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### The Religious Conditions of Italy and Greece

Ewald Martin Plass

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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INSCRIBED IN A SPIRIT  
OF  
LOVE AND REVERENCE  
TO  
MY MOTHER.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS  
OF  
ITALY AND GREECE.

ANNO DOMINI  
SIXTY-FOUR

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE  
FACULTY OF THE GRADUATING SCHOOL  
OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY. 1923

by

EWALD MARTIN PLASS. 1898-

## Chapter 1.

### Introductory.

It is the year of our Lord sixty-four. The deep blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea lap up the sands on the shores of the most civilized nations of the world. Far into the midst of the Mediterranean Sea projects the slender peninsula of Italy. In the middle of this peninsula, on the banks of the turbid Tiber stands Rome, the center of the center, the pivot of civilization, the mistress of the world. Her first Emperor, Augustus, erected in her Forum a golden milestone. It stood as a symbol that there was the center of the world.<sup>1</sup> And so it was.

In the year B.C. 753 Romulus had founded Rome, which at first had little more than four thousand souls. It grew slowly but irresistibly, laying up a rich store of military and governmental experiences against those centuries during which its iron grasp was to embrace the entire known world. Slowly but surely, and with ever increasing irresistibility the Roman Eagle soared aloft and spread his mighty wings--northward into Etruria, southward into Campania then beyond the Italian boundaries, until the Mediterranean Sea was but a Roman lake. Governed in turn by monarchs, consuls and oligarchs, Rome at length laid the reins of its government into the hands of an emperor. Then the sun of the ancient world had reached its meridian; for the ancient world culminated in Rome and Roman history in the birth of the empire.<sup>2</sup> At the fall of the

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 6.

2. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 5.

the Roman republic<sup>1</sup>. the conquest of the world, certainly of the civilized world, had practically been completed. The Augustan legions then overran the country between the Danube and the Alps and the northwest portion of Spain, thus constituting the boundaries of the Empire; the Atlantic on the west, the Euphrates on the east; the desert of Africa, the cataracts of the Nile, and the Arabian desert on the South; the British channel, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Auxine Sea on the north. The subjugation of Britian by Claudius, of Dacia (N.N.E. of the Danube) by Trajan were the only subsequent conquests of any importance. The Germans on the north and the Parthians on the east were thus the only formidable independent powers.

The dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation by Daniel were fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> The "legs of iron"<sup>3</sup> were indeed a proper representation of the Roman power. Its legions carried everything before them, reducing independent kingdoms into conquered provinces, and holding the proudest nations under the most galling tribute. "The great end of existence among the Romans was war, they were the children of Mars, and they revered their progenitor with the most fervent enthusiasm."<sup>4</sup> In more than one respect they were a people of iron. Not a people of peace, but of war, not a nation of philosophers, but men of action, not in rich arts but great in

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1. After or rather through the battle of the Actium in B.C. 31.

2. Daniel, Chapter 2.

3. Daniel, 2, 33, 40.

4. Finlay, History of Greece under the Romans 1, 17.

courage and political sagacity, endowed with unique powers of assimilation, a marvelous gift for organization, and a strong instinct for legislation and government.<sup>1.</sup> The differences between the character of the Romans and that of almost all nations which they subjugated or with which they came in contact are marked and fundamental. Needless to say, the influence which the masters exerted upon their subjects, barbarian and civilized, was great and many-sided. But the Romans not only influenced others; they were in turn influenced by their subjects. And this mutual influence was greatly facilitated by the vast interchange which sprang into life during the time of the Empire, and of which Rome on the Tiber was the center.<sup>2.</sup> In many respects, it is true, Rome had little to learn from its provinces and dependencies. But there was one country whose influence upon Rome was so strong as to tincture its entire civilization. That country was Greece. "Rome met in Greece a higher culture than its own. Externally the conquerer, it became inwardly more and more subjugated by the Greek mind";<sup>3.</sup> and thus we have at this period not a purely Roman, but rather a Graeco-Roman civilization. Rome was authoritative in the political and material, Greece in the artistic and intellectual field, Rome was, as it were, the hand, Greece the head, Rome the body,

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 5.

2. Other great centers of traffic were Alexandria (second only to Rome itself); Antioch (in Syria); Ephesus; Smyrna and Corinth.

3. Uhlhorn Kampf des Christentum p. 9; See also Finlay, Greece under the Romans 1, 17.

Greece the soul. Such were the political conditions and such the civilization of the age in which Christianity was born.

Probably few students of the annals of mankind will gainsay that statement, that it is a matter of some difficulty to find in history a period of greater interest, a period presenting more complex problems of cause and effect, a period more typical of all that is worst and best in mankind, a period fraught with richer lessons for both State and Church, than the first centuries lying on either side of the advent of Christianity. Especially the theologian will find a careful study of these centuries of great value. It is in the beginning of Christianity in its contact and conflict with Heathenism that one most unmistakably sees the secret of its power. It is then that one fully realizes that it is not only the soul, but also--thank God--the perfect remedy for a sin-sick world. It is during these centuries that one can plainly recognize God in history, that one is convinced secular history is but the background of church history and the entire world but the scaffold employed by God almighty to build His Holy Christian church. Considerations of this nature have decided us to make a close study of conditions, primarily the religious conditions of the year A.D. 64 of Italy and Greece, those two countries which not only swayed the political and intellectual destinies of the world for many centuries, but also effected nascent Christianity, though not in content, yet in history and development.

## Chapter 2.

## Italy.

Out of the century of war and bloodshed, which terminated with the battle of Actium, N.C. 31, the great Roman Empire had been born. The government of Caesar Augustus, though a republic in form, was in fact a monarchy.<sup>1</sup> Mindful of the bloody lessons which the past had taught Augustus did not officially assume the title Caesar.<sup>2</sup> Tacitus says<sup>3</sup> he was "prince", neither king nor dictator. This title, it seems, would simply imply the rank of first member of the senate (*princeps senatus*) and include no civil authority. Augustus furthermore allowed all magistracies existing heretofore to continue, but was careful to absorb the most important parts of their powers and functions. While thus the constitutional position of the early emperor was not that of sovereign, he nevertheless concentrated in his person the offices of commander-in-chief of the military and naval forces of Rome, of minister of war and finance, and of Pontifex Maximus, having therefore practical control of every important department of state. Given an emperor of strong will and political aptitude, he could guide the ship of state howsoever and withersoever he pleased and say with literal truth, "L'etat c'est moi". The

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1. Milman. History of Christianity II, 7f.

2. In the New Testament the emperor is usually called *Καίσαρ* (Matt. 22, 17. 21; Luke 2, 1; 3, 1; 23, 2; John 19, 15; Acts 11, 28; 25, 10; Phil. 4, 22 and many others). The word *Κύριος*, Acts 25, 26 is remarkable as marking the progress in Roman servility between the time of Augustus and Nero. Both Augustus and Tiberius refused this title. It was first born by Caligula, Cf. Alford's note l.l.c.

3. Tacitus, Annals 1, 9.

senate, it is true, was still existing but, shorn of its real independence by the censorial power for revising its lists vested in the emperor, its independence and legislative powers were practically nil.<sup>1.</sup>

Augustus already had divided the Roman provinces into two classes, the imperial and the proconsular. The former were under the direct control of the emperor and were governed by his lieutenants or legates at the head of resident military forces.<sup>2.</sup> These legates, appointed directly by the Emperor, received fixed salaries, and thus the scandalous abuses which had grown up in connection with the earlier system of self-payment through fees, requisitions and like devices, were swept away. The proconsular provinces<sup>3.</sup> on the other hand were dependent on the senate. They were

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1. The low servility into which the senate had fallen during the time of Nero may be seen from the fact that it actually addressed congratulations to the wretch on the murder of his mother Agrippina. Comp. Tacitus, Annals, 3, 65; 6, 2; 14, 12 and Farrar Seekers aft. God 84f.
  2. These at first were: Gaul, Lusitania, Syria, Pheonicia, Clicida, Cyprus, and Egypt. The legates ( *πρεσβυτης* ), or propraetor, *ἀντιστράτηγος* had under him the procurators, *ἐπιστοπος* (Dio Cassius 53.15) "steward" Matt. 20, 8) who governed the smaller districts into which an imperial province might be divided. The governor of Judaea is in the New Testament usually called *ἡγεμῶν* (Luke 3, 1; 20, 20; Acts 23, 24 etc) Josephus usually *ἐπιστοπος*.
  3. These at first were: Africa, Numidia, Asia, Achaea and Epirus, Dalmatia, Macedonia, Sicily, Crete and Cyrene, Brithynia and Pontus, Sardinai, Boetica (Dio Cassius 53, 12. -- Cyprus and Gallia Narboneusis were subsequently exchanged by Augustus for Dalmatia. Many other changes were later made.



governed by proconsuls<sup>1</sup> or propraetors and had no resident Roman legions. These officers occupied a higher rank in the state than the imperial legates, and since they were not the immediate objects of jealousy to the emperor they were in a position to gratify whatever ruling passion they had without much danger of interference.

The result often was a reckless exploitation of these provinces. The imperial provinces were, on the whole, the better governed of the two divisions.<sup>2</sup> The result of this governmental system is obvious. Asked of Tiberius what was the cause of a certain rebellion Baton, King of Dalmatia replied that it arose from the emperor's delegating wolves to guard his flocks instead of shepherds.<sup>3</sup> Thus the provincial governors enriched themselves by plundering their subjects, and the emperors in turn fattened their treasuries by accusing the senators of those crimes entailing confiscation of their fortunes--a branch of imperial revenue, by the way, highly developed by Nero.<sup>4</sup>

These were in brief, the salient political conditions of the Roman Empire when on October 13, A.D. 54 the young prince Nero

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1. . . Dio Cassius 53, 13; called *ἀναδύτατοι* in the New Test. Acts 13, 7; 18, 12, 19, 38.

3. Tacitus Annals 1, 76; 4, 6; Dio Cassius 53, 14.

4. The administration of the provinces was on the whole better under the Empire than under the Republic. But whatever may have been the improvement in the external administration of provincial government, it is hard to believe that governors were gentle when a Caligula and a Nero were on the throne.

