. How did Paul conceive of Wisdom before Damascus? What were the conceptions of pre-Christian Judaism and Hellenistic syncretism concerning Wisdom?

We are acquainted with the fact that the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee, and a devout one at that. His was the opportunity of study-

ing under one of Pharisaism's greatest teachers. He was therefore well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures and the Rabbinical traditions.

Despite its dead dogmatism and cold formalism, Pharisaism served a definite purpose in God's plan for mankind. In an age of heathen syncretism the Pharisees preserved the worship of the true God and paved the way for Christianity.

It was from Pharisaism that Paul received his high reward for the Old Testament. His references and quotations from its pages reveal his respect for its authenticity and authority. When he preached in the synagogues, he sought to prove "from the Scriptures" that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ of God. He had been able to see many of its prophecies fulfilled in his precious Lord.

Christianity in its inception was a religion of the Jews. Even though Paul emphasized the universal character of the Gospel, he began his preaching in the synagogues. It is therefore logical to assume that Paul would employ Jewish terminology and ideas of expression in his speech and in his epistles. Since a part of our problem is to determine whether or not Paul identifies Christ with the Wisdom of God, we shall examine the opinions of contemporary Judaism, where it had long been customary to speak of Wisdom as a person distinct from Jahweh.

When and where did this personification of Wisdom begin? It will be our endeavor in this chapter to present as concisely as possible the origin and development of the Old Testament Chokmah and its functions in God and man. Our compilation of the theories projected must necessarily be limited in keeping with the scope of this thesis.

## Origin of the Personification of Wisdom

That Chokmah in the Old Testament is more than a mere attribute of God is adduced by the majority of scholars. Most believe that the personified Chokmah, especially in Proverbs 8, is identifiable with Christ, but they are not agreed upon the origin of this personification.

Rankin,<sup>1</sup> who places much emphasis on the influence of Israel's neighbors in the development of her religion and theology, claims that the personification of wisdom is in keeping with the coming of a definite monotheism in Israel. Especially after the exile, he says, Jahveh becomes for Israel a transcendent Being. In order that there may be contact between man and this supra-mundane God, it was necessary that there be intermediaries. These were angels, who were substituted for the deities of polytheism. They later became the equivalent of divine attributes, representing the functions of the Supreme Being.

Thus, explains Rankin, The Spirit<sup>2</sup> of God and the Word<sup>3</sup> of God became hypostases or personifications of divine activity and power. Wisdom is in like manner personified,<sup>4</sup> receiving a higher place than the Spirit or the Word.<sup>5</sup> (Of this relationship between Wisdom and the

<sup>1</sup>Oliver Shaw Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), p. 222 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Job 33:4; Jud. 16:15; Apoc. Bar. 23:5 as world creating power; Sep. Sol. 1:7 as filling all things; Is. 63:10 as ruling in history.

<sup>3</sup>Ps. 107:20; 119:50.

<sup>4</sup>Prov. 1-9; Job 28; Sirach 24:3-6; Baruch 3:9-4:4 and in I & II Enoch.

<sup>5</sup>Rankin, op. cit., p. 224.



Word, Wisdom and the Law, and Wisdom and the Spirit, more will be said later.)

While Rankin believes that foreign religions, especially Persian and Iranian cults, were instrumental in developing the personification of Wisdom, he is fair in his presentation of opposing views. He cites the conclusion of Eduard Meyer,<sup>6</sup> who believes that although the personification of Wisdom 'has its analogies in Zoroastrianism', yet it is a 'natural and independent product of Jewish thought'.

He also presents the view of Heinisch<sup>7</sup> who agrees in the main with Meyer when he says: 'An attribute of Jahveh has grown into an hypostasis through the urge of poetic speech to describe divine attributes as persons, a process in which supernatural guidance was not wanting'.

Then Rankin proceeds to strengthen his own conviction by quoting Bousset and Bultmann. "Bousset rightly remarks that this personified Wisdom 'emerges so suddenly in Jewish literature and so mysteriously, that we may at once conclude that it is of alien origin'". He sympathizes with Bultmann also, who says: "'Wisdom speculation is not of Jewish origin. The figure (of Wisdom) and its mythos cannot be explained from Israelitish-Jewish premises'".

Rylaarsdam also stresses the similarities between the wisdom movements of Babylon, Egypt, and Israel.<sup>8</sup> He points to Israel's assimi-

---

<sup>6</sup>Rankin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup>Rankin, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>8</sup>J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, c.1946), p. 18.

lation of foreign religious elements as an established fact:

. . . The capacity of Hebrew religion to assimilate foreign forms and ideas is historically attested in many ways. Students of Hebrew civilization and culture have repeatedly shown how specific feasts and rites, once celebrated in honor of other deities, . . . were ultimately incorporated in the Yahweh cultus. . . . Thus the rules of life and the ideas of human existence, which were the wisdom given to men by such Babylonian and Egyptian deities as Ea, Shamash, Re, Toth, and Horus, were attributed to Yahweh; and Yahweh became the guarantor of the rewards that resulted from obeying the rules. Finally, it falls out that only a Jew who knows and obeys the Mosaic Law is capable of possessing or profiting by this wisdom.

One may conclude that the views and theories concerning the origin of the personification of Wisdom are speculative. They cannot be historically determined. This much is evident: that the Hebrew conception of Wisdom was peculiarly different from any other. Even though the holy writers of the Old Testament may have used terms current in their day, they filled them with new and different concepts to harmonize with their true worship of Jahweh.

We cannot, then, accuse early Judaism of syncretism. Their use of foreign terminology does not imply acceptance of foreign philosophies and religious beliefs. Wisdom from its beginning was for Israel a specific Wisdom with a specific purpose and function for Jahweh's chosen people.

#### Functions of the Personified Wisdom

The writer found a concise and complete outline of the functions of the personified Wisdom of Prov. 1-9 in the previously mentioned work of O. S. Rankin.<sup>9</sup> We shall employ this outline with only slight

---

<sup>9</sup>Rankin, op. cit., p. 243.

revision:

- 1) Wisdom was begotten of God before the world was created.
- 2) She was installed or appointed by God either to rule or to be an associate with Him in His rule.
- 3) Wisdom was a master of works or artificer whose plans for the creation were evidently studied and approved by Jahve, Jahve Himself being the Creator.<sup>10</sup>
- 4) Wisdom is an associate of Jahve in whom He has constant delight.
- 5) Wisdom's message and functions are particularly concerned with mankind: She reveals the way of life and righteousness.
- 6) Wisdom's dwelling or house has seven pillars.
- 7) She is contrasted with Folly (or "woman" of foolishness), and what She bestows is compared with what Folly offers: the ways of Folly are Death.
- 8) The character of Wisdom's message is a proclamation of Truth, Righteousness, Knowledge, and Judgment, Justice, or Law.

In the remainder of this chapter we shall briefly summarize these eight points under two main divisions: A. "Wisdom's Relation to the Father"; B. "Wisdom's Relation to Mankind". Later in Chapters V and VI we shall again use these divisions when we analyze Paul's conception of Christ as the Sophia on the basis of his epistles.

#### Wisdom's Relation To The Father

1. Wisdom was begotten of God before the world was created.

In Proverbs 8:22-23 we read: "The Lord possessed me (wisdom) in

---

<sup>10</sup>For our purposes we shall change point 3 to read: . . . whose plans for the creation were shared by Jahve, being co-Creator with Jahve.

the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

Scholars are agreed that Proverbs 8 speaks of a personalized Wisdom existing before the creation of the world. Since Scripture is very clear on this point, there is no argument. The difficulty begins when the Chokmah of Proverbs 8 is identified with Christ. This raises the question: Is the Chokmah merely the first of all created things, or did it proceed from the Father of eternity?

According to Delitzsch the Chokmah, while it is a power active in the creation of the world, it has itself been created. He speaks of Wisdom as a creature above all other creatures. Proverbs 8:22 is made to read: "The Lord prepared (not possessed) me. . ." He says:

Die Weisheit ist nicht selber Gott, sondern Gottes, sie hat der neutestamentliche Offenbarung zufolge im Logos persönliches Dasein, aber ist nicht der Logos selbst; sie ist die Weltidee, welche, einmal entworfen, Gotte gegenständlich ist, nicht als todttes Schemen, sondern als lebendiges Geistesbild; sie ist das Urbild der Welt, welches aus Gott entstanden vor Gott steht, die Welt der Idee, welche das Medium zwischen der Gottheit und der Welt der Wirklichkeit bildet, die bei der Entstehung und Vollendung der Welt, so wie Gott diese haben will, betheiligte geistige Macht. Diese Weisheit personificiert hier der Dichter, er redet nicht vom persönlichen Logos, aber der weitere Offenbarungsverlauf weist ihre faktische Personification im Logos nach.<sup>11</sup>

This paragraph provides a comprehensive synopsis for the views of a large number of scholars.

Others regard the Chokmah in Proverbs 8 as more than a poetical personification. They consider it an hypostatization referring to

---

<sup>11</sup>Carl F. Keil und Franz Delitzsch, Biblischer Kommentar Ueber das Alte Testament. Die Poetischen Buecher des alten Testaments von Franz Delitzsch, Dritter Band: Das Balomonische Spruchbuch (Leipzig: Doerffling und Franke, 1873), p. 141 ff.

Christ, the Logos of John. Some hold that to deny the eternity of the Chokmah would mean the denial of the eternal generation of the Son. We must be sure of ourselves, however, before we brand anyone with the stamp of Arianism. It would be possible for a man to deny the eternal generation of the Chokmah and still believe in the eternal generation of Christ. If it is definitely proved that the Chokmah is the Logos of John, then of course, there would be no argument, since John definitely speaks of the eternal begetting of "the Word".