~~5. Tacitus, Annals 12, 69. Nero was but seventeen years of age upon his ascent of the throne.~~

2. Dio Cassius 55, 33.

donned the royal purple.<sup>1</sup> In view of the fatal importance of his role both in secular and ecclesiastical history it might not be improper to give a brief sketch of this strange ruler. Born in A.D. 37 at Antium as the son of Domitius Ahenobarbus and Agrippina the younger he was adopted by the emperor Claudius upon his (Claudius) marriage with Agrippina, his niece. The youth then received the name Nero Caludius Caesar Drusus Germanicus.<sup>2</sup> Soon he was placed under the tutorage of the famous Stoic Seneca.<sup>3</sup> Agrippina succeeded in displacing Britannicus, Claudius' right child, in favor of Nero as heir to the throne. A totally abandoned woman, she poisoned Claudius A.D. 54, whereupon Nero supported by Burrhus and the army, became emperor.<sup>4</sup> For the first five years (the so-called *Quinquerium Neronis*<sup>5</sup> his government and public conduct, guided by Burrhus and Seneca<sup>5</sup> was unexceptionable, though his private life was already stained by vicious vices. Matters went from bad to worse with him. In A.D. 55 he poisoned Britannicus and four years later had his mother murdered. In A.D. 62 Burrhus died, not without suspicion of also having fallen a victim to the "state mys-

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1. Tacitus, *Annals* 12, 69. Nero was but seventeen years of age upon his ascent of the throne.

2. Tacitus, *Annals* 12, 25, 26.

3. Tacitus, *Annals* 12, 8.

4. The support of the army was, of course, the *conditio sine qua non* of the Caesars, as, indeed, the very title "Imperator" indicates.

5. See Merivale, *Romans under the Empire*, VI, 93.

tery of poisoning." With Burrhus fell Seneca's influence. Having put away his wife Octavia, daughter of Calpurnius, Nero married the adulterous and profligate Poppaea. Now fearing no rival in power, he exchanged the jealousy of a kinsman for the enmity of the whole world, and gave full scope to the darkest traits of his vile character. It is as distasteful to us as foreign to our purpose to dwell at length upon his craving for praise and popularity, upon his inordinate desire for play and display<sup>1</sup>. upon his nightly revels and brutish vices<sup>2</sup>. upon his many cruel and deliberate murders<sup>3</sup>. among whose victims were even Seneca (A.D. 65) whom he accused of complicity in the conspiracy of Piso, and Poppaea, who died from a brutal kick he gave her while in an advanced state of pregnancy. Suffice it to say that even the patience of bloodsoaked Rome, accustomed to tyranny and debauchery as she was, had a limit. The provinces of Gaul at length revolted and marched on Rome, and the Senate, long weary of and torn by Nero's arbitrary confiscations and proscriptions, pronounced him a public enemy and sentenced him to death, which sentence Nero anticipated by taking his own life--with

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1. Tacitus, Annals, 14, 15; 15, 33; 16, 4; Suetonius Ner. 21, 22, 23.

2. Tacitus, Annals 13, 25; 14, 15; Suetonius, Ner. 27, 28.

3. Tacitus, Annals 14, 1-8; Comp. 15, 62 Suetonius Ner. 33, 24. Those who are interested in such particulars we would refer to Suetonius in Nerone and the History of Dio Cassius, where they will find a veritable anthology of Nero's abominations portrayed with almost disgusting minuteness.

the help of a servant. This was in A.D. 68.<sup>1</sup> Thus died Nero "incurably vicious, incurably frivolous, with no result of all his education beyond a smattering of ridiculous of unworthy accomplishments, his selfishness had been so inflamed by unlimited autocracy that there was not a single crime of which he was incapable, or a single degradation to which he could not sink. The world never entrusted its imperial absolutism to a more despicable specimen of humanity."<sup>2</sup> Surveyed from a distance of well nigh nineteen hundred years such damnable atrocities as those which history records of Nero seem to border on the incredible yet it is true that he "was the epitome of the age in which he lived--the consummated flower of Pagan degradation at the time when the pure bud of Christian life was being nurtured into beauty amid cold and storms."<sup>3</sup>

The social conditions of Italy in general and Rome in particular were nothing to be proud of in A.D. 64. Hellenic influence in the Roman Empire just during Nero's rule was very marked.<sup>4</sup> For authoritative expositions on arts and sciences, for profound philosophic thought, for a polished and elegant style the Romans of the Empire looked to Greece. "Hellenic culture, which had survived

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1. The great fire of Rome in A.D. 64 we have, on account of its dire influence on Christianity, reserved for more detailed treatment. See infra p. 75.
  2. Farrar, *Life and Works of St. Paul*, II, 407.
  3. Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, p. 29.
  4. Schon gegen Ende der Republik raum gewinnend, macht der Hellenismus in der Kaiserzeit besonders unter Nero immer raschere Fortschritte. Ohlhorn, *Kampf etc.* p. 10.

so many conquests and captivities had laid its invisible yoke on the necks of the worlds masters."<sup>1</sup> We have therefore at this period as mentioned above<sup>2</sup> a composite culture, half Greek, half Roman. This culture, however, though it was the best that ancient Paganism could produce, could do next to nothing to cure the cancer that was rapidly consuming the vitals of Roman society and morals. The Roman Empire, as almost all ancient nations, knew no middle class,<sup>3</sup> that great class of citizens, which today is known to be the civil and moral back bone of a nation. There are various reasons for the lack of a middle class in the Empire. To begin with, honest manual labor was by the ancients considered quite unworthy of a man.<sup>4</sup> Again, the conquest of the world had brought an almost inconceivable amount of slaves to Rome and Italy. These, sold at a nominal price, put a life free from the responsibility and toil of manual labor within the reach of many thus at the same time noticeably reducing the wages of native laborers. This again resulted in a flux of the country population into the great cities, above all into Rome.<sup>5</sup> The land was thus in the hands of a few

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1. Merivale, Romans under the Empire VI, 113; cf. Conybeare and Howson, St. Paul I, 15. Merivale points out (VI 182) that the very text books were not the most famous compositions of the Romans, but of the Greeks of the Republic.

2. See page 13.

3. Farrar, Seekers After God 38f.

4. "Jede ehrliche Arbeit kam in Verachtung und wurde als sklavendienst ein Schimpf," Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum, p. 103. Even men like Plato and Aristotle regarded work in this light.

5. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 78.

fabulously rich "land-Barons". The civil war had created the class of freedmen, slaves liberated by their masters for signal or faithful services. These, and they were by no means few, held many minor offices of state, occasionally amassed great riches, gained much influence<sup>1</sup>. and were in general a troublesome element in Rome. The Rome and Italy of A.D. 64 were practically divided into two classes, viz., the very rich and the miserably poor.<sup>2</sup> Both extremes were of the devil," someone has bluntly said; and they certainly seemed to be so at Rome. This vast plebs urbana practically lived at the expense of the state<sup>3</sup>. at this time. In fact, already in 695 A.U.C. Claudius introduced a law providing for the gratuitous distribution of corn.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this gift of corn, largesses in money (coughiaria) were distributed.

The slaves were barbariously treated by the Romans. Hardly considered human, they were often and upon the slightest provocation brutally killed or put to death by the most exquisite torture. Their

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1. Helius, to whom Nero intrusted the government of Italy while he visited Greece in A.D. 66 was such a freedman. Merivale, Romans under the Empire VI, 276.
  2. Farrar, Seekers after God, p. 40, of course, there were some exceptions, but they were exceptions. Of the 1,200,00 inhabitants of ancient Rome there were, even at Cicero's time hardly 2,000 proprietors; See infra, note 3.
  3. At the time of Caesar 32,000 were thus supported, Augustus reduced them to 100,000 by establishing colonies of the poor in Italy and the provinces. Of the inhabitants of Rome (See supra, note 2) about 10,000 belonged to the upper class (senators and knights), almost 1,000,000 were slaves; about 50,000 were foreigners (merchants, etc.) and the remainder was the plebs urbana consistently poor.
  4. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum. p. 80.

lot was as a rule sad in the extreme.<sup>1</sup> It is not at all surprising that Christianity recruited her ranks so successfully from this pitiable class. What religion but that of the lowly Christ could possibly make Roman slavery bearable!

Above all the family, that gauge of a nation's social and moral soundness, was undermined. Marriage was, to begin with, regarded with disdain and contempt under the Empire; and a family was considered a misfortune, while divorce had become a fashion.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, he who had no amorous intrigue--and if it be with his friend's wife--was considered quite behind the times. A reaction of such social conditions on national morality was inevitable.

Then, too, we must not pass by the games of the circus and amphitheatre without notice, for as they are indications of the corrupt morals of the age, so they at the same time contribute much to still greater moral decay. An inordinate desire for pleasure and enjoyment, a craving for new and powerful stimulants, is another characteristic of this period. "Panem et circenses": Bread and games;

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1. See Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum 99, 105, who paints a sad but unfortunately true picture of Roman slavery. comp. Farrar, Early Days of Christianity, p. 2; McClintock and Strong, Bible. Cycl. s.v. "Slavery", III 5. In the Empire there were no less than 60,000,000 slaves; they were so numerous that they were divided according to their nationality. Tacitus, An. 3, 53. On their cruel treatment see Tacitus, Annals 14, 43, 44.
  2. Non consulum nuncero sed maritorum annos suos computavit, says Seneca, De Beudf, of the women. Comp. also Tacitus, Annals 2, 37.38; 3, 34, 35; 15, 19. And Tertullian, Apolog 6, says of this matter "Repudium jam votum erat, et quasi matrimonii fructus." See also Tertul Apolgg 9; Tacitus, Hist. 5, 5.

that was the ambition of the populace<sup>1</sup>. and as long as Rome could keep her millions fed and amused, the Emperor had little to fear.<sup>2</sup> The chariot races of the circus especially raised enthusiasm to the highest pitch, so that Juvenal could say, "Does the green lose, then Rome is struck aghast as after the defeat at Cannae".<sup>3</sup> Another spectacle of great popularity was furnished by the amphitheaters, where the well known gladiatorial contests took place<sup>4</sup> in the presence of spectators thirsting for bloody exhibitions and utterly indifferent to the torments of the vanquished. Besides these principal public spectacles there were others of less frequent occurrence and of minor importance, though none the less marked by frivolty, sensuality, cruelty, and an utter disregard of the sacredness of human life.