It is not our purpose at this time to prove that the Chokmah of Proverbs 8 is the Logos of John. Suffice it to say that when Proverbs 8:23 says, "I was set up from everlasting", it would appear that the Chokmah was begotten of God from all eternity.

2. Wisdom was installed or appointed by God either to rule or to be an associate with Him in His rule.

In Proverbs 8:22-23 we find that Wisdom is spoken of as having been brought forth or generated. It would seem, then, that Wisdom was more than an attribute of God. It would appear to be a distinct entity, separate from God; a person, proceeding from God, ruling with God.

Could this be the "my Lord" of Psalm 110? We read there: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right Hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion and rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."

That Wisdom is operative in the rule of the world is indicated by verses 15 and 16 of Proverbs 8: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth". The latter part of the chapter indicates that Wisdom

rules with the Father over all the affairs of men.

3. Wisdom was a master of works or artificer whose plans for the creation were shared by Jahve, being co-Creator with Jahve.

The Psalmist says: "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath He established the heavens".

Scholars are agreed that Wisdom was present at the time of creation. Whether or not she was actively present is another matter. Crucial in determining this active presence of Chokmah in the creation is the translation of verse 30. The King James version reads: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him". Some scholars maintain that amon does not simply mean "brought up", but that it is related to the verb amen, "to be firm, sure, skilled in one's art". Luther and Delitzsch translate it as "Werkmeister". The Chokmah then would become the "Master Workman", the co-Architect, the co-Creator of the universe.<sup>12</sup> The Book of the Wisdom of Solomon<sup>13</sup> calls Wisdom the artificer of all things.

Delitzsch considers the Chokmah a "force", created by God to assist Him in the work of creation. Those who regard the Chokmah as the Logos asarkos naturally object, for such an interpretation would deny the participation of Christ in the creation of the world.<sup>14</sup>

4. Wisdom is an associate of Jahve in whom He has constant delight.

---

<sup>12</sup>Psalm 104 also speaks of Wisdom sharing in the work of creation, although it cannot be proved to be the Personal Wisdom.

<sup>13</sup>7:22.

<sup>14</sup>Keil und Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 147.

The term חֵן וְצֶדֶק is said to have spiritual significance throughout the Old Testament.<sup>15</sup> It is never a carnal pleasure.<sup>16</sup> For those who identify Chokmah with Christ there is a striking parallel to this delight of the Father in the New Testament: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

#### Wisdom's Relation to Mankind

1. Wisdom's message and functions are particularly concerned with mankind: She reveals the way of life and righteousness.

Wisdom is not only the object of delight. She herself rejoices and delights with the sons of men (Proverbs 8:31). This delight reminds us of the creation account, where Jahweh says of His work, "And it was good". It was a joy for Wisdom to see what She had created. Particularly does She delight in man, the crown of creation.

Wisdom invites man to partake of what She offers. "Blessed are they that keep my ways". Her ways are the ways of life, for "whoso findeth me, findeth life, . . . all they that love me hate death". The wise man accepts her and is led to God; only the fool says, "There is no God".

2. Wisdom's dwelling or house has seven pillars.

Wisdom's house in Proverbs 9:1 is contrasted with the house of the harlot (Proverbs 7:8). Some scholars hold that this is a reference to the seven planets which were considered the seven pillars of the world

---

<sup>15</sup>Cp. Ps. 119:24; Jer. 31:20.

<sup>16</sup>Rudolph Henscy, The Personal Wisdom in Proverbs Eight (B. D. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 1945), pp. 48-9.

structure. Others believe there is a reference to the seven pillars of the tower of Babel.<sup>17</sup>

Another view maintains that the seven pillars are not the pillars of wisdom's house, but of herself. Seven is the number of completeness, for perfection. Wisdom rests on perfection, wisdom is perfection.

Some scholars maintain that Wisdom's house is the spiritual and everlasting Church (I Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22), composed of the body of true believers (I Cor. 3:17), which house is "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).<sup>18</sup>

3. Wisdom is contrasted with Folly (or "woman" of foolishness), and what she bestows is compared with what Folly offers: the ways of Folly are death.

Rankin and others would have us believe that the "woman" of Folly is a foreign goddess, most likely Astarte, whose priestesses invite the young Israelites to be their partners in the fertility cults.<sup>19</sup> This would account for the allusions to Folly as an adulteress and a harlot, since the worship of Astarte included gross sexual immorality. We may here have a background for the common expression: "And Israel went whoring after other gods."<sup>20</sup>

Whatever the reference, we are certain that Folly is in direct

<sup>17</sup>Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co.), III, 441.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Rankin, op. cit., pp. 229-31.

<sup>20</sup>Op. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (Cambridge: University Press, MCMXXIX), p. 61-2.



opposition to Wisdom. It is the antithesis of all that Wisdom promotes. Wisdom begets knowledge; Folly begets ignorance (Proverbs 9:13 ff). Wisdom is righteousness; Folly is sinful (Proverbs 8:8). Wisdom offers Life; Folly leads to Death (7:27).

4. The character of Wisdom's message is a proclamation of Truth, Righteousness, Knowledge, and Judgment, Justice, or Law.

It would take us too far afield to conduct a detailed study of the Chokmah's rich message to mankind. We shall consider its content when we discuss the message of Paul's Sophia in a later chapter. Suffice it to say at this time that Wisdom's message is something that is active and makes active. When men are filled with its preachment, they receive power to know the Truth, the Way, and the Life. The Chokmah instills knowledge and discernment of God's plan for man. It begins with the fear of God and ends with an understanding of His promises. "The wise man proves himself to be such by living like one who is constantly reflecting on the purposes of God."<sup>21</sup>

It must be noted in conclusion that the same functions which were attributed to the Chokmah were also included in the functions of the Memra and the Torah. We have already seen that Ecclesiasticus equates the Torah and the Chokmah, ascribing to both the same purpose. The Apocryphal books, beginning with Ben Sira continue and strengthen the equation, shifting the emphasis from the Wisdom to the Law.<sup>22</sup>

In earlier Judaism Wisdom receives a higher place than the Word.

---

<sup>21</sup>G. F. Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament, Translated by Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875), II, 451.

<sup>22</sup>Supra: Chapter I, p. 11.

In the following chapter we shall consider their similarity and the rising importance of the Memra, resulting in Philo's equation of Wisdom with the Logos.

While rejecting the current assumptions as to the influence of Hellenism on Jewish theology, we cannot ignore the presence. Philo lived in a Greek world. He was familiar with its language and its culture, its philosophies and its religions. Would it not be logical to assume that his preaching among the Gentiles would be in terms and thought patterns which Gentiles would understand?

Stoicism was the great philosophy of his current in Philo's day. It had long replaced the older schools. Since Jesus was a master of Greek learning, we can assume Philo's acquaintance with its teachings, as James Stewart says:

That the apostles, then, when they made their Greek work of thought, and that Jesus and those he has revealed himself of their ideas, seem to the present writer quite certain. The Stoic's "Logos", his belief in a divine principle of logic, a principle which the Christian preacher to use in illustration out of the lines along which nature was unceasingly being prepared for Christ, it is very like Philo's idea of divine ideas and theology and not to be overlooked. To say that his writings show a knowledge of ideas which were in the air when he was writing does not at all imply dependence. It certainly does not imply that Philo had ever attended lectures in a Greek school. It simply implies that the man was intellectually active.

Stewart then continues by showing the great differences between Philo and the Stoics. The latter was predominantly religious in a day.

<sup>1</sup>James H. Stewart, *A Man in Search of God: The Story of Philo of Alexandria* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers), p. 200.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE INFLUENCE OF HELLENISM AND THE JEWISH-ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL UPON PAUL'S WISDOM THEOLOGY

While rejecting the current overemphasis on the influence of Hellenism on Pauline theology, we cannot ignore its presence. Paul lived in a Greek world. He was familiar with its language and its culture, its philosophies and its religions. Would it not be logical to assume that his preaching among the Gentiles would be in terms and thought patterns which Gentiles would understand?

Stoicism was the great philosophy of life current in Paul's day. It had long replaced the older schools. Since Tarsus was a center of Stoic learning, we can assume Paul's acquaintance with its teachings, as James Stewart says:

That the apostle, then, knew the main Stoic trends of thought, and that here and there he has availed himself of their ideas, seems to the present writer quite certain. The Stoic's 'humanitas', his belief in a divine principle or logos, . . . predisposed the Christian preacher to see in Stoicism one of the lines along which paganism was unconsciously being prepared for Christ. At the same time Paul's debt to Stoic ideas and terminology must not be overestimated. To say that his epistles show a knowledge of ideas which were in the air when he was writing does not at all imply dependence. It certainly does not imply that Paul had ever attended lectures in a Stoic school. It simply implies that the man was intellectually awake.<sup>1</sup>

Stewart then continues by showing the vital differences between Paul and Stoicism. The latter was pantheistic, believing in a dim,

---

<sup>1</sup>James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers), pp. 59-60.

vague world-spirit, "The Unknown God", while Paul preached a personal God, the God revealed in the person of Christ. Stoicism was anthropocentric. Man was but a microcosm of the divine Spirit, becoming the cause of his own salvation. Like the syncretism of Christianity's modernism today, Stewart says: "It could speak of a God within, but it could offer no God without".

Against this idea Paul stressed repeatedly man's complete dependence upon God's grace. In terms familiar to Stoicism he emphasized forensic justification and man's total depravity.

Stoicism stressed the brotherhood of man as a culture common to all men which would one day pervade all men. Paul, on the other hand, spoke of a brotherhood in which all men are bound together by love, regardless of culture, as the sons of God. The Stoic terms eros, philia, and philanthropia gave way to agapé.

The motive for life in the Stoic mind lay in the individual. A man was self-sufficient, self-controlled, autarkees. Paul's sufficiency was of Christ: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me".

Stoicism in the final analysis led to despair. God became Fate. Life ended with physical death: "Tomorrow we are dead". For Paul life had a different meaning: "For me to live is Christ; to die is gain". His was a theology of peace and hope and joy.

Despite this variance between Stoicism and Christianity, we cannot deny that Paul used Stoic terminology and ideas. How were such ideas taken over by Paul and filled with Christian meaning? Had anyone else attempted to reconcile Stoic philosophy with Jewish or Christian

thought?

There had been a movement in the Jewish-Alexandrian School to link Judaism with Hellenistic philosophy. Philo, its chief exponent, in his effort to make Judaism appeal to the Greek mind, adopted Greek terms to express Old Testament concepts. This reconciliation between Judaism and Hellenism was effected, says Knox, by the figure of Wisdom:

In Alexandria from the middle of the second century B.C. Judaism was in contact with Hellenistic philosophy, with which it was bound to come to terms, if it was to retain its hold on the intelligent and educated members of the nation. The sacrifices which loyalty to the religion of Israel demanded could not be asked of any but the most ignorant, unless Judaism could find means of reconciling itself with the attitude of the intelligent and cultured outlook of mankind. Wisdom provided the means of reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

It was generally assumed, then, that Philo substituted for the personal Chokmah of the Old Testament the Logos of Hellenism. Their close relationship demands that we briefly summarize the development of the Greek Logos doctrine. Since time and space does not permit a thorough investigation of original sources, we shall condense the opinions of Andrews.<sup>3</sup>

Before Heraclitus the Greeks had thought in terms of the physical, but "he introduced the conception of a principle of reason pervading the cosmic process and at work in the process". Then Plato and Aristotle developed their dualistic theory of ideas, dividing the

---

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (Cambridge: The University Press, MCMXXXIX), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Elias Andrews, The Meaning of Christ for Paul (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press), p. 165.

universe into a material world and a world of higher reality.

The Stoics objected to this rigid dualism, preferring to return to the "Heraclitean principle of an eternal reason, permeating the world in all its parts and even residing in man's own soul". Very interesting to note is that the Stoics termed this reason the spermatikos logos.

The similarity between the Greek Logos and the Chokmah is very evident. It is not difficult to understand that Philo would ascribe the functions of the Chokmah to the Logos. A particular example of this equation is the Jewish-Alexandrine exegesis on the story of the Rock that followed the children of Israel through the desert (Ex. 17:6; Num. 21:17). Knox says:

In two passages we find the rock equated with the divine Wisdom; in the later of the two we have an equation of the water from the rock with the manna, which again is equated with the Logos; we could need no clearer evidence that here the Logos and Wisdom are merely different names for the same thing, the divine element diffused throughout the cosmos.<sup>4</sup>

For the sake of completeness we ought to add the opinion of Bultmann that the Logos of John was dependent on another source in addition to Hellenistic Judaism. The idea of the Logos as the divine bearer of revelation is of much earlier origin. He looks for it in Mandaeen sources:

Bultmann, in his study of 'the religious historical background of the prologue of the gospel according to John' argues that while Stoic teaching which influenced Hellenistic Jewish writers was able to do ample justice to the idea of the Logos as a cosmic power, and while in the Wisdom literature of Judaism there is the idea of Wisdom as an immanent power of understanding and knowledge,

---

<sup>4</sup>Knox, op. cit., p. 89.

there is reason to search for the idea of the Logos or Word as the deity of revelation, as the divine Bearer of revelation, in sources of religious belief of a much earlier date than that of Hellenistic Judaism. In seeking for this source Bultmann draws attention to the Mandaeen doctrine of the cosmic, or heavenly Man, Enosh-Uthra, who is described as 'a (or, the) Word, a son of words'. This means that, since Mandaeen sources reflect Iranian religious thought, Persian mythology is probably the ultimate source of the concept of the Word as divinity of revelation.<sup>5</sup>

Another scholar, H. H. Schraeder, also identifies the Memra, the Logos, and the Chokmah with Enosh, the heavenly Man. He holds that John's prologue is a Christianizing of a Gnostic Aramaic hymn. John is said to have translated the "Memra" of this hymn with "Logos".

This late Jewish Gnostic hymn extolled the identity (Einheit) of the divine Messenger who should come into the world—that is, the cosmic or heavenly Man, Enosh—and the Light of the divine Word, or Memra. . . . The aspect of Schraeder's conclusions . . . is his view that the Word (Memra) which he takes to be substantially the same as the personified Wisdom of the Wisdom literature was united by Jewish Gnosticism with the heavenly Man.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, the above paragraphs are speculative theory. They have no direct bearing on our problem, since we are concerned with the Judaistic and Hellenistic background of the Apostle. Their content merely serves to show that some scholars wish to make the New Testament writers dependent upon a great many outside influences and will go to great lengths to try to prove their syncretistic theories.

This fact, then, is well established: That there is a definite connection between the Jewish figure of Wisdom and the Greek Logos. We cannot assume that this affinity between Wisdom and the Word is

---

<sup>5</sup>Oliver Shaw Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), p. 225.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

wholly dependent upon Greek influence. Already before the time of Philo there had been a movement in Judaism to lay greater stress on the Memra, which no doubt influenced Philo in his development of the Logos doctrine.

In Hebrew thought, the "Word of God" meant the purpose of God, uttered so as to realize that purpose. It is the creator and sustainer of the universe, which would relapse again into primordial chaos should the Word of God be withdrawn. 'It was natural', writes Dr. E. F. Scott, 'for Philo to advance a step on the Jewish speculation of his time and to identify the 'word' of the Old Testament with the stoic logos. . . . The Logos of Philo requires to be understood in the light of this double descent from Hellenic and Old Testament thought'. This identification he actually made, as Scott suggests, when he describes the word of God as that word by which 'the whole universe was created, . . . the same Logos producing the totality of things. . . .' Moreover, Philo also identified the Logos with wisdom, declaring that 'goodness' finds its source in wisdom which is 'the Logos of God.'<sup>7</sup>

We could assume from the above quotation that the functions of the Greek Logos, the Hebrew Memra, and the Hebrew Chokmah were much the same. As we have already seen, the Old Testament had nearly equated Wisdom with the Word. Of the similarity between the Chokmah and the Logos Knox states that apart from an incidental difference "Wisdom has no real function to differentiate her from the Logos".<sup>8</sup>

Since this striking similarity exists, it is difficult to determine which of the two concepts--the Chokmah or the Logos--exerted a greater influence on Pauline Wisdom theology. There are those who insist that his cosmic conception of Christ is dependent solely on the Hebrew Wisdom, that there is no need to bring the Logos of Hellenism

---

<sup>7</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>8</sup>Knox, op. cit., p. 85.



into the picture at all.

Why should there be a hesitation to admit a relationship between Paul and Jewish-Alexandrine thought? Couldn't Paul have taken over the current concepts of the Logos and Wisdom and filled them with a new, more glorious meaning? He did so with Righteousness, Grace, Law. Why not Sophia? In effect, Paul could have said, and did say, to his Greek readers: You people are acquainted with a divine world principle; you call it the divine nous, the Wisdom, the Logos, the "Unknown God". Now, I'm telling you this God is not unknown; He has manifested Himself in the flesh. He is the embodiment of all wisdom and power. He is the pre-existent life principle Who created all things and Who becomes life for all who accept Him and His wisdom. He is the Wisdom of God. He is God.

While Paul employed the language concepts of Hellenism, he was also concerned about a harmful influence of Greek thought. The "wisdom of men", as he called it, in the form of gnosticism and other "isms" was the object of severe denunciation on his part.

A fusion of paganism and Judaism has produced a syncretism which advocated forms of ascetic practice and discipline, the worship of angels, and boasted of a superior wisdom. Though some have denied that the heresy was in any way related to gnosticism, claiming that the latter developed much later, an increasing number of scholars are recognizing that the type of thought usually described as gnosticism was part of a general movement of philosophical or pseudophilosophical thinking that had been in progress even earlier than Paul's time. Its danger to Christianity lay in the fact that it claimed to improve and to enrich the gospel, to supplement the redemption wrought in Christ. The supremacy of Christ was thus challenged and the finality of the Christian salvation brought into question.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p. 162.

Paul would have nothing to do with any "abstract" Logos of Philo or anyone else. His Sophia of God was an active, creative, sustaining personality. It is perhaps because of Philo's abstract concept of the Logos as reason that Saint Paul fails to use the term. We definitely know, however, that Paul had a Logos Christology in mind.<sup>10</sup> He nowhere contradicts John's conception of the Christ, but he preferred to express Him in terms of a wisdom theology, probably because of the personal character which the Old Testament had ascribed to Wisdom.

There are scholars, on the other hand, as Machen, that deny the presence of a wisdom theology in Paul. Machen takes great pains to refute the view of Windisch that Christ was for Paul the "hypostasized" Wisdom of the Old Testament. He bases his argument on the fact that nowhere in pre-Christian Judaism was the Messiah conceived of "either as being active in creation or as dwelling in the hearts of men."

The figure of the Messiah in the apocalypses is as incongruous as anything can possibly be with the idea of spiritual indwelling. Wisdom is conceived of as dwelling in the hearts of men only because Wisdom in Jewish literature is not really or completely a concrete person, but is also an abstract quality. The Messiah is a concrete person and hence is not thought of as indwelling. It was something absolutely without precedent, therefore, when Paul regarded his Christ—who is nothing if not a person, and a person who may be loved—as dwelling in the heart of the believer.<sup>11</sup>

In his summary of the relationship between Pauline theology and the Old Testament Wisdom Machen says:

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 164 & 168.

<sup>11</sup>J. Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 202.