The year A.D. 64, then, falls within an age effete with the drunkenness of vice and crime. It was by no means a barbarous and an uncivilized age. On the contrary, arts and sciences, and education in general were in a rather flourishing state--it was heathen-

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1. In the times of Caesar the Circus had a seating capacity of 150,000, Titus added 100,000 more. Cf. Conybeare and Howson III, 367.
  2. As early as Augustus the games were celebrated for 66 days and under Marcus Aurelius for fully 135 days. Ohlhorn, Kampf des Christentum. p. 89,
  3. Quoted by Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 91; see Friedlander Si Hengesch. Romans 3.
  4. The walls of excavated Pompei revealed posters announcing and advertising gladiatorial spectacles.



ism at the height of her culture.<sup>1</sup> But this culture was only surface<sup>2</sup> culture and this education was restricted to the intellect. St. Paul writing to the Christians at Rome<sup>3</sup> lifts the veil a moment and throws the fierce flames of divine indignation upon the pollutions of pagan wickedness in all its unnatural deformity. True, there undoubtedly were some exceptions. The moral decay, that stubborn testimony of the bankruptcy of every form of paganism, was not so pronounced in the seclusion of the country and the provinces at large as it was in Rome, that sink of vice, living under the flaunting banners of lust and crime. Then, too, we must not lose sight of the fact that almost all descriptions of this time are, pen-pictures drawn by artists whose productions leave an indelible impression on one's mind. But all deductions made, one cannot study the first century of the christian era without receiving a horrible impression of the almost brutish depravity and utterly reckless immorality of the heathen world of that age.<sup>4</sup> It presents scores of pictures so loathsome that the pen refuses all detailed description. "Pagan society, in its hideous disintegration, became

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf des Christentum p. 97.

2. We cannot subdue the desire to quote Farrar's characteristically graphic remarks on the famous passage Rom. 1, 18-32: "Paul unmoved, untempted; unbewitched, unterrified, sees in this painted Circe no laughing, maiden, no bright-eyed daughter of the sun, but a foul baleful harlot, and seizing her by the hair, stamps deep upon her leprous forehead the burning titles of her shame. Henceforth she may go for all time throughout the world a branded sorceress. All may read that festering stigma; none can henceforth deceive the nations into regrets for the vanished graces of a world which knew not God." Life and Works of St. Paul 1, 30,31.

3. Romans 1, 18-32.

4. Cf. Merivale, Romans under the Empire VI, 226 f.

one foul disease of unnatural depravity. The cancer of it ate into the heart; the miasma of it tainted the air."<sup>1</sup>.

Whither are we to look for the cause of such appalling conditions? Had religion died altogether? Were sacrifices no longer offered, the appointed auspices no more observed? Did the temples stand in the crumbling silence of disuse? No, indeed: Quite the contrary obtains in this age. Instead of irreligiousness St. Paul can well charge the age with super religiousness.<sup>2</sup>

And this does not obtain only in Athens. Parallel to all the moral filth in Rome run many pagan cults with thousands of votaries. Though inwardly diseased and decayed, polytheism preserved its outward splendor long after its religious and moral influence had passed away.<sup>3</sup>

It might be well in this connection to draw attention to the fact, that, contrary to christianity, the form, even the religious

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1. Farrar, Life and Works of Paul II, 196.

2. Acts 17, 22, Luther indeed translates, "allzu abergläubig." The A.V. "too superstitious," but we are inclined to regard "very religious" or "unusually religious" (Farrar, Paul I, 542) the better translation of ὡς σεβασταμωβεστίπους. Thus also Uhlhorn, Kampf -. 18. The word is a vox media. Athens had the fame of being more religious than any other Grecian city. See citations from Josephus, Isocrates, Plato, and Livy by Conyb. and Howson, Paul I, 363 Blass, Gram (5 A) Par. 244, 2; ungewöhnlich (allzu) gottesfürchtig (klass) oder, sehr gottesfürchtig." Winer, Gram (7th Ed. Lunemann. Engl. by Thayer) p. 244 explains thus: "The particle ὡς does not appear to belong to the comparative (?) as an intensive, but the passage must be rendered: In all respects (at every step as it were) I behold you as more religious people (than others are). See also Meyer on Acts 17, 22.

3. Milman, History of Christianity II, 99.

content of pagnaism is to a great extent modelled by political and social conditions and expediences.<sup>1</sup> The deities of the polytheist do not so much shape the destiny and determine the character of their votary as their attributes are dependent upon the determination of their devotee. Here too the fundamental difference between polytheism and Christianity becomes apparent. The one is man-made and therefore man can unmkke it or modify it ad libitum;<sup>2</sup> the other is determined and revealed by God and therefore beyond the interference of man. Man's disbelief in or distortions of the truths of Christianity do not in the least effect their validity or objective reality; whereas polytheism as such, being fable and fiction, is quite dependent on the belief of the mind from which it sprang. Polytheism and Christianity compare as fable and fact.

The three constituent elements of Roman religion, it will be remembered, were the service of the ancient Sabine or Italian divinities; the hornspicinal discipline, derived principally from Etruria;<sup>3</sup> and the cult of certain foreign deities introduced generally by advice of special oracles, such as those of Ceres, Aesculopius, and Cybele.<sup>4</sup> It is not our intention to give a detailed description of the various attributes and functions which the Romans originally ascribed to Jupiter, Juno, Vesta, Mars, and their host of

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1. Comp. Uhlhorn, Kampf 44.

2. Comp. Fisher, Beginnings 114, Uhlhorn, Kampf 23. Uhlhorn points out that this was especially the case with the imaginative Greeks.

3. Milman, Hist. of Christianity I, 26.

4. Gibbon, Decline and Downfall I, 39.

other divinities; and indeed, the absence of dogmatism in belief, which made Roman religion ever quite ready to transfer foreign customs and ideas to their own gods, gave it a constantly shifting and broadening character, so that it is difficult indisputably to determine for a definite period more than the essentials.<sup>1</sup> It might, however, be well here to point out the two salient features of the Roman religion which rendered possible its existence during times and amid conditions which would have proved the undoing of a religion differently constituted.

The prosaic and practical character of the Roman at an early date transmuted the never very strong moral element of its religion into a political power. And it was as a political power and institution that the Roman religion assumed importance and influence. In Rome the State was everything. The priest, so important in the cults of the East, acted more in the capacity of a master of ceremonies at Rome, according to whose directions the statesman offered sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> The object sought to be obtained by this close union of religion and politics at Rome, may probably be found in a desire to give to the wars of the State a religious character and thus encourage and inspire its legions.<sup>3</sup> During the time of the Republic sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered to the capitoline Jupiter, who then represented the State. When, however, caesarism

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1. Comp. on Roman religion in general Milman, Hist of Christianity, I, 26f.
  2. Thus as mentioned above, p. 17, the Emperor was himself Pontifex Maximus. See also Gibbon I, 37.
  3. See the proofs adduced for this view in Milman, Hist. of Christianity I, 27.

took its rise, the Emperors represented the State in their person<sup>1</sup>. and thus to a certain extent usurped the place of the Capitoline divinity. Hence the culmination of Roman religion in Caesar-worship has a perfectly logical consistency about itself. This final form of Roman state religion is at once its political climax and its religious anticlimax.<sup>2</sup> This deification of the living<sup>3</sup> or apotheosis of the dead Emperor proved to be the test-act of the Christians, and their refusal to offer incense to the Emperor-god was not only looked upon as a religious blasphemy, but above all as a public attestation of dissatisfaction with Roman rule and government as represented by the Emperor.

From the political character of the Roman religion its other salient feature may readily be deduced. It was predominantly a ceremonial service. Priests as mediators between God and man were, as noted above, quite unknown to Rome. Men kept their accounts with the Gods in order by the punctual and punctilious performance of minutely prescribed rites.<sup>4</sup> This endowed the entire Roman religion with a juridical atmosphere and gave it such a business-like

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1. Comp. Supra. 17.

2. Fisher, Beginnings. 125, 126. What depth of degradation emperor worship implied will readily appear when we think of such monsters as Caligula and Nero. Of Nero himself we are told that he revered the Syrian Actarte, till in a fit of vexation he brutishly insulted her image. At last his sole object of worship was a little figure of a girl. The Emperor-God had himself turned a fetishist; Suetonius. Ner. 56.

3. Julius Caesar and in a large measure Augustus received divine honors during their life-time.

4. Fisher, Beginnings 122.

air that it has properly been called "Ceremonial Romanae". At the same time this opus operatum character of Rome's religion gave it a peculiarly long lease on life, since it thus could exist long after it had lost its influence over the inner man which, it is true, was little enough. The small element of real spirituality and morality in pagan religion becomes noticeable at every step. Orthodoxy and pioussness were strangely confused with the amount of sacrifices offered and with the scrupulous observance of prescribed ceremonial rites, while the attitude and condition of the inner man were lightly regarded. Uhlhorn records that on the accession of the Emperor Caligula (A.D. 37) 100,000 animals were slain in sacrifice in three months<sup>1</sup> while at the same time wickedness and immorality, unchecked and unhampered, were like a deadly leprosy spreading their contamination among all classes. Upon the murder of Agrippina vows and sacrifices were offered the Gods by a decree of the Senate, yea, the most atrocious barbarities perpetrated by Nero were celebrated with religious rites and ceremonies of thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup> But further evidence is not necessary; for the entire history of paganism proves that the loftiest heights of culture and the most scrupulous performance of Roman religious duties were compatible with the lowest abysses of depravity and corruption.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf 28, 29.

2. Tacitus, Annals, 14, 64; 15, 74. See also Merivale, Rom. Empire VI, 151; Fisher, Beginnings 126.

3. Farrar, Paul I, 529.

But not only a loose and immoral life, also positive unbelief was compatible with an adherence to the Roman religion, paradoxical as this may seem. And there can be little doubt that the philosophic and more educated Roman of this time had little in common with the popular belief.<sup>1</sup> Already Cicero quotes Cato as saying, that it was a matter of some surprise to him how the hornspices could refrain from bursting into laughter when catching one another's eyes while performing their duty.<sup>2</sup> The elite and literati of Roman society "had long learned to treat the current mythology as a mass of worthless fables scarcely amusing enough for even a schoolboy's laughter."<sup>3</sup> When Seneca sneers against the old mythology and legends of deities whose cruelty and license would have been infamous even among men, he gives us one of the many reasons why the old religion was falling into disrepute by many. This unbelief had, of course, its various degrees of intensity. There were those who flatly denied the existence of the popular deities and prided themselves upon their intellectual and spiritual emancipation, far removed from slavishly following the ignes fatui of traditional mythology. Then too, there were those who, with Pliny, who once said "There is nothing certain save that nothing is certain,"<sup>4</sup>

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1. Gibbon, *Decline and Downfall* I, 37.