The figure of Wisdom in Jewish literature, with its curious vacillation between personality and abstraction, is absolutely incongruous with the warm, living, concrete, personal figure of the Pauline Christ. The two belong to totally different circles of ideas. No wonder that even Bousset (as Windisch complains) has not ventured to bring them into connection. The Pauline Christology was certainly not based upon the pre-Christian doctrine of Wisdom.<sup>12</sup>

Whether or not Machen believes that there is a Logos theology in Paul is not clear. It is not likely that he would, since the Logos concept and the Old Testament Chokmah are so closely related.

Much has been said and written about the influence of the Eastern mystery cults upon Pauline theology. Since they contain very little that has specific reference to Wisdom or the Logos principle which is different from Hellenistic philosophy, we shall not discuss them. In the following chapter, when we consider the functions of Christ as the Sophia of God on the basis of Paul's epistles, they may come into the picture by way of comparison.

Stewart sums up their importance when he says:

It is unnecessary and unsound to trace back to the mystery religions conceptions whose true ancestry might more profitably be looked for in the Old Testament.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>13</sup>Stewart, op. cit., p. 73.

## CHAPTER V

### CHRIST THE SOPHIA IN RELATION TO THE FATHER

In the preceding chapters we traced briefly the philological and historical development of Wisdom. We saw that certain concepts and movements within Judaism and Hellenism proved to be a preparatio evangelica for Christianity in general and Pauline Wisdom theology in particular.

It shall be our endeavor in this chapter to discover to what extent Paul's presentation of Christ agrees with former conceptions of Wisdom. Stewart warns us that this is "risky business", and we are inclined to agree.

It is a risky business, admittedly, to try to make old categories do duty for a totally new experience, especially when that experience itself directly negates much of the older position; and it may be questioned whether the concepts of righteousness, justification, and so forth, which Paul inherited from Judaism, were always adequate to the purpose to which he put them.<sup>1</sup>

He continues with the thought we expressed previously: that Paul filled the old concepts with new meaning and new life.

But just as it was the fact of redemption he was dealing with, so the very concepts used have, as it were, been redeemed and born again. The old categories begin to live and breathe with a vitality that Rabbinism had never put into them. Damascus meant a rediscovered Old Testament. . . . Righteousness, justification, all the familiar conceptions, were still there, but shining now with a light how different, how transfiguring, how wonderful!<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>James S. Stewart, A Man In Christ (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

So also Paul's concept of Wisdom was a change. All the vague ideas of Wisdom before Damascus became real for him in the person of Christ, the complete and perfect Wisdom of God.

Just what does Paul mean in I Corinthians 1:24, where he calls Christ the Wisdom of God? Is he conscious of the personified Chokmah of the Old Testament? The first chapter of I Corinthians speaks of several kinds of wisdom (wisdom of the wise, wisdom of the world, wisdom of God, etc.). Hence, it has been said that Paul is not actually personifying wisdom when he applies the term to Christ in verse 24. He is referring to Christ only as the mediating agent through Whom we receive the wisdom of God; He is not Wisdom itself.

Such a view disregards the fact that John also gives the term logos several meanings. It appears not only as the personal Word, but also as: 1) a spoken utterance, a saying, a narrative, or discourse; 2) instruction, doctrine, or preachment. So also the term sophia in Paul is not confined to one specific meaning, but this does not prevent a possible personification any more than in the case of John's logos.

In our discussion of sophia in Paul we shall follow John's method. In the fourth gospel he first presents the personal Logos. Then he follows with the logoi of the Logos—namely, His instruction, His preachment—in opposition to the logoi of men. This chapter, then, will proceed with the assumption that Christ is the personal Sophia, in that He fulfills the functions of the Chokmah of Proverbs 8. The following chapter will describe the activity of the Sophia as He dispenses His sophia to mankind and overpowers the wisdom of the world.

For our study we shall follow the outline of the functions of the personal Chokmah presented in Chapter III, substituting Christ for Wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

1. Christ, the Wisdom, was begotten of God before the world was created.

That Paul plainly sets forth Christ as pre-existent is beyond doubt. "Paul does not anywhere seek to establish the belief by argument. Indeed, he assumes it, and presupposes that it is so familiar to his readers as to be beyond dispute".<sup>4</sup>

The first passage we shall examine is one of the most widely disputed of all of Paul's Christological references, Colossians 1:15:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Some scholars, such as Baur, Holtzmann, and Porter have failed to recognize this passage as Pauline, because of its strange speculation on the person of Christ. We are inclined, however, to agree with Davies when he says:

Textually, however, there is no justification whatever for accepting the views of any of these scholars and to solve our difficulties by recourse to the knife is to violate the objectivity which should characterize our study. We therefore accept these verses as being Pauline.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>Supra: Chapter III, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Elias Andrews, The Meaning of Christ for Paul (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949), p. 151.

<sup>5</sup>W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: S. P. C. K., 1948), p. 151.

Lightfoot is of the opinion that the idea of the Logos definitely runs through this entire passage. The person of Christ, he says, "is described first in relation more especially to Deity, as εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, and secondly in relation more especially to created things, as πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως. The fundamental conception of the Logos involves the idea of mediation between God and creation." Since teachers at Colossae had perverted the idea of this mediation, Paul had to present the true doctrine of Christ as the eternal Logos.<sup>6</sup>

It is significant to note that Philo frequently used the term εἰκὼν when speaking of the Logos. He identified the term in Gen. 1:26, κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν, κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ, with the Logos.<sup>7</sup> Of this relationship to Gen. 1:26-27 Kittel says:

Die εἰκὼν θεοῦ ist dem Paulus ohne allen Zweifel eine in Gen. 1:27 gegebene Grösse; wenn er sie, die dort auf Adam bezogen ist, auf Christus uübertraegt, so kann dies wohl nur auf Grund einer ihm geläufigen Gleichsetzung Christi mit dem in Gen. 1:27 gemeinten Adam geschehen sein. Dies Postulat findet seine volle Bestätigung durch I K. 15:45 f, wo Paulus von Christus als dem anderen Adam redet, was allein aus der auch bei Philo vorhandenen Beziehung von Gen. 1:27 auf den himmlischen "Menschen" - fuer Paulus: Christus; fuer Philo: der Logos--sich erklärt. Nur haben fuer Paulus alle diese Dinge keinerlei spekulatives Interesse. . . .<sup>8</sup>

An interesting observation by Lightfoot reveals that before Philo the term εἰκὼν was used of the personified σοφία in Wisd. VII:26: ἀπαύγασμα γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς αἰδίου. . . καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς

<sup>6</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (London: Macmillan and Company, 1875), p. 210.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 394.

ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ.

Paul speaks of the εἰκὼν also in Phil. 2:6, but he uses the expression ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, which is further qualified by εἶναι ἕσα Θεῷ.

A detailed study of μορφή would prove interesting and profitable. Bishop Lightfoot, at the end of the second chapter in his Commentary in Philippians, presents a scholarly study on its development and relationship to εἶμα. Agreeing with Braune<sup>9</sup> and Trench<sup>10</sup>, he refutes the possibility of acknowledging that μορφή is equivalent to οὐσία or φύσις. Luther and the Lutherans had maintained such an equation in their writings against the Socinians, as did Hilary, Ambrose, and Gregory of Nyssa against the Arians.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time Trench, even though he does not equate μορφή with οὐσία, yet says that "none could be ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ who was not God." To substantiate his view he quotes Bengel: "'Forma Dei non est natura divina, sed tamen is, qui in forma Dei estabat, Deus est.'"<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, μορφή, says Trench, "signifies the form as it is the

<sup>9</sup>Karl Braune, "The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians", translated by H. Hackett, Lange-Schaff, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870), XXIII, 32 f.

<sup>10</sup>Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1915), p. 244 f.

<sup>11</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistles of St. Paul, St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians (London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Company, 1869), p. 129.

<sup>12</sup>Trench, op. cit., p. 245.



utterance of the inner life. Not 'being' but 'mode of being', or better, 'mode of existence'; and only God could have the mode of existence of God".<sup>13</sup>

Braune also holds that μορφή "presupposes the existence of that nature or reality, of which it is the manifestation." Then he continues with a very convincing observation:

Besides, to deny that Christ's μορφή, or form as God, agreed with the reality, would oblige us to deny also in the next verse that His form or condition as a servant agreed with the reality, and this would destroy the force of the Apostle's reasoning. The condition in both cases presupposes the corresponding nature of reality, and is called μορφή, precisely on account of that condition.<sup>14</sup>

In formulating his final conclusion on the μορφή of Phil. 2:5, Lightfoot believes it "must apply to the attributes of Godhead". He maintains that Paul borrowed this meaning from Greek Philosophy, channeled through the speculations of Alexandrian and Gnostic Judaism, even as John adopted the Logos idea. "It suggests the same idea which is otherwise expressed in St. John by ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, in Christian writers of succeeding ages by υἱὸς θεοῦ ὢν θεός, and in the Nicene Creed by θεός ἐκ θεοῦ."<sup>15</sup>

Here again, therefore, there is evident the close connection between Paul's Christ and the Logos, and therefore also the Chokmah.

The fact that Christ is the image of God in itself causes no difficulty, since He is definitely called the second Adam and would

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Braune, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>15</sup>Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, p. 131.

therefore be in God's image. The next statement in our Colossians passage, *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, has become the occasion for much debate. It would almost appear at first glance that Christ is considered as the earliest of created things. The text, however, does not necessitate such a view. The early church fathers pointed to the fact that the Apostle does not use *πρωτόκτιστος*, or *πρωτόπλαστος* (Origen), but *πρωτότοκος*. In Clem. Alex., e. g., the *μονογενής* καὶ *πρωτότοκος* is contrasted with the *πρωτόκτιστοι*, the highest order of angelic beings.

Furthermore, the context militates against the possible interpretation of Christ as the first of created things, as Lightfoot declares:

It is inconsistent alike with the universal agency in creation which is ascribed to Him in the words following, *ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα*, and with the absolute pre-existence and self-existence which is claimed for Him just below, *αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων*.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that Jesus is elsewhere called the *μονογενής*, says Lightfoot, also prohibits the possibility that He is part of the *κτίεις*, since *μονογενής* implies that He is "alone for His kind and therefore distinct from created things." While these two words express the same idea, "*μονογενής* states it in itself, *πρωτότοκος* places it in relation to the Universe."<sup>17</sup>

It has been suggested by Windisch and proved by Burney, reports Davies, that Paul here pictures Christ on the image of Wisdom. Burney

<sup>16</sup>Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, p. 212.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

holds that this passage is a direct allusion to Prov. 8:22: "The Lord begat me as the beginning of His way." Since Windisch maintains that pre-Christian Judaism had merged the figure of Wisdom with that of the Messiah, Paul could very easily have conceived of Jesus the Messiah as the pre-existent Wisdom.<sup>18</sup>

Davies also holds to the view that Christ in this passage fulfills all the functions of the Wisdom. Unfortunately he considers Christ as the first product of God's creation. In a unique manner he supports Burney's theory that "the term reshith in Prov. 8:22 was used by Rabbinic Judaism as the key to the bereshith which begins the Hebrew Bible." Because the present writer does not wish to misrepresent Davies, the latter's account is presented verbatim:

This latter bereshith of Gen. 1:1 was correspondingly interpreted as meaning "by wisdom". It is natural to infer that when in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul calls Christ the πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, he is thinking of him as the reshith of creation. Moreover, although it is idle to deny the Stoic colouring in the phrases ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίεθαι τὰ πάντα . . . καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε . . . etc., it has been clearly shown that these can be adequately explained in the light of Rabbinic usage.<sup>19</sup>

He continues by quoting Burney:

Here we have an elaborate exposition of Bereshith in Gen. 1:1, in the Rabbinic manner. Three explanations are given of the preposition be: then four explanations of the substantive reshith; and the conclusion is that in every possible sense of the expression, Christ is the fulfiller. Putting the argument in tabular form for the sake of lucidity, it appears as follows--<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Davies, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

Prov. 8:22 ff., where Wisdom (i.e., Christ) is called reshith gives the key to Gen. 1:1, "Bereshith God created the heavens and the earth":

<u>Bereshith</u>	in <u>reshith</u>	ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα . . .
"	by "	πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἔκτισται . . .
"	into "	πάντα εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται . . .
<u>Reshith</u>	Beginning	αὐτός ἐστι πρὸ πάντων . . .
"	Sum-total	τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε . . .
"	Head	αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος .
"	Firstfruits	ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν .

Conclusion: Christ fulfils every meaning which may be extracted from Reshith—ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτός πρωτεύων .

This also seems to be Philo's conception of the Logos, as Lightfoot testifies:

These appellations, "the first-begotten, the eldest son," are given to the Logos by Philo, because in his philosophy it includes the original conception, the archetypal idea of creation, which was afterwards realised in the material world.<sup>21</sup>

Interesting to note is that Justin Martyr and Theophilus apply the term πρωτότοκος to the Logos-Christ. This certainly strengthens the theory that Paul is promoting a Logos Christology in this passage.

It is believed that ὁ πρωτότοκος had been a recognized title for the Messiah long before his coming.

The way had been paved for this Messianic reference of πρωτότοκος by its prior application to the Israelites, as the prerogative race, Exod. 4:22: 'Israel is my son, my first-born': comp. Psalm. Salom. 18:4: ἡ παιδεία σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς εἶδον πρωτότοκον μονογενῆ; 4 Esdr. 6:58: 'nos populus tuus, quem vocasti primogenitum, unigenitum,' where the combination of the two titles applied in the New Testament to the Son is striking.<sup>22</sup>

Schaff translates the phrase: "The first-born before every creature." "This second predicate," he says, defines His relation to

<sup>21</sup>Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, p. 212.

<sup>22</sup>ibid.

the created world. *Πρωτότοκος* distinguishes Him as the Son from the creation. . . . It is joined with the first predicate closely uniting with God and distinguishing from the creation . . . the genitive *κτίσεως* depends on *πρωτος* as *πρωτός μου* (Joh. 1:15, 30).<sup>23</sup>

Part of the difficulty in this particular phrase is man's insistence to place the events of God's plan for us into definite categories and points of time. We forget, as Lenski says:

The Creator of time is not bound by differences of time; our minds are chained to succession and limitation of time, and cannot even conceive of the relation of a timeless God to events in time . . . the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13:8--not ideally merely, but in fact. It is useless for us to try to conceive this.<sup>24</sup>

The Arians have always translated the expression with "every creature," to harmonize with their Christology. Scholars are divided. Many translate it in terms of "the whole creation," maintaining that it fits more easily into the context.

It would appear upon the basis of the passages studied that Paul's Christ corresponds to the Old Testament Chokmah and therefore to John's Logos in that it is pre-existent--"begotten of God before the world was created." He was ever by "him, as one brought up with him." (Prov. 8:30). Other passages in Paul also affirm this: Gal. 4:4; I Cor. 10:4 (which we discussed in a previous chapter); II Cor. 8:9; I Cor. 8:6; and possibly Rom. 1:3-4.

---

<sup>23</sup>Braune, "The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians", translated by Riddle.

<sup>24</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1937), p. 49.

2. Christ, the Wisdom, was installed or appointed by God either to rule or to be an associate with Him in His rule.

In Chapter 2 we developed the thought that Wisdom was more than an attribute of God. Since the Chokmah was brought forth or generated from the Father, he must be a distinct person, proceeding from God, ruling with God.

If Christ is the Wisdom of God, He must, then, be an associate with Him in His rule. Paul indeed calls Him the "Power of God." Even as the Chokmah was operative in the government of the world (Prov. 8: 15-16) so Christ is the Originator of "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers both in heaven and on earth. (Col. 1:16). His dominion is without bounds or limits.

Just as the "my Lord" of Psalm 110 was placed on Jehovah's right hand, so Christ is the  $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ; the Father has "set him at his own right hand. . .", as in Ephesians 1:20-22:

Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet.

Christ is not one of the created angels even as Chokmah was not a mere attribute of God. The phrase  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\epsilon\zeta\iota\tilde{\alpha}\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  distinguishes Him from spirits.<sup>25</sup> The  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , more indefinite than  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\omicron\tilde{\iota}\varsigma\ \omicron\tilde{\rho}\epsilon\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\tilde{\iota}\varsigma$ , is further explained in verse 21 by principality, power, might and dominion. "The reference to angels is quite obvious, being required here by the context. . . these designations for the world of

<sup>25</sup>Braune, "The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians", op. cit., p. 61.

angels were given through the higher position of the angels as the messengers of God (Ps. 103:20 f; Heb. 1:6 ff; 13 f.); as holy (Psalm 89:5; Dan. 8:13).<sup>26</sup>

Christ, then, is a separate entity, different from angels, above them, as the Chokmah is above any personification of a heathen deity. All things, even the favored angels of God, are placed "under his feet" (Eph. 1:20). Phil. 2:9-11:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

That Paul's Christ is with the Father is brought out by his use of the title Kyrios. Space does not permit a thorough examination of the term. We shall outline briefly the theories of its origin and development.

New Testament usage of the term does not always imply a religious significance. It was commonly used to denote ownership, possession (the lord of a vineyard; master of a slave). In many instances it is a title of honor, "addressed by subordinates to their superiors."<sup>27</sup> In the secular world it was a common appellation for sovereigns and kings, one which has continued from that early Greek world to the present time, e.g., in England.

The view that Paul is the first to ascribe the term to Christ in

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Moulton and Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 365.

a special religious sense is not held by most scholars. Where Jesus first received the title is a matter of dispute. Bousset, in his Kyrios Christos, claims it was first used among the diaspora Jews and pagans who became members of the church at Antioch. He would thereby indicate that a pagan environment with its many lords of the mystery cults was responsible for attaching the title first to Jesus.

Many prominent scholars disagree. They hold that the application of the title Kyrios to Jesus had its origin in early Jewish Palestinian communities. They point to the fact that the Jehovah or Adonai of the Hebrew Old Testament had become Kyrios in the Septuagint. The early Jewish Christians had identified the "my Lord" of Psalm 110 with the Messiah, thereby attaching to the title a high religious significance which no Hellenistic view of "Lord" could approximate. Since there is no similarity between the pagan "Lord" and Paul's Kyrios, it would appear that the Christ first received this title in early Palestinian Christianity.

In keeping with the Old Testament concept of the Chokmah, Christ is Lord over all things by virtue of the fact that He created all things: "He is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). Because He is πρωτότακος, He is the Lord of the entire universe (Col. 1:15-20). His sovereignty is absolute because He is the "first-born of creatures" and the "first-born from the dead." Even His salvation is for all men.

The Lordship of Wisdom extends over all the universe, but in a special way over the children of God. As the "first-born from the dead" Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18).



This rulership of the Sophia in the world of men and in the church we shall consider more fully in the following chapter.

One more observation is in place. Christ's rulership is eternal. He is "over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5). "He is before all things" (Col. 1:17). He laid aside His former state of royalty which was from eternity and for our sakes He became poor (Phil. 2). "Unto Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21).

The Wisdom's Lordship, while it extends over all men and all things, extends in a special sense over the children of God. Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). We shall consider this particular rulership in greater detail in the following chapter: "Christ the Sophia In Relation to Mankind."

Christ is Ruler over all things by virtue of the fact that He created all things.

3. Christ, the Wisdom, was a master artificer whose plans for the creation were shared by Jahve, being Co-Creator with Jahve.

The Chokmah, we said, was actively engaged in the creation. (Chapter III, p. 26). Christ, then, was not only present, but actively present. Returning to the first chapter of Colossians, verse sixteen tells us: "By him were all things created, etc."