2. Quoted by Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte Roms* III, 465.

3. Farrar, *Early Days* 89. "Poetry had been religion; religion was becoming poetry." Milman, *Hist. Christianity* 1,33. Thus Juvenal *Sat.* 2, 149, 152 (quoted by Farrar, *Early Days* p. 8, n.2):

*Esse aliquos manes et subterranea regna  
Necpueri credunt nisi qui nondum aere laventur.*

See Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte* III, 428.

4. Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte* III, 428.

did not quite so categorically condemn the entire popular mythology but were thoroughly sceptic as to its reality and efficacy as a religion. Among the literati there were, however, also those who like Tacitus in Rome and Plutarch in Greece<sup>1</sup>. confessed yet to believe in the popular religion; yet the very pains they take to assert their adherence to the ancient religion has something forced and unnatural about it. This class, however, was small, the rule in this strata of society being scepticism or unbelief. But we must not think, that this matter of unbelief manifested itself in bitter animosity toward or persecution of the believers. On the contrary, the very philosophers who in their writings and private conversations set down the old faith as a conglomeration of silly fables suitable as bug-bears for the nursery and old women, in public often "resigned their actions to the command of law and custom--and concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes,"<sup>2</sup>. condescendingly donned to play a "religious" part in the theatre, the temple or the parade. Thus Roman religion was a pageant in which also unbelievers could play their part with hypocritical sincerity and formal coldness,<sup>3</sup>. could with legal formality sacrifice to the very deity which they at heart utterly despised and upon whose devout worshippers they looked with the pitying smile of philosophical arrogance.

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf 35.

2. Gibbon, Decline and Downfall I, 36.37.

3. Hilman, Hist. of Christianity I, 37; comp. Farrar, Paul I, 534.



That there yet remained some "devout worshippers" of the ancient deities in Rome and especially in Italy at large, is beyond a doubt true. The statements of the decay of pagan religions in the early decades of the Empire are often somewhat exaggerated and admit of modification in more than one respect. The view, sometimes advanced, that Christianity upon its advent found paganism quite dead and completely decayed will not stand the test of precise historical research.<sup>1.</sup> It is of course true, that the literature we possess of this period propounds a sceptic and rationalistic view of the hereditary pagan religions and traditions. However, we must not lose sight of the fact, that this literature originated among a class usually one of the first to become sceptic and unbelieving. We may set it down as a rule, that a nation can have and usually has more religion than its literature emanating from a particular class would indicate. The lower strata of society, as they are usually the first to embrace so they are the last to cast away religious belief. And thus we find the roots of paganism most firmly grounded among this class of people.<sup>2.</sup> The old heathenism made its last stand not in the cities and great centers of population but rather in the retreats of the country<sup>3.</sup> and provinces, and among

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1. See Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte* III, 443.

2. See Uhlhorn, *Kampf* 20, who enumerates in extenso the populous domestic Roman pantheon of these times. There were besides many local cults of which little is known. *Ibid* p. 31.

3. Whence our words "rustic", "countryman"---"pagan" *paganus*. See Skeat *Ety. Dict.*

the lower classes of people--of whom we unfortunately hear little. Yet it would be equally as false to represent the common people as left altogether intact by religious doubt and unbelief. For it is but natural that, when they discovered that their Gods were rejected as false and derided as impossible and insufficient by those whose rank or superior understanding they were accustomed to reverence, that they too were infected with doubts and apprehensions concerning the religion of their forefathers. A careful investigation, then, of the many considerations which enter into this question results in the following: All facts are so strongly contradictory to admit the supposition that as early as A.D. 64 the great mass of the people had become entirely estranged from the heathen religion, while on the other hand we have unimpeachable witnesses whose testimony leaves no doubts, that the leaven of unbelief and scepticism had already penetrated beyond the cultivated circles and begun to affect the masses.<sup>1.</sup>

But man is an inherently religious creature. Few of those who no longer gave the popular religion any credence were atheists. Dissatisfied with both religious and political conditions of the time, they looked about in search of a philosophy of life. It is then that Stoicism became more prominent at Rome than ever before.<sup>2.</sup>

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1. This view we share with Fisher, *Beginnings* 133; Gibbon *Decline* I, 573; Uhlhorn, *Kampf* 28, 39 et al.

2. Merivale, *Rom. Empire* VI. 191-193; Friedl. *Sitteng.* 3, 429; Milman. *Hist of Christianity* I, 38.

We must, however, not think that Stoicism excluded all faith in the Gods. With that elasticity so peculiar to polytheism Stoicism was not of necessity atheism to the Roman. On the contrary, some of the most zealous Stoics sought to spiritualize and scientifically to systematize Rome's heterogeneous Pantheon and to allegorize its most offensive legends and traditions.<sup>1</sup> Thus to a certain extent, it may be called the "mediating theology" of the time. And it was in many ways adapted to find favor with the Roman mind. Its practical character, its self-confidence, its aristocratic tendency—all were quite accordant to the Roman disposition. And beyond a doubt, the most exalted philosophic sect of pagan antiquity was "the sect of Stoics." So nearly, indeed, does one of its most eloquent exponents, Seneca, arrive at Christian truths,<sup>2</sup> that an early Christian writer could conceive the romantic idea of composing a work professing to contain the correspondence carried on between Seneca and St. Paul himself.<sup>3</sup> Though of undoubted spuriousness the fictitious correspondence evidences the high regard accorded Seneca's

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf. 37; Friedl. Sitteng. III, 429f.

2. Compare for instance: Seneca. De Clem. 5, "Peccavimus omnes nec delinquimus tantum sed ad extremum alvi delinquimus", and Rom. 3, 23: "Omnes peccaverunt" (Vulg); or Seneca (to Lucilius): "God is near you, is with you, is within you, and 1 Cor. 3, 16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?". Quoted by Farrar, Seekers after God 174.

3. On this interesting subject see Farrar, Seekers after God, Chap. XIV: Seneca and St. Paul.

utterances on subjects of morality.<sup>1</sup> It is of him that Lactantius says: "Accordingly he has said many things like ourselves concerning God." And Tertullian says his utterances are "the testimony of a mind naturally Christian." But as superior as Stoicism undoubtedly was to the general run of the religious and philosophic sects of this age, and as much as it in some points seems to be tangent to Christianity, it is at best pagan and its divergencies from the spirit of Christianity are, to say the least, as remarkable as its resemblances.<sup>2</sup> The all superintending Providence which the system of Zeno<sup>3</sup> recognized was quite different from "the Divine Providence" of Christianity, was in fact, a stern and all-controlling necessity, an inexorable Fatalism. "The stoics were Pantheists. -- The world was itself a rational soul producing all things out of itself, and resuming them all to itself again. Matter was inseparable from the Deity. He did not create: He only organized. He merely impressed law and order on the substance, which was, in fact, himself."<sup>4</sup> The well known key-note of Stoic philosophy was "Sustine et abstine":

Ἀπέχου καὶ ἄπτεχου.

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1. "Seneca's utterances on subjects of morality" we say, because Theoretic and practical morality were very often two different things for Seneca. Inconsistency is written on every page of his romantic life.
  2. Just to cite one instance: The panacea of Stoicism was suicide. Both Zeno and Cleanthes died thus. Epictetus, Pliny, Lucan and many others laud it. The very variety of Latin phrases for "suicide" indicate its frequency. Cf. Tacit. Annals 6, 10, 26; 15, 60. Ib. Hist. 5, 26.
  3. "Zeno, born in Cyprus, lived through the greater part of the century between B.C. 350 and 250."
  4. Conybeare and Howson, St. Paul I, 367.

To the Stoic pleasure was no good and pain no evil, but in the pride of his vaunted apathy he stood alone in self-asserted strength. To him the reasonable was the good, the unreasonable the evil. For his moral life the Stoic was referred wholly to himself. In consequence he was excessively proud of whatever little virtue he possessed. Stoicism was a glorification of the Ego. "Admire only thyself:", says Seneca.<sup>1</sup> "Pride, rank pride, and haughtiness of soul--I think the Romans call it Stoicism" says Addison somewhere. No, the forced philosophical calm and the arrogant aloofness of Stoicism was no remedy for the festering wounds of a deep-rooted moral putrefaction. Stoicism was in reality such a miserable "philosophy of life," that it has been termed with much greater exactness "the apotheosis of suicide."<sup>2</sup> Patet exitus: "...this is the last consolation of expiring heathenism: Then, too, Stoicism was aristocratic. It was not a boon granted mankind in general, but like all philosophy was reserved for the few elect. "The Father of the worlds," says Plato, "it is difficult to discover: and when discovered, it is impossible to make him known to all."<sup>3</sup> For the best of heathen philosophies can be claimed neither the glory which Paul ascribes to the preaching of the cross, that it "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power"<sup>4</sup> nor that glory of the Gospel, that it was preached to

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1. De Vita Beata, 8, 2.

2. Farrar, Paul I, 536.

3. Quoted by Milman, Hist. Christianity I, 42. Comp the words of Voltaire as quoted by Farrar, Paul I, 503; Merivale, Rom. Empire II, 416.

4. 1 Cor. 2, 4.

the poor!<sup>1</sup> Alas for the sadness of the truth that "darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people."<sup>2</sup>

If however, still further evidence were required to demonstrate that the confidence in the old gods was wavering, the reception of many foreign cults and religions at Rome would furnish us with such a proof. Even under the Republic it had been found impossible to maintain the exclusive practice of the genuine Roman religion--if, indeed, even a Roman could ever accurately define it. It is recorded by Dio Cassius<sup>3</sup> that Maecenas advised Augustus not to permit foreign religious innovations into Rome, as they would only tend to destroy the monarchy. A compromise had, however, been effected by granting toleration to certain cults which had taken too deep root in Rome to make their extirpation advisable or possible and whose practices were not considered dangerous to the welfare of the State. These cults were called religious licitae;<sup>4</sup> but even their exercise was guaranteed only to natives of the countries from whence they were imported and Romans never officiated as their priests.<sup>5</sup> While, however, this was for a long time the official

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1. Matt. 11, 5; cf. 2 Cor. 9, 9.

2. Isaiah 60, 2.

3. Dio Cassius, 7, 36.

4. Tertullian, Apolog 4, 21. Milman Hist. of Christianity I, 14.

5. Gibbon, Decline and Downfall I, 38 Wencke's note. Wencke corrects Gibbon's statement in regard to universal, indiscriminate toleration.

attitude in theory, in practice religious toleration at Rome was remarkably great<sup>1.</sup> while, of course, subject to the caprice of royal jealousy and animadversion.<sup>2.</sup>

As Rome had brought her legions and magistrates to the conquered world, the world now sought to bring her religions to the city on the Tiber. And also in this respect Rome proved her great governmental sagacity. The Gods of the subjected nations were accorded marked respect. Sometimes they were even allowed to enter the sacred precincts of the conquerors city and, as it were in allegiance to their new masters, were assigned seats under the Jupiter of the capitol in the Roman Pantheon. We are told, the Romans used to invoke the deity of a besieged place and bait their invitations to come out to them with promises of greater honors to be bestowed upon it by the Romans.<sup>3.</sup> Nor was this mere political sagacity, but

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1. Comp. Conyb. and Howson, St. Paul I, 302, 303.

2. The history of the astrologers of Rome during the imperial period makes interesting reading. Banished in turn by Augustus (Dio Cassius 56, 25 by Tiberius (Tacitus, Annals II, 32) and by Claudius (Tacitus, Annals 12, 52) they returned as often, by tacit permission or in defiance of the edict of expulsion, until Vespasian and his successors became their avowed champions. Tacitus, Hist. 2, 78; See also 7, 20 and Finlay, Greece under the Romans I, 10. In characteristic language Tacitus, Hist. 1, 22, describes the astrologers as "genus hominum, potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallas, quod in civitate nostra et setabitur semper et retinebitur."

3. Pliny, 28, 2 quoted by Milman, Hist. of Christianity I, 14, n.1; See Bibbon, Decline I, 39, and Uhlhorn, Kampf 24, who records such a prayer of invocation. To avoid a retaliation by their enemies through like methods, the Romans in early times studiously kept the names of their Gods hidden. Fisher, Beginnings, 122.

it was founded on the idea that the Gods of other nations were also gods who if badly treated might harm the Romans. Nay, more than this. It is the natural religious expansiveness or, as it were, elasticity of polytheism, the tendency to recognize in the national deities of neighboring nations ones own divinities worshipped under a different name or in a different form or the tendency even to regard the powers of the deities of other nations as supplementary to those of one's own Gods, it is this innate tendency of polytheism which throws the doors open to foreign religions.<sup>1</sup> Then, too, we must not lose sight of the effect of the universal Roman dominion and the great commercial and martial flux of nations to which it gave rise. Nations were no longer geographically circumscribed and this too was a great factor in the diffusion of foreign cults and religions.<sup>2</sup>

A blending of religions was as natural to the Roman Empire as a fusion of politics and nationalities. We are therefore not surprised to find that no matter how strenuously the genuine Roman spirit at the first rejected foreign rites, no matter how many edicts were issued for their expulsion, that commingling of deities, that universal toleration which characterizes the last period of heathenism went on uninterruptedly. Thus Rome, with a Pantheon containing the representative deities of all nations, was the religious as well as the political capital of the world.

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1. Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte Roms* III, 445.

2. Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte Roms* III, 446.



Of the many cults represented at Rome A.D. 64 those of the East were steadily increasing their popularity.<sup>1</sup> While the Roman spirit ruled in the domain of government and law, and the Greek in that of arts and sciences, the Oriental began to exert its influence upon religious life. Undoubtedly the very novelty, the great difference between the Eastern cults and the Roman and Grecian religions, account to some extent for their popularity in a country by long familiarity grown contemptuous and weary of its own deities.<sup>2</sup> Another factor which entered in was the vague report, based probably on Jewish Messianic hope, that from the East Salvation was to rise on the Earth.<sup>3</sup> Above all, however, it was the weird and wild enthusiasm and superstition which attracted a people living in a feverish orgy of criminal indulgence and sensual gratification. To such a generation the old Roman religion could not but be insipid. And thus "the wild, fanatical enthusiasm of the Eastern cults shook with new sensations of mad sensuality and weird superstition the feeble and jaded despair of Aryan Paganism."<sup>4</sup> The bizarre and sometimes terrible rites of initiation, the fineness of the magicians, the feigned potency of charms and amulets, the enigmas of emblematical idolatry with which the superstitions of the

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1. Schuerer, *Hist. of Jewish People* II, 301ff; Farrar, *Seekers after God* 46; Milman, *Hist. of Christianity* I, 48; Since the second Punic War oriental elements had entered the Roman religion. Friedl. *Sittg.* III, 445.

2. Milman, *Hist. of Christianity* I, 33.

3. Uhlhorn, *Kampf.* 55.

4. Farrar, *Paul* I, 28.

Orient were replete enchanted the languid interest of the voluptuary who had neither the energy requisite for a moral belief nor the boldness for a logical scepticism. Then, too, the oriental cults owed a large portion of their influence and attraction to their secrecy always a great bait for man's curiosity. Even if the successive revelations of the mysteries did not satisfy the mind, they kept it in a state of suspense and excited anticipation.

Little known in Roman territory at the time of Augustus, the famous cult of the Persian Mithras gradually gained a firm foothold in Italy in consequence of the growing intercourse between Rome and the East."<sup>1</sup> In the year (A.D. 64) its mysteries were already beginning to attract attention. In later years it had a great following at Rome and was not entirely suppressed until A.D. 378. On account of the great popularity to which it subsequently attained it might not be amiss to take a closer view of this fantastic cult. Mithras, properly the God of day and light<sup>2</sup> presided over the movements and influences of the principal heavenly bodies. He is the protector of man in this life and watches over

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1. Those who desire a fuller picture of Mithraism than we can here submit, we would refer to Hardwick, Christ and other Masters p. 566-573 and the article "Mithras" in the Encycl. Britannica, to which articles we are in the main indebted for the above outline.
  2. Therefore the Persian Sun God. Greek: *Μίθρας*; Sanscrit Mitra or Mitras, i.e., Friend, Strabo calls him Sun-god expressly: *Ἡερόν τε τιμῶσι δὲ καὶ ἡρώων ὄν καλεῖται Μίθραν* (XV, 13). Mithras would convey the idea of light as a friend of man and a mediator (*μεσότης*) between heaven and earth.

his soul in the next, transferring it to eternal realms of bliss. He is all-seeing and all-hearing. Armed with a club he marshals the bright army of the good genii against Ahriman<sup>1</sup>. and his deos. At first of a merry character,<sup>2</sup> the mysteries gradually assumed a severe aspect. The ceremonies observed upon the initiation into these mysteries were of an eccentric nature and symbolical of the battle of Good<sup>3</sup> and Evil. Among the inaugurative acts were baptism and the partaking of a peculiar liquid concocted of flour and water. This was drunk during the recitation of mystic formulae. There were yet other acts of initiation which were really perilous. The neophyte received the title of "soldier of Mithras". These peculiarities gave the rites a bellicose character which attracted especially the Roman soldiery.<sup>4</sup> Of the many festivals celebrated in honor of Mithras that of his birthday on December the twenty-fifth was the most important.<sup>5</sup> Such, in brief, was this strange

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1. The "Satan" of the Avesta.

2. The king of Persia was allowed to become intoxicated only on the Feast of the Mysteries.

3. Represented by the Persian God Ormuzd, with whom Mithras was on a level. Evil-Ahriman.

4. As the idolatrous lodges of to-day the Mithras-cult had its degrees. These were: 1. Soldiers; 2. lions (men) or Hyaenas (women); 3. Ravens; 4. Degree of Perses; 5. Of Oromios; 6. Of Helios; 7. Of Fathers, also called Hawks and Eagles. The votaries of Mithras were recruited from all ranks. Even the Emperor Commodus offered human sacrifice to Mithras. The Jews were forbidden to be initiated in the mysteries. See Milman's remarks, Hist. of Christianity 1, 4 or 5.

5. The fact that this day was subsequently fixed as the day of Christ's birth and the resemblances between some of the rites of Mithras and some christian ordinances and institutions has lead a few to assume a quasi-dependence of christianity on Mithraism. This romantic view, however, has been very ably refuted by Hardwick, Christ and other Masters, p. 568f. Hardwick points out that these resemblances are rather "Mithraic mimicries of Christianity", to which indeed already Tertullian alludes, De Praescript. Haer. C 11.

cult, which, where the classic forms of pagan idolatry had become bankrupt, was able to attract to itself a multitude of followers both in the East and West.

In like manner the worship of the Egyptian Isis, sister-wife of the Sun-God Osiris found favor at Rome during this and many subsequent periods. The myths connected with Osiris were numerous, but, like many Greek myths, frequently confused, even contradictory. The well known Isis-Osiris myth relates how Osiris, having become incarnate, "once upon a time," reigned as king in Egypt. A beneficent ruler, he was nevertheless slain by his brother Set, the principle of evil, having cut his body into fourteen pieces, disposed of them in various parts of Egypt. Isis, however, succeeded in collecting and revivifying them, while Horus to whom she had given birth in the meanwhile, set out to avenge his father on Set, after the completion of which task he assumed his father's throne, Osiris having upon his "resurrection" passed triumphantly into the nether world, whose king he became.<sup>1</sup> On this myth the Isaic mysteries were built. Isis herself soon became prominent in the worship and gradually absorbed the attributes of all female divinities. She was Goddess of the earth and its fruits, of the sea, of love, of healing, of magic, etc. A long preparation preceded the initiation, including sprinkling with consecrated water, baths, and abstinence from

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1. See the myth treated in detail by Breasted, Hist. of Eg., p. 58ff. *Encycl. Brit.* s.v. "Isis".

meat. On the night of consecration, indicated by a dream, the novice watched in the temple, first in a harsh linen robe, then with symbolical significance changing his dress twelve times he went through a number of scenes and visions signifying (the) death and resurrection through the favor of Isis.<sup>1</sup> The mysteries themselves consisted mainly in lustrations, festive parades, and secret consecrations. Thus when the ocean in spring was again considered navigable, the Romans and Greeks carried about a ship in solemn procession consecrated to Isis. This festival of the navigium Isis was celebrated annually on March the fifth. The priests of Isis usually wore long linen robes with the dog-mas before their face, while they carried their peculiar rattle (the sistrum) in their hand. The mysteries were at first probably of a more sober character, were often sensual and orgiastic.<sup>2</sup> Though traces of the Isaic mysteries are found in Rome as early as the Second Punic War (B.C. 218-201),<sup>3</sup> they were not actually introduced there until the time of Sulla, about B.C. 86. The cult had been repeatedly forbidden by senates and emperors,<sup>4</sup> but despite the edicts of magistrates and the contempt of philosophers

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1. This account of the initiation is found in Uhlhorn, Kampf 251f.