We are reminded of the Logos-Christ of John 1:3: "All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made." Also the "Master Workman" of Proverbs 8:30, strengthens our convictions of a close relationship between the Chokmah, the Logos, and Paul's Christ as the Wisdom of God.

Braune rightly emphasizes that the ἐν αὐτῷ should be translated "in Him". He condemns Schleiermacher for holding "that κτίζει is not used in Hellenistic Greek of the original creation, but means to give order, arrangement." He proves his argument by referring to Acts 10:6 and 14:7. In the former instance, we find: ἔκτισε τὸν οὐρανόν; in the latter: τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανόν.

This creation is ἐν αὐτῷ, not ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, which would indicate the first cause. . . there is no thought of emanation, hence ἐξ αὐτοῦ is not used. . . . Ἐν αὐτῷ is not to be referred to the κόσμος νοητός, the idea omnium rerum, which was in Him (Schleiermacher and others), nor is it = δι' αὐτοῦ (Usteri); nor does ἐκτίσθη refer to the new moral creation, which reference is not supported by Eph. 4:23, where the context is entirely different.<sup>28</sup>

Meyer also calls Schleiermacher to account for his interpretation of ἐκτίσθη to favor his "ethical interpretation of the founding of the church." His claim is that "throughout the New Testament in general κτίω, κτίσις, κτίσμα, denote the original bringing forth, never merely the arrangement of that which exists."<sup>29</sup>

At the close of the verse we have, as Meyer says, a "solemn recapitulation" of the opening sentence: "All things were created by him and for him." Now the perfect, ἐκτίσται, is used instead of the aorist, "because we have here a dogmatic consideration of the completed and now existing creation (Winer's Gram. p. 255)." Also, "we have not

<sup>28</sup>Braune, "The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians", op. cit., on Col. 1:16.

<sup>29</sup>Heinrich A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon, translated by John Moore, translated, revised and edited by Wm. Dickson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1885), p. 228.

merely δι' αὐτοῦ (instrumental), but εἰς αὐτόν, indicating Him as the τέλος of creation."<sup>30</sup>

An unmistakable example in Paul of his assertion that Christ is the Co-Creator of all things is I Cor. 8:6: "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."

Meyer explains:

Jesus Christ, in His premundane existence, as the Son of God (not as the Ideal Man or the like) as πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως (in John's phrase, as Logos), was He through whom God brought about the creation of the world.<sup>31</sup>

Any further exegesis of this passage, as far as our problem is concerned, would be a repetition of what was said previously in connection with Col. 1:16.

Paul's Christ, then, is Co-Creator with the Father of all things. He is the eternal Author and Preserver of the universe. As such, He is the Chokmah, the Logos, and the Sophia of God.

4. Christ, the Wisdom, is an associate of Jahve in whom He has constant delight.

Paul does not quote direct expressions of the Father in which He reveals His Love for the Son, as the evangelists do in the Baptism account: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Corinthians, translated by D. Bannerman, translated, revised and edited by Wm. Dickson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1884), p. 187.

There are numerous instances, however, which evidence the Father's delight in His Son. He accepts fully the mediation of the Son, approving therefore of His work and mission. Through the atonement of His Son, we have peace with Him (Rom. 5:17). "God was in Christ (therefore one with Him, approving of His atonement), reconciling the world unto himself."

In Col. 1:13 the Father is referred to as having "translated us into the kingdom of his dear son." In Ephesians 1:6, the Father, Paul says, "hath made us accepted in the beloved."

Of special significance is Paul's "Son of God" Christology. The very term indicates the special, intimate relationship of love which exists between Christ and God. Andrews tells us that "the Beloved" was a current Messianic interpretation of Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," and Is. 42:1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." "Chosen" became the "Beloved" of Paul. Like John, the Apostle Paul in his title "Son of God" combined "Son" and "Beloved" into one.<sup>32</sup>

Christ was more than "a son" of the Father. He was "the Son" (I Cor. 15:28); "His Son" (Rom. 1:3; 5:10; I Cor. 1:9; Gal. 4:6). The Father sent not "a son" but "His own Son" (8:31). And He spared not "His own Son." Truly there is a unique relationship of "sonship" and "love" between the God and the Christ.

A further indication of the Father's intimate relationship with the Son is their association with the Spirit. At the Lord's baptism

---

<sup>32</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p. 123.

the Spirit of God came to rest upon Him. This Spirit later became for Christianity the Spirit of Christ also.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Rom. 8:9-11).

It would appear, as Andrews says that: "Being 'in the Spirit;' having Christ within; having 'the Spirit of Christ,' and God's Spirit dwelling within, all mean the same thing, and the same effects are predicated of all."<sup>33</sup>

Yet, there is a distinction, as Andrews shows, between the Spirit and Christ, "for the former is described as 'the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead.'"

More will be said of this relationship between Christ and the Spirit, and also the "spirit of wisdom" in the following chapter as we look at their functions in the hearts and lives of men.

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHRIST THE SOPHIA IN RELATION TO MANKIND

We ended the preceding chapter with the thought that the Father delights in Christ as He is said to have delighted in the Chokmah (Prov. 8:30). We shall continue with the next thought in Rankin's outline: even as the delight of the Chokmah "was with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:31), so Christ is concerned with the children of men.<sup>1</sup>

Because of His great love and concern for mankind, He actually became one of them that He might carry out His holy will among them. Though He was equal with God, He took upon Himself "the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). All this for a purpose: that He might humble Himself and become obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8), that men might have life.

Paul had experienced this impact of Christ. The Sophia of God was for him no speculative reflection. His Christ was actively engaged in bringing life to men. His Wisdom was also the Power of God, something as vital as John's Logos.

1. Christ's message and functions are particularly concerned with mankind: He reveals the way of life and righteousness.

There are those who say that Paul was more or less indifferent to the details of the life and character of Jesus. He was interested, they tell us, in a Christ of faith, not a historic Christ. While much of the present controversy revolving about the historicity of Jesus is

---

<sup>1</sup>Supra: Chapter III, p. 23, the complete outline presented.

a confused battle of words, we cannot ignore its existence.

It seems illogical and contrary to common sense to assume that Paul wasn't interested in the historic Christ. Andrews has drawn up St. Paul's references to the historic Christ under the three headings: his human life, his character, his teaching. We shall quote him verbatim.

1. His human life: Jesus Christ was a man (Rom. 5:15); sprung from the Israelitish race, and of the seed of David (Rom. 1:3, 9:5); born of a woman, made under the law (Gal. 4:4); had brothers, one of whom was called James (Gal. 1:19); carried on a ministry among the Jews (Rom. 15:8); had a group of disciples twelve in number (I Cor. 15:5); instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with that group on the very night in which he was treacherously betrayed and arrested (I Cor. 11:23-26); was crucified upon a cross, buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day (II Cor. 13:4, I Cor. 15:4). Here is a brief summary of the life of Jesus which would be clear enough without the Gospel portrait.

2. The references to the character of Jesus in the Pauline epistles are more numerous than those to his human history. He speaks of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Cor. 10:1); of his "obedience" (Rom. 5:19); his "endurance" (II Thess. 3:5); his "grace" (II Cor. 8:9), and his "love" (Rom. 8:35).<sup>2</sup>

What more proof can we have that Paul was concerned with the life and character of Jesus?

It is true, Paul did not dwell at length on the details of Jesus ministry and life. He was rather concerned with the redemption of the crucified, risen, and exalted Christ. He saw no need to repeat the accounts of the gospels. His was a different purpose--not simply to show that the Christ had come, but that He had come to reveal the way of life and righteousness. He assumed that his readers knew the events

---

<sup>2</sup>Elias Andrews, The Meaning of Christ for Paul (New York & Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949), pp. 32-3.

of Jesus' life. Christ had been accepted as a historic person. Paul's specific task was that of proving not the how but the why of Jesus' incarnation, life, suffering, death, and resurrection.

At the same time, Paul is always dealing with a historic figure. The fact of Christ's humanity was essential to Pauline theology. If Paul's Christ would not have been for him a historic reality, how could the plan of redemption be carried out? How could He have "died for our sins"? (I Cor. 15:3).

Paul carefully showed that in order to redeem mankind, His Savior had to share human experiences. He had to meet sin in order to conquer sin. Paul acknowledged that He became the Jesus of history in order to become the Christ of faith. This is clearly shown by Andrews. He cites the passages where Paul "uses the names 'Christ' where he is thinking of the earthly story of Jesus (Rom. 5:6; II Cor. 10:1), and the name 'Jesus' where the exalted Lord is intended (I Cor. 8:6; II Cor. 4:11)."<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the finest example where Paul shows his vital faith in the historic Jesus is Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified. . . ." The Christ of Calvary is the Christ of faith. "Being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8).

For the Apostle Paul it was the historic Christ who became the revealing Christ. If we may paraphrase St. John: He was the Wisdom made flesh. Even as John's whole gospel revolves about Christ, the Manifestation, the Revealing Word of God, so Paul's Christ is the

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 39.



Revealing Wisdom of God. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

St. Paul assures the Colossians and others that through Christ, the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge, they can understand the hidden mystery of God. He earnestly hopes "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:1-3). If the princes of this world, says Paul, had known that Christ came to reveal the "hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. . . they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:7-8). The "princes of this world" failed to see that the historic Jesus was the embodiment and revelation of God's hidden wisdom.

. . . the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:26-27).

Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16). - (Even if, as is possible, the original text did not contain the word God, the paeon of praise with which we are here dealing should be quoted in this connection).

Paul understood the Greek mind. It is natural that he would make much of Christ as the Wisdom. Hellenism was a symbol of learning and culture. To acquire wisdom was the highest good. From sophia flowed all virtue. A perfect society was only possible through a perfect knowledge of its ideals on the part of all its members. When Paul

proclaimed that he had found the perfect Sophia, his message had appeal. When he proved that his Wisdom was superior to the sophia and philosophia of all ages, he got results.