2. Josephus, Antiq. 18, 3.

3. Friedlaender, Sittengeschichte Roms 3, 447.

4. During the Republic the temple of Isis and Serapsi--Serpais, originally an Asiatic god, was equated with Osiris, consort of Isis, cf. McCl. and Strong Bib. Cycl. s.v. "Serapis"--were twice destroyed (Dio Cassius) 40 and 42). Later both Augustus and Tiberius banished the cult from Rome. (Tacitus Annals 2, 85; Suetonius, Tib. 36). See Bibbon I, 38, Wenck n. 2.

its following grew until under Domitian, about A.D. 81, it became a naturalized religion,<sup>1.</sup> and as late as A.D. 222 we find a Roman Emperor, Alexander Severus, enlarging the Temples of Isis.<sup>2.</sup> This cult was one of the last to fall before Christianity. As late as A.D. 453, long after paganism had been suppressed in other parts of Egypt by the edict of Theodosius, Isis had her devotees, though they belonged to the least civilized tribes of the land.

Among all the foreign peoples and religions, however, which at this time found shelter in the Eternal City there is one nation and one religion which next to the christians and christianity themselves, is of most peculiar interest to us. The terrible prophecy of Moses had literally been fulfilled and Israel had been "removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."<sup>3.</sup> There was hardly a known country of the world where some Jews were not to be found.<sup>4.</sup> Invasions and conquests, civil strifes and oppressions, persecutions and famines, all had been God's agents in

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1. Tertullian, Apol. 6, Domitian and Caracalla were themselves Isaic priests. Milman, Hist. 2, 154.

2. Milman, Hist. of Christianity. 2, 180, 181.

3. Deut. 28, 25.

4. Even in China very early traces of them have been found. Conyb. and Howson 1, 17; see Eilersheim, Life and Times 1, 70. The study of the Jewish dispersion is peculiarly interesting. See especially Schurer, Jewish People 2 ii, 219-291; Friedlaender, Sittengeschichte Roms 3, 506ff; also Strabo in Josephus, Antiqu. 14, 7, 2. Fisher, Beginnings 67f. etc.

this world-wide dispersion. The political independence of Israel had finally been shattered by the Roman legions and the land of the Jews became a province of the World Empire B.C. 64. The sun of its outward glory had set,--red with the blood of its sons. And already A.D. 64 the distant mutterings of the last terrible storm, which was to leave the Holy City a mass of reeking, blood-stained ruins, were audible.

The year A.D. 64, then, finds the Jew, in past centuries so exclusively at home in Palestine, turned cosmopolitan. Reluctantly turning from the rudely dispelled dream of reestablished Israelitic independence and greatness many of those who were yet free and independent now devoted themselves to commercial pursuits with the perseverance and shrewdness which have ever since been associated with Jewish commercialism. For the exercise and development of this Jewish talent Rome was peculiarly well adapted.<sup>1.</sup> The real Jewish community in Rome had its beginning in the captives brought by Pompey after his Eastern campaign.<sup>2.</sup> Already Julius Caesar allowed them to live in Rome according to their own custom<sup>3.</sup> and when the distribution of

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf. 58, 59.

2. Conybeare and Howson, Paul 2, 369. If credit is to be given to the reading of two epitomists of Valerius Maximus Jews were already in Rome B.C. 139. Thus Friedl. Sitteng. 3, 310. But this is too clearly an anacronism (what would Jews have to do with a Phrygian God?) to attach any weight to it.

3. Josephus, Ant. 14, 10, 8. In general the Republicans were against, the Ceasars favorable to the Jews.

the largesses of corn in which the Jews had a share fell on a Sabbath Augustus had it postponed to the next day.<sup>1.</sup> True Tiberius<sup>2.</sup> and Caludius<sup>3.</sup> banished them from Rome, but a few years later they were again at Rome in great numbers.<sup>4.</sup> The Jews at Rome enjoyed not only perfect liberty but were granted positive privileges. Thus, Josephus tells us,<sup>5.</sup> they were exempt from military services on account of their religious prejudice, while their religion itself was a *religio licita* in Rome. Due to such favorable conditions many even of the manumitted slaves had become rich and influential.<sup>6.</sup>

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1. There were about 40,000 Jews in Rome during the time of Augustus, Josephus Ant. 17, 11, 1, tells us 8000 were present upon Archelaus' appearance before Augustus. cf. Schuerer J. P. II, ii, 235f.
  2. Tacitus, Ann. 2, 85. Tacitus says Tiberius banished many of them to Sardinia with the hope, that the unhealthy climate might put away with them..." et si, ob gravitatem caeli interissent, vile damnum". Cf. Suet, Tib. 36.
  3. Josephus, Ant. 18, 3, 5--Suetonius, Claud. 25. The well-known words of Suetonius are: "Judaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultantes Roma expulit." Whether this Chrestos was a ringleader of the Jewish tumults or whether, due to an ignorant misreading he was Christ, from the disputes concerning whose name, i.e. Messiahship, the incessant riots arose, cannot be ascertained with certainty. We are inclined to indorse the later view, which with slight and immaterial modifications is held also by Gieseler, Thiesch, Ewald, Neander, Lange, Bish. Usher et al. The former view is held by Meyer (cf on Acts 18, 2) De Wette, et al. Dio Cassius 60, 6 seems to contradict Suet. when he says that the Jews were too numerous to be expelled without danger, and therefore Claudius contented himself by closing their synagogues. The correct solution seems to be that the decree was indeed passed, but never rigorously enforced.
  4. Acts 28, 17f.
  6. "Die Juden bewohnten die XIV Region jenseit der Tiber u. einen Stadteil an der Porta Capena. den Angang der Appischen Strasse; aber auch mitten in den elegantesten Teilen der Weltstadt stossen wir auf Judische Hauser." Uhlhorn, Kampf 58.
  5. Josephus, Ant. 14, 10, 11-19; 26, 6 comp. 19, 5, 3.



Although the Jews had made their homes in foreign countries, whither the fortunes of war or the pursuits of commerce had had them, we must not think that they were willing to compromise their nationality or abandon their traditions. On the contrary, it seems as though the very absence from the land of Israel had made them more intensely Jewish than ever, had made the land of their fathers more dear to their hearts and its religion more sacred.<sup>1</sup> Upon their rejection of the promised Messiah, it is true, their religion had been emptied of its central, essential truth. They had no longer the true God, since their Jehovah was not the Father of Jesus Christ to them.<sup>2</sup> But in more than one respect the religious character of the Jews of this period differed from that of their forefathers, the radical religious change effected by the Jewish captivities is truly remarkable. Before the exiles repeated idolatry often of the grossest kind, and religious syncretism were the cancer eating at the vitals of Israel's material and spiritual prosperity. Nor could the most terrible and harrowing visitations of insulted Jehovah effect a permanent reform. Then came the exiles: And after them the small community of returned Jews established itself on an exclusively Mosaic, monotheistic basis, apparently forever cured of all polytheistic tendencies. But soon they began to verge into the other extreme. Formerly too liberal, they now became morbidly legalistic. Already many a decade before A.D. 64 Judaism had degen-

1. Such titles as *φιλάνθρωπος* and *φιλόπατρις* on their tombs bear witness to their zeal for their religion and nationality. Schuer, 1 i, 31-34; comp. Uhlhorn, Kamp. 56.

2. 1 John 2, 23; John 6, 23; 2 John v.p.

erated among its most zealous exponents into an intolerable exclusivism and a fanatic ardor to observe the smallest minutiae of the scriptural and traditional laws and ceremonies. Nor was the genuine Jew of the dispersion, absent from the great center of Israelitic worship, absolved from its scrupulous observances. He remitted his yearly temple tax, sent offerings to Jerusalem and, at least once in his life, went up to the Holy City to keep the feast. Paul himself ably qualified to judge from experience, bore them record "that they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

Needless to say, the sons of "the chosen nation" in their arrogant exclusiveness considered the Romans, together with all other heathen nations as utterly despicable. "The very dust of the heathen soil," says Ebersheim,<sup>2</sup> was supposed to carry defilement, like corruption or the grave." The Romans on the other hand, entertained as hearty a hatred and as lively a loathing for the Jews. They were considered the mere scum and offscouring of peoples;<sup>3</sup> devoted to disgusting and ridiculous superstitions and animated by an inveterate hatred of all nations except themselves. This mutual loathing finds eloquent and emphatic expression in the literature of both.<sup>4</sup> Yet this strained relation admits of exceptions

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1. Romans 10, 2.

2. Ebersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* 1, 87.

3. Cf. Deut. 28, 37: "Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Comp. Tacitus, *Ann.* 5, 5.

4. See Farrar's *Excursus on "The Hatred of Jews in Classical Antiquity"* in his *St. Paul* 1, 667. cf. also on this subject: Schuerer, *Jewish People* 11. 11, 291ff; Ebersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus* 1, 65ff; Farrar, *Seekers after God*. 172ff.

and modifications, as, indeed, the very privileges which the Jews enjoyed under the Romans would indicate. Dallying with Judaism was not infrequent among the Romans. Despise them as they would, there was something indefinably attractive about this strangest of nations and their religion. The Jewish synagogues in Rome<sup>1</sup> were frequented also by Romans, a few of whom probably sought in the Jewish religion that spiritual satisfaction which neither their stereotyped Roman ceremonies and rituals nor the wild orgies of Oriental cults could give them, while the blase and dissipated idler would be lead thither by curiosity and a craving for novel diversion. The experiment which had been tried with so many other Gods was now also tried with Jehovah. No doubt there was something attractive and mysterious about the Jewish religion to the Romans. While the greatness of their own religious systems lay in the past, the Jews certainly lacking all material props for such a faith, looked undauntedly to the future for the triumphant elevation of their nation and religion to universal renown and dominion. While, furthermore they distributed the Divine Power and Majesty among a populous Pantheon, represented by myriads of figures and statues, the Jews concentrated their worship upon but one Supreme and only God, Jehovah, whom no one had ever seen represented by statue or

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1. cf. Schuerer, Jewish People II, II, 74, 247f; 260; 283. We know of seven synagogues in Rome, while there must have been many more. Some of the names have come down to us: Synagoga Compi; Augusti; Agrippae, Suburrae, Elais. See Eilersheim, Life and Times I, 69.

graven image, in the synagogue or elsewhere.<sup>1.</sup> Thus a marvel and a portent, wondered at while scorned, attracting while repelled, the Jews represented in "this age of shattered religions and corroding doubts" the spectacle of a faith and religion invisible, immaterial but unshaken.