Paul sought to prove to the Greeks that his Wisdom was superior because His Wisdom was divine. He was the revelation of their unknown God (Acts 17:20). He was the "image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). Yes, He is that Unknown God, "for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). Thus Paul boldly witnessed in Athens, the seat of Greek sophia.

It is not difficult, then, to understand the presence of a Wisdom Theology in Paul. With his Sophia Paul met the Greek mind as effectively as John with his Logos. Paul's advantage was this: his Sophia fit also the Jewish mind. John's use of Logos was in all likelihood daring and objectionable to many of the Jews because of heathen associations. Paul, on the other hand, could explain his Sophia in terms of the personified Chokmah. At the same time his Sophia had equal to the Greek mind.

In both Paul and John, however, Christ is the Revealer of God's plan for mankind. As the Logos and as the Sophia Christ is God made manifest in the flesh (John 1:14; I Tim. 3:16). Both came to reveal the way of life and righteousness, of which we shall say more in part 4 of this chapter.

## 2. Christ's dwelling or house has seven pillars.

In Chapter III we mentioned the various interpretations of the

"seven pillars".<sup>4</sup> For our purpose we shall consider the views: 1) that the seven pillars are not the pillars of wisdom's house, but of herself; 2) that wisdom's house is the Church.

Since seven is the number of completeness and perfection, wisdom is complete and perfect. Christ is for Paul the "perfect" and "all-sufficient" Wisdom.

The perfect Christ. There are those who claim that Paul started a new theology and that his cosmic Christ is not the Jesus of the Gospels. Wrede and Harnack are the chief exponents of this view, the latter making the statement that the Gospel, as Jesus proclaimed it, has only to do with the Father and not with Himself.

Stewart says very properly:

The Gospels set before us One whose conscious authority is unparalleled, whose moral perfection is dimmed by no faintest shadow of sin, whose will is God's will, whose very presence is salvation. This is Jesus' own tremendous claim.<sup>5</sup>

It appears that Paul is in indisputable agreement with the Gospels when he pictures the historic Jesus as the perfect man, "who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5:21). It was impossible for Him to know it, for "in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "God was in Him" (II Cor. 5:19); He was the "image of God" (Col. 1:15).

Everything that God was expected, or could be expected, to do, and every promise that He had made, all had been done and fulfilled by and in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Supra: p. 27-8.

<sup>5</sup>James Stewart, A Man in Christ (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers), p. 297.

<sup>6</sup>Andrews, op. cit., p. 130.

It was through Jesus' divine manifestation of holiness that Paul discovered the reconciled God: "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God" had been revealed "in the face of Christ" (II Cor. 4:6). In this, Paul's Sophia is again identical with the Logos, who said of himself: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Let us turn to the second view: Wisdom's house is the Church. If Christ is the Wisdom, the identity between Wisdom's house and Christ's Church is logical and natural.

Christ's Church, even as Wisdom's house, has the seven pillars of perfection, because she is His perfect body (Rev. 12:5; I Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:23; 4:12; 5:30; Col. 1:24; 2:19). She is the pillar of truth (I Tim. 3:15). She supports and proclaims the truths of God and reveals them to men.

Since the Church is Wisdom's body, it is impossible for Wisdom to be separate from His Church. He is, in fact, the head of that body (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; 4:15). From Him the Church receives its life (Col. 1:18; 2:19). Each one of her members partakes of His life (Gal. 2:20). Every Christian lives ἐν χριστῷ (Col. 1:27; Gal. 3:28).

It is not our purpose to develop the ἐν χριστῷ theology of Paul. We mention it briefly to show that Paul's Sophia, like the Chokmah, dwells in the hearts and minds of men. Christ, like Chokmah, is a constant occupant of His perfect House. He is that House. The House is His body. It's a House "fitly framed together," "a holy temple in the Lord," "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20-21).

Paul and every Christian preacher is a co-builder with God,

constantly enlarging and beautifying the House (I Cor. 3:9-10). The Christian preacher-builder never lays a new foundation, however. That cannot be improved or replaced. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11).

There are in Christ's House component parts with varied functions. "All members have not the same office" (Rom. 12:4). And yet the Structure, the body, is "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

As common knowledge and wisdom serve as a bond between men, so Christ, the perfect Wisdom is the bond of fellowship between His members. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). "We being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). "We are all members one of another" (Eph. 4:25).

Christ is contrasted with Folly, and what He bestows is compared with what Folly offers: the ways of Folly are death.

We turn now to the first chapter of First Corinthians. In verse 17 Paul begins his comparison between the wisdom of men and the wisdom which is of God, climaxing his argument in verse 24 by personifying Wisdom as the Christ.

Paul's chief aim in life was to "get the gospel out", *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι*, in the most effective way he knew (v. 17). He was not interested in setting up a beautiful systematic philosophy, a "wisdom of words." Godet points out that *σοφία λόγου* is not synonymous

with σοφία τοῦ λέγειν, "the art of speaking well."

The former term applies to the matter of discourse; it denotes a well-conceived system, a religious philosophy in which the new religion is set forth as furnishing a satisfactory explanation of God, man, and the universe. The latter bears on the form, and denotes the logical or brilliant exposition of such a system.<sup>7</sup>

In Chapter 2 of I Corinthians Paul again emphasizes that he is not interested in displaying fine oratory or dialectic argumentation. He was not concerned with deep philosophic speculation. In all his preaching he had a singular purpose: to "get the gospel out." He was determined not to know anything among his hearers, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (2:2).

His preaching was not a wisdom, a philosophic speculation. It was rather a salvation.<sup>8</sup> The central fact of his preaching was indeed contrary to wisdom. It was foolishness to those without the new life (1:18).

The gospel itself is not wisdom, but it "contains a wisdom which is unveiled to the believer in proportion as the new life is developed in him, and which is really the only true wisdom".<sup>9</sup> We might add, it is the revelation of the Wisdom (v. 24).

It would appear that foolishness is contrasted with power in verse 18: "The cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." Some scholars deny that such an antithesis is correct. They claim that the opposite of μωρία

---

<sup>7</sup>F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, translated by A. Cusin (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889), I, 87.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

is *σοφία*, not a force, *δύραμις*.

As Godet shows, these men overlook that the cross can be either very uneventful and inoperative or it can be an active, driving force. To them who reject it, the cross is an abstract . . . . To the saved it is a vital, living force, a lasting, indestructible which is of God (1:18) and which is God (1:24).

This *δύραμις*, while in direct disagreement with the wisdom of men, nevertheless contains a wisdom of its own. In Chapter 2 of First Corinthians Paul, after again contrasting the "wisdom of men" with the "power of God," says we can speak of a wisdom of God (v. 6). But, he says, it is vastly different from the wisdom of men.

The wisdom of God is not a static accumulation of facts; it is a wisdom which has an everlasting purpose "which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (2:7).

The wisdom of God was a hidden wisdom until God revealed it in the flesh. Since that time men have come to know God's hidden plan for them by that revealed Wisdom. To those who accept Him the Wisdom becomes a living, all-sufficient, perfect Wisdom. To others He is foolishness.

When Wisdom came, the world crucified Him because its reasoned philosophic wisdom was in direct opposition to a living, personal Power (2:7-8). The eyes and ears of the proud world failed to see the perfect Wisdom in this lowly son of a Galilean carpenter (2:9). The world's wisdom refused to recognize Him as the Son of God and the Lord of Glory (2:8). "The world by (its) wisdom knew not God" (1:21). The incarnation of God's Wisdom was foolishness to the children of worldly

wisdom.

The world considers the followers of Wisdom as fools. Paul emphasizes this on various occasions. "We are fools for Christ's sake" (I Cor. 4:10). To be wise Christians must become fools in the eyes of the world. (Rom. 1:22; I Cor. 3:18). They are fools because they accept that which is contrary to human reason and wisdom. Their foolish tenets confound the worldly wise. Because of its utter simplicity the Gospel message appears foolish and untenable to those who love the "enticing words of men's wisdom." To the Jews it becomes a scandal and to the Greeks plain foolishness (1:23).

The only wisdom which is effective, which produces life, which is lasting, is the perfect incarnate Wisdom. "Where is the wisdom of the (worldly) wise? . . . Where is the disputer of this world?" (1:20). All the philosophies and theories of man's wisdom are temporary and ineffectual. God allows them to exist for a time. Gradually they become outmoded, and man laughs at the philosophies of preceding generations. God has "made foolish the wisdom of the world" (1:20). "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19). God has turned the seeming wise into fools; He has destroyed "the wisdom of the wise" (1:19). He "chose the foolish things that he might put to shame them that are wise" (1:27).

On the other hand God has made wise those whom the world views as fools. He has given the "fools for Christ's sake" a knowledge of Himself and His will. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them" (Rom. 1:19). "Even the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and from generations, but



now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26-27).

The ways of Folly in Proverbs meant death. Similarly Paul describes those who regard the cross to be foolishness as "them that perish" (I Cor. 1:18). "Not many wise after the flesh," he says, "are called" (1:26). Paul would paraphrase the Old Testament and say, "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no Christ." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

The way of the true Wisdom is life and salvation. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God." This Wisdom offers "righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1:30). The Gospel of Christ in the cross is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).

By what means does God reveal and impart His divine Wisdom to mankind? Paul says we come to know Wisdom through the operations of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:10-16). The natural man cannot know true Wisdom because he resists the Spirit of God. Without the Spirit he cannot know the things of God, because they must be spiritually discerned. Without the Spirit the Wisdom of the cross is foolishness (2:14).

Christians have received the Spirit which is from God; hence they "know the things that were freely given to us of God" (2:12). One of the blessings of God upon His children is the "spirit of Wisdom" (Eph.