Thus also Judaism had its proselytes and quasi-proselytes among the Romans. To judge from the concrete examples adduced by Josephus<sup>2.</sup> Jewish proselyters were of two types, one requiring complete adhesion with circumcision, the other being satisfied with a leaning toward Judaism and the observance of certain of its usages. In consequence there were also two classes of proselytes. The so-called proselytes of righteousness<sup>3.</sup> were complete converts into the Jewish community. The other class of converts were the so-called proselytes of the gate.<sup>4.</sup> Without becoming circumcised and bound

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1. To many of the Romans, surrounded as they were on all sides by images of their gods, the Jews must have seemed atheists. It is remarkable how the best informed of Roman writers continued to a late period to have peculiarly vague notions of Judaism. St. Augustine de Civ. Dei 6, 11 quotes Seneca: Major pars populi facit quod curfaciat ignorant." and Juvenal 15, 97 says: Nil praeter nubes et coeli numen adorant." Uhlhorn, Kampf 61.

2. See Josephus Ant. 20, 3-4 on the conversion of Izates of Adiabene. This is not the place to enter into the mooted questions attaching to Jewish proselytism. The following salient facts are derived from Schuerer, Jewish People II, ii, 291-327, and E. von Dobschutz' article on "proselytes" in Schaff-Herzog's Encycl. of Rel. Knowledge. Consult also McClintock and Strong., Bibl. Cycl. s.v. "Proselytes".

3. פְּרִשְׁתֵּי שְׂרָר

4. שְׂרָר שְׂרָר - גַּל Derived from the frequently occurring "stranger ( גַּל ) that is within thy gates"--as Ex. 20, 10. Jewish commentators regard Naaman, 2 Kings 5, as such a proselyte. cf. Ebersheim Bible History VI, 158, n.3.

to observe the entire ceremonial law, they pledged themselves to avoid idolatry, to serve the one God, Jehovah, and keep the so-called seven precepts of Noah.<sup>1</sup> By far the largest number of those who attached themselves to Judaism were proselytes of the gate. They are the "devout" men and women so often spoken of in the book of Acts.<sup>2</sup>

But we turn to another religion, a religion which, lowly and despised in its beginnings, outlawed and hunted down in its progress, was yet to plant its despised cross upon the ruins of pagan temples. Thank God: there were some in Rome A.D. 64 who instead of the worthless husks which a crumbling paganism and a despairing philosophy offered the famished souls of mankind, has partaken of that bread of life, which gives a peace that passes all understanding. Thank God: there were some who amid that turbid, weltering sea of popular depravity had succeeded in reaching a green island of moral purity. Just at what time the seeds of Christianity had been wafted to the shores of Italy it is impossible for us to say. If, as some would have us believe, the Roman church was founded by the Apostle Peter, the absence of any allusion to one so prominent in this epistle as well as those written from Rome by St. Paul, would

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1. The seven precepts of Noah, the first six of which were originally supposed to have been given to Adam, are 1) against idolatry; 2) against blasphemy; 3) against bloodshed; 4) against uncleanness; 5) against theft; 6) of obedience; and 7) against "flesh with the blood thereof."

2. See Acts 10, 2.7; 13, 50; 16, 14; 17, 4.17; 22, 12 et al.

be hard to explain. But the view that Peter founded the church on the Tiber is a mere assumption and militates against Paul's express statement that his principle was not to build upon another man's foundation.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, highly improbable that any apostle founded this church. On the other hand it is clear that its foundation dates very far back.<sup>2</sup> It may be that some of those present on the day of Pentecost, some of the Jews and proselytes from Rome,<sup>3</sup> took back with them the earliest tidings of the new doctrine. It may be that the busy flow of commerce between the East and the West brought the Gospel of Christ to Italy--as it has brought it to many other distant lands since. The persecution subsequent to the martyrdom of Stephen,<sup>4</sup> and the banishment and readmittance of the Jews of Rome<sup>5</sup> kept the Jewish population in a continual state of flux, as did also the yearly feasts for which they repaired to Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> A combination, then, of all these causes planted the "Grain of mustard seed" in the virgin soil of pagan Rome.

The question arises; What was the composition of the Roman church at this time? Our only source for determining this ques-

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1. Romans 15, 20.

2. See Romans 13, 11; 15, 23; 16, 7.9.

3. Acts 2, 11: οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, Ἰουδαῖοι τε καὶ προσήλυτοι.

4. Acts 8, 4, 11, 19.

5. Comp. Suetonius, Claud 25 with Josephus, Ant. 19, 5, 3.

6. V. Supra p. 40.

tion, concerning which opinions greatly differ<sup>1</sup> is St. Paul's letter to the Romans, that incomparable and profound "compendium doctrinae christianae".<sup>2</sup> If we arrange all details furnished by the letter itself we come to the conclusion that the church at Rome was at this time composed of Jews and Gentiles, with the Gentile element predominating and still in the ascendent.<sup>3</sup> This is plainly the case at the time of Paul's writing, A.D. 58 or 59, how much the more, then, will it obtain five or six years later, A.D. 64, knowing, as we do from centuries of Early church history, that the future, even of the young christian church lay with the Gentiles.

Then, too, the very situation of the church in the metropolis of the Gentile world would in a great measure, we think, give it a gentile character." At the same time, we cannot doubt that the original nucleus of the church there, as well as in all the other great cities of the Empire, was formed by converts who had separated

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1. Thus Baur, Thiersch, Holtzmann, Zahn (1) are confident that it was addressed mainly to Jews, while Phillipi, Hofman, Stockhardt (Roemerbrief P. 5), Meyer, Luthardt, Godet and others are as certain that it was intended mainly for Gentiles. Guericke, Isagogik (3 Aufl) 312, 313, thinks the church was half Jewish, half Gentiles. Merivale, Rom. Empire VI, 211, 214 holds that it was half Jewish, half Grecian. Farrar, Paul 11, 169, conjectures that the letter was not so much "addressed to a special body (?) as purposely written to argue out a fundamental problem "(relation of Judaism to Christianity)" and treating it in a dramatic and ideal manner."
  2. Fuerbringer, Einleitung p. 61.
  3. For Jewish elements comp. Romans 2, 17-3. 19; 12, 7, 1-4; 9-11; For Gentile elements Rom. 1, 16-32; 6, 17; 9, 24, 30; 11, 13-25, 28, 30; 14, 1-15, 13. Such passages as 1, 5, 13, 9, 3.4; 10, 1; 11, 23.25.30 clearly indicate that Paul is primarily addressing Gentiles. Cf. p. 67 v7.

themselves from the Jewish synagogue."<sup>1</sup> The large Gentile element seems, however, not to have been Roman. Strange as it may sound, the Roman Church was at this time rather a Greek church. Conversion among the native Italians was yet the exception.<sup>2</sup> To some extent this condition can be accounted for. A very considerable portion of the population of Rome was Greek, and the Greeks, holding yet more loosely to their traditions than the Romans, being naturally of an intellectually restless and inquiring nature,<sup>3</sup> moving, besides, in circles more open to missionary efforts, the Greeks could be more easily reached with the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

If we inquire into the probable rank and station of the Roman church, we must look for its members among the small merchants and tradesmen, the petty officers of the army, the slaves and freedmen of the imperial palace,<sup>5</sup> in general among the lower strata of

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1. Conybeare and Howson, 11, 155 "Weis man die Hauptsitze des Judentums, so kennt man auch schon in voraus die Hauptsitze des jungen Christentums." Uhlhorn, Kampf 64.
  2. A great portion of the converts greeted by Paul in Rom. 16 bear Greek names. True, they may have been Jews or other foreigners by birth, but not Romans. Milman, Latin Christianity 1, 27 points out that for the first two centuries the names of the bishops of Rome are, with few exceptions Greek. See also Merivale, Rom. Emp. VI, 210, 211.
  3. Acts 17, 21.
  4. We would by no means be understood as implying that the conversion of the Greeks over against the Romans is to be found in "the right conduct" or even "the lesser guilt" of the former. Internally the Greek as the Roman, as every natural man (1 Cor. 2, 14) was only averse believingly to listen to the word of the cross. (comp. 1 Cor. 1, 23).
  5. Cf. the οἱ ἐκ τῆς καίρας οἰκίας of Phil. 4, 22.



society. From these the heavenly leaven spread upward and downward. The great number of slaves, the general misery and oppression has not improperly been called a "negative preparation for the Gospel" of Him who, Himself poor, was the Friend of all publicans and sinners, of all poor and needy. We may be certain that in general the church at Rome was no exception to the rule that "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called."<sup>1</sup>.

In view of the general inconspicuous rank and position of its members the early church at Rome drew little or no public attention. We may well assume that during the first decades the ancients never condescended to ascertain the difference between a Jew and a Christian. In fact, it seems as though Christianity was considered but a modification of Judaism, just another excrescence on the fertile religious soil of the Orient.<sup>2</sup> It took the Romans nearly two centuries to realize the vast difference between a Jew and a Christian. Undoubtedly it was the providential design of an allwise God thus to afford His little flock shelter, thus to give faith time to sink its roots and tendrils firmly into the hearts of the Christians lest the succeeding tempests of persecutions completely uproot it. And faith at Rome was waxing strong. It is, of course, true,

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1. 1 Cor. 1, 26; comp. Matt. 11, 25.26.

2. Tertullian, Apolog. 21; Christianity grew up "sub-umbraculo licitae Judaeorum religionis." Comp. Acts 18, 12f; see Ramsay church in R. Emp. 194; Neander, Gesch. der christl. Rel. u. Kirche 1, 135; Gieseler, Lehrbuch der Kircheng. (4 Aufl.) 1, 106; Farrar, Paul 1, 330; 569.

that the church there also had its deficiencies. But we cannot conclude from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, that a strong Judaic agitation from within was impending over it,<sup>1.</sup> nor that the Jewish and Gentile elements stood in contentious opposition to each other.<sup>2.</sup> The epistle furnishes us no sufficient grounds for such views. On the contrary, the internal condition of the Roman church A.D. 58 or 59 as well as 64 seems to have been one of exceptional tranquility and concord, a fact also indicated by the quiet and moderate tenor of the Apostle's language.<sup>3.</sup> The nature and object of the letter throws some light--almost the only light--on the spiritual status of the church at about this time. Though not founded by an apostle, the christians at Rome were remarkably well versed in doctrine and possessed a faith already worthy of note.<sup>4.</sup> We are therefore not to think of Christianity at Rome in the years preceding A.D. 64 and Paul's first visit to that city as of a vague, undefined and confused nature. Paul's object in writing to the church from Corinth A.D. 58 was not to found a church but to confirm it in the faith it already confessed. The Epistle is, therefore, a clear and lucid

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1. Thus Baur, Reuss, Zahn, (I) and others.