1:16). Christians who have this Spirit speak "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth combining spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:15).

The Spirit works through the Sacred Scriptures. Like John, the Apostle Paul reminds us that the Scriptures testify of Christ the Logos and Christ the Sophia (Jn. 5:39). They have been written "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life in his name" (Jn. 20:31). Through the Scripture, Paul says, the Holy Spirit makes men "wise" unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15).

The character of Christ's message is a proclamation of Truth, Righteousness, Knowledge, and Judgment, Justice, or Law.

We shall consider the above proclamations under the functions which Saint Paul ascribes to Wisdom when he says that Christ is our 1) redemption, 2) our righteousness and sanctification (I Cor. 1:30).

Christ, the Wisdom of God, is our redemption. He has redeemed us from sin. Andrews points out that to understand sin one must understand God, because sin is a "personal offense against a personal God."<sup>10</sup> We would add: sin means the separation of God and man.

Paul is more concerned about the exodus of sin than its origin. He does, however, expressly teach the doctrine of original sin: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). This sin is a part of every individual, "for all have sinned, and come

---

<sup>10</sup> Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). All men, as the result of Adam's fall, are sinful, separate from God.

How does man know sin? Paul answers: "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Man sees his utter helplessness when he realizes his inability to keep the law of God. "I had not known sin, but by the law" (Rom. 7:7). Sin manifests itself by the failure to "hit the mark." Sin becomes sins.

The law, while it reveals sin, cannot save from sin. "By the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified" (Rom. 3:20). "Man is not justified by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16).

In fact, Saint Paul refers to the law as a curse. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). Christ's redemption is a deliverance from the bondage of the law (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 3:23). Now that Christ has come we no longer need the custodianship of the law. We have come into our rightful inheritance (Gal. 4:4-7). Through the Son we have come to know God as our Father. The Law brings knowledge of sin, but Christ brings knowledge of God, because He removed sin.

Sin is therefore ignorance of God. The Gentiles "know not God" (I Thess. 4:5). Paul prays that his readers might "know the grace of our Lord Jesus" (II Cor. 8:9). The worldly wise, he says, cannot know the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14). "The world by its wisdom knew not God" (I Cor. 1:21).

Redemption, then, because it is a redemption from sin, is also a redemption from ignorance. The true Wisdom has brought saving wisdom

to His followers. He Himself lives in their hearts, and those in whom He dwells are granted a knowledge of God. They are "no more strangers and foreigners" (Eph. 2:19). Through Christ God has reconciled His chosen to Himself (II Cor. 5:19). We have been redeemed from a state of not knowing God (Gal. 4:8).

Christ redeemed man from the punishment which accompanies ignorance of God. On the last day, says Paul, Christ will take vengeance in flaming fire "on them that know not God" (II Thess. 1:8). Death was man's lot: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

It was Christ's purpose as the Sophia of God to instill into man a knowledge of Himself and the Father. John brings this home very emphatically when he says: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Paul likewise was determined not to know anything, save Christ and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2), since He alone is able to make us wise unto salvation.

Our knowledge of God will always be imperfect during our earthly sojourn. We "know only in part". There shall be a time however, when we shall know even as we are known. (I Cor. 13:9, 12).

Christ has redeemed us not only for a life beyond. Our righteousness and our sanctification is something operative here and now. We have been redeemed that we should no longer serve sin. We are to yield our members "servants to righteousness" (Rom. 6:19), to put on the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14). Redeemed Christians follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace (II Tim. 2:22).

Christ has become our Righteousness and our Sanctification. By His redemption we are declared righteous (*δικαιώ*) before the Father in heaven. We stand holy and blameless in His righteousness "after the new man" (Eph. 4:24).

The power of Christ's redemption lies not only in His suffering and death, but also in His perfect life of righteousness. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came" (Rom. 5:21). Like the Chokmah, all the words of his mouth are in righteousness (Prov. 8:8). The worldly wise again are doomed because of their ignorance of Christ as Righteousness and their failure to submit to His righteousness. Israel herself was guilty of this ignorance. To the Jews the fact that one man should perfectly fulfill their precious law was a scandal (I Cor. 1:23). Paul says of them:

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:3-4).

The perfect wisdom, living within His redeemed, imparts to them wisdom to do the will of the Father. With His light we walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (Eph. 5:15). His grace enables the Christian to counteract the evil influence of fleshly wisdom:

For our rejoicing is this. . . that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward (II Cor. 1:12).

With the advent of Wisdom comes an increase in godly living. We "walk worthy" in proportion to the knowledge of God in our hearts:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the

knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9-10).

Like the Chokmah Christ leads "in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 8:20). He is our perfect example of holy living. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). "Let Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16).

The Christian is also an example of wisdom: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (I Thess. 4:5). Christian preachers are to be "teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

Let us emphasize once more that Christ the great Example is not a new Law-giver. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law" (Matt. 5:17). Paul insists that Christ removed the yoke of the law and instituted salvation solely by faith. Yet the Christian fulfills the law. Because Christ dwells in him, he wants to do the will of the Father. The new man is created after God "in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). The Christian delights "in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22).

But there is another law, says St. Paul, which wars against the law of the mind. That is the law of sin served by the flesh (Rom. 7:25). To combat this law of sin the Christian must constantly grow in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10).

The only source of such knowledge is the Perfect Wisdom, "in whom are hid all the treasures of the wisdom of knowledge of God" (Col. 2:3). The new man is renewed in knowledge only after the image of the

perfect Wisdom that created him (Col. 3:10). He receives the spirit of wisdom and revelation "in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17).

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33).

English Bible. *Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by Lewis and Edwards. Philadelphia: Pott, 1828.

English Bible. *King James Version*.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

English Bible. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by E. Hatch. A Commentary of the Holy Scriptures. Edited by James Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrews, Elias. The Meaning of Christ for Paul. New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949.
- Bengel, John Albert. Gnomon of the New Testament. Translation by Lewis and Vincent. Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins. New York: Sheldon & Company, 1862.
- Bible, Holy. King James Version.
- Braune, Karl. "The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians". Translated by M. Riddle. A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Edited by Johann Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.
- "The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians". Translated by M. Riddle. A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Edited by Johann Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.
- "The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians". Translated by H. Hackett. A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Edited by Johann Peter Lange and Philip Schaff. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1870.
- Bulgakov, Sergius. The Wisdom of God. A Brief Summary of Sophiology. New York: The Paisley Press Inc. London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1937.
- Cremer-Koegel. Biblich-theologisches Woerterbuch der Neutestamentlichen Graecitaet. Eleventh edition. Gotha, 1923.
- Cruden, Alexander. Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments. Philadelphia & Toronto: The John G. Winston Company, c.1930.
- Davies, W. D. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1948.
- Gesenius, William. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament. Translated by Edward Robinson. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1882.
- Girdlestone, Robert Baker. Synonyms of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948.
- Godet, F. Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Translated by A. Cusin. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889.



- Honsey, Rudolph. "The Personal Wisdom in Proverbs Eight." Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1945.
- Jamieson, Fausset, Brown. A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments. III. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., n.d.
- Keil, Carl F. und Delitzsch, Franz. Biblischer Kommentar Ueber das Alte Testament. Die Poetischen Buecher des Alten Testaments von Franz Delitzsch. Dritter Band: Das Salomonische Spruchbuch. Leipzig: Doerffling und Franke, 1873.
- Kittel, Gerhard. Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament. II. Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935.
- Knox, Wilfred L. St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles. Cambridge: The University Press, MCMXXXIX.
- Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon. Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1937.
- Liddell & Scott. A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press, n.d.
- Lightfoot, J. B. The Epistles of St. Paul, St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. London: Macmillan and Company, 1875.
- The Epistles of St. Paul, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Company, 1869.
- Machen, J. Gresham. The Origin of Paul's Religion. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923.
- Meyer, Heinrich A. W. Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Corinthians. Translated by D. Bannerman. Translation revised and edited by Wm. Dickson. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1884.
- Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon. Translated by John Moore. Translation revised and edited by Wm. Dickson. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 1885.
- Moulton and Milligan. The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949.
- Nave, Orville J. Nave's Topical Bible, A Digest of the Holy Scriptures. Lincoln, Nebraska: Topical Bible Publishing Company, 1903.

- Nestle, Eberhard, editor. Greek New Testament. Newly revised by Dr. Erwin Nestle. Sixteenth Edition. New York: American Bible Society, n.d.
- Oehler, G. F. Theology of the Old Testament. Translated by Sophia Taylor. II. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1875.
- Rankin, Oliver Shaw. Israel's Wisdom Literature. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936.
- Rylaarsdam, J. Coert. Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, c.1946.
- Schmoller, Alfred. Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament. Achte Auflage. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Wuertembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949.
- Schweitzer, Albert. The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle. Translated by William Montgomery. New York: Henry Holt and Company, c.1931.
- Stewart, James S. A Man in Christ. The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion. New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, n.d.
- Stier, R. und Theile, K. G. W. Polyglotten-Bibel zum praktischen Handgebrauch. Die Heilige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments in uebersichtlicher Nebeneinanderstellung des Urtextes, der Septuaginta, Vulgata und Luther-uebersetzung, so wie der wichtigsten Varianten der vornehmsten deutschen uebersetzungen. Bielefeld und Leipzig: Verlag Velhagen & Klasing, 1890.
- Strack-Zoedler. Die Briefe an die Thessaloniker, Galater, Korinther und Roemer. Muenchen: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894.
- Strong, James. The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. New York & Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, c.1890.
- Thayer, Joseph Henry. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. New York . Cincinnati . Chicago: American Book Company, c.1886.
- Trench, R. C. Synonyms of the New Testament. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1915.
- Vincent, Marvin R. Word Studies in the New Testament. III. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.