2. Thus Pfleiderer, Delitzsch, and others. For yet other views some of which belong entirely into the realm of fiction see Stoeckhardt, Roemerbrief Pgs. 7-19. Comp. Purves. Ap. Age 228.

3. Compare the style of his letters to the Galatians and Corinthians with that of the Epistle to the Romans.

4. Romans 1, 8; 15, 14; 16, 19a. We cannot agree with those who hold Paul is merely thanking God (chap. 1, 8) that the report of the existence of a christian church in Rome had become known in the then christian world. Rom. 15, 14, 16, 19 a et passim clearly indicate more.

exposition of Christian doctrine and has not improperly been called "Paul's catechism."<sup>1</sup> Three years after the great Apostle had written to Rome he appeared there in person as a prisoner.<sup>2</sup> For "two whole years Paul preached (in Rome) the kingdom of God and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence no man forbidding him."<sup>3</sup> Paul a prisoner, an insignificant Jew preaching the Gospel of Christ, and Him crucified, in Rome, the Rome of Nero and Seneca: what a picture it is.

However, the quiet growth of the church was ruthlessly interrupted in A.D. 64. Living in the undisturbed seclusion thus far, the christians now for the first time stand out in bloody prominence on the pages of history. The immediate cause was the great conflagration of Rome which broke out on July 19th and, with a short intermission, as if to gather new strength, raged with undisputed fury for eight days. Of the fourteen districts into which Rome was then divided the fire licked up four completely, seven partially, leaving only three untouched by its fiery waves.<sup>4</sup> Although Nero, then at Antium, did not return to Rome till the sea of

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1. Godet, as quoted by Stoeckhardt, Roemerbrief O. 16, says: "Wir besitzen in dieser Schrift nichts Geringeres als den Lehrgang des Religionsunterrichts, gewisser massen den dogmatischen u. moralischen Katechismus des Apostles." Similar views are entertained by Stoeckhardt, Meyer, Philippi; et al. Purves, Apost. Age 228, 230.

2. Acts 28.

3. Acts 28, 30.31.

4. Tacitus, Annals, 15, 38-40.

fire threatened to engulf his palace, the people generally accused him of setting fire to their city in order to build up a finer one on its ruins. Whether or not Nero really was guilty of this crime of incendiarism that he was capable of it no one will deny--it is impossible indisputably to ascertain.<sup>1</sup> Be this as it may, he was accused of it by his contemporaries and all his efforts to clear himself by his attempts to relieve the suffering of the thousands of homeless wretches proved insufficient to exonerate him in the suspicious minds of the populace. In this extremity Nero spread the report that the Christians were to be regarded as the authors of the fire. And now the grand vanguard of the army of martyrs marches over the pages of history. The question arises: Why did Nero single out the Christians for his scapegoats? It is not our intention to air all the theories advanced to explain this criminal choice of

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1. Our principal sources for this event, as, indeed, for the entire age, are Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius. Suetonius, Nr. 38 and Dio Cassius 62 ascribe the fire to Nero's deliberate contrivance, but Tacitus, Ann. 15, 38, thinks the matter doubtful, or at least all his efforts to determine Nero's part in the case failed to convince him of his direct guilt. We are inclined to attach more weight to Tacitus' (cf. Ramsay, church in R. Emp. 228) than to Suetonius' and Dio Cassius' statements. The historical value of Suetonius' Life of Nero is small. It is a mass of biographical matter unchronologically grouped under thirteen heads. Each of these writers evidences a peculiarity to raise into prominence a certain of Nero's character. Thus Tacitus stresses his cruelty, Suetonius his sensuality; Dio Cassius his vanity (and sensuality). Cassius' work is of value in as far as it supplements to some extent Tacitus and to a greater extent Suetonius. It is however, to be deplored, that, as Farrar, Seekers after God 293, says: "Dion loved dearly every peice of scandal which degraded human nature."

the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say that the solution offered by Farrar seems to us the most acceptable. He holds that the Jews, bearing the Christians deadly hatred--and, we would add, probably fearing for their own safety--suggested to Nero, probably through the proselyte Poppaea, Nero's favorite mistress, to unload the guilt on the Christians.<sup>2</sup> That these were not entirely unknown to the public

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1. Gibbon's conjecture (Decline and Downfall 11, 21.22) that the Christians in Rome were confounded with the Galileans, the fanatical followers of Judas Gaulonite, is "entirely devoid, not merely of verisimilitude but even of possibility." Tacitus does not confound the christians with any one. Cf. Fisher, Beginnings 528. Merivale, while rejecting Gibbons conjecture (VI, 221) advances the theory that "the Jews, notorious for their appeal to the name of Christ" as an expected King, were accused. They in turn "implicated the true disciples" who avowed Christ-worship in their own sense a sense which the judges did not care to discriminate. Thus the persecution fell "obliquely" upon them and the heathen historians finding the "common shibboleth of the victims to be Christ" imagined that the persecution was directed against christians only, Rom. Empire VI, 222). This "suggestion" seems fanciful to say the least. We think Merivale is correct when he states this view is held only by him. Milman Hist. of christianity 1, 468f surmises that probably an incautious expression from the christians regarding the destruction of the wicked and the world by their coming Deliverer through fire had attracted the resentment of the people. The assertion of their exemption from the coming misery would mark them out "in some dark manner" (?) as the authors of the fire and convict them of the "odium generis humani."
  2. Farrar, Early days of Christianity 35-37. Farrar advances his solution with his usual eloquence and power. Poppaea's Judaism is inferred from her refusing to be burned after death, but requesting to be embalmed (Tacitus Annals 16, 16); from her adopting the custom of wearing a veil in the streets (Id. 13, 45); from the favor which she showed to Aliturus and Josephus (Jos. Vit. 3; Ant. 20, 8, 11); and from the term *νεοσεβής*, "monotheist" or proselyte, like *σεβόμενος* (Acts 13, 43; 16, 14) which Josephus applies to her. (Ant. 20, 7, 11) (i) Cf. Farrar, Early Days 36, 37; Eilersheim Life and Times 1, 71, n. 1; Mommsen, Roman Provinces 2, 167.

even A.D. 64 seems certain. It was impossible for an "nigens multitudo" to remain altogether hidden among a people with whose views, customs, and entire mode of life they so radically differed. The Neronian persecution shows that the Christians were to some extent already the objects of popular hatred and were accounted by the multitude as malefici.<sup>1</sup> Their very abstinence from the customary dissipation and revelry, their soberness and moral rectitude, their failure to observe customs specifically heathen, could easily be interpreted as "odium generis humani" by minds saturated with and addled by loose and fast living. The terms employed by Tacitus and Suetonius suggest, that the common charges which were brought by the heathen against the Christians, charges of immorality and unnatural crimes, had reached their ears and were credulously accepted.<sup>2</sup>

And thus the young church at Rome was given to "drink of the cup" of which its Lord had drunk.<sup>3</sup> It appears from Tacitus' statement that the mere fact of professing Christianity was accounted

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1. Neander, Planting of Christ. church 316f; Zahn, Introd. 2, 185.

2. Some of the judgments of pagan writers on Christianity are: Tacitus, Annals 15, 44: Christians are "perflagitia invisos", Christianity is "superstitio exitiabilis" and belongs, by inference, to the "atrocia and piddenda." Suetonius in Ner. 16 says: "afflicti supplicis christiani genus hominum superstitionis noval et malificae." As late as the second century A.D. Pliny the Younger (1, 117) in his famous letter to Trajan writes of Christianity as a "prave et immodica superstitio." See Tacitus, Ann. 15, 44; Hist. 5, 5; Suet. in Ner. 16.

3. Mark 10, 38.39.

sufficient to justify their execution.<sup>1</sup> The martyrs were put to death under circumstances of the most aggravated cruelty. Some were covered with skins of beasts and torn by wild dogs, others were nailed to crosses, yet others, sewed in garments dipped in wax and pitch, were hung on posts and crosses in Nero's garden, to serve as illumination to that monster who mixed among the spectators in the costume of a charioteer. So terrible were their tortures that they aroused the compassion, contemptuous though it was of even the brutalized Romans.<sup>2</sup>

How many christians thus early received a martyr's crown it is impossible for us to say though their number does not seem to have been small.<sup>3</sup> St. Paul's proclamation of the blessed Gospel in Rome seems therefore, to have been signally blessed. Paul, we have noted, had arrived in Rome A.D. 61, three years before this horrible persecution. Though a prisoner and hunted down by the Jews, his race had not yet been run. He appears to have been tried<sup>4</sup> and acquitted and spent some years in missionary travels Eastward and Westward. This year, A. D. 64 so fatally eventful for

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1. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 2, 468, 469. Cf. also Farrar, Early Days 475; Flick, Rise of Med. church 100; Patches Apostolic Age 279. but comp. Ramsay, ch. in Emp. 282.
  2. See Tacitus Ann. 15, 44 for his description of the persecution.
  3. Tacitus, Ann. 15, 44 calls them "ingens multitudo" a phrase identical with that of Clemens Romanus (Ep. ad Cor. 1, (6)):  
Πολὴν ἡμετέραν.
  4. On the procedure of his probable trial and the evidence in favor of his liberation cf. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 2, 436-446; V. infra Note 1, p. 54.

the church he had just left, probably found him on his long meditated journey to Spain.<sup>1.</sup>

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1. The view that both Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom A.D. 64 is still held by a few, notably Wieseler; Harnack, Chronol. 24, 24, 3 n.1. Kurtz. K. Gesch. 23 n.1 and in general by those who reject the Pastoral Epistle. We hold, however, with Milman, Hist. of Christianity 1, 471; 477; 479-485; Merivale, Romans and Empire VI, 216, n.2, 223, Conybeare and Howson, 2, 446; Purves Apostolic Age 254, 320; Neander Planting (Engl. trans. by Ryland) 317; 320; Guericke, Isagogik 53-56; Gieseler, Kircheng. 1, 99 n. 9; Farrar, Paul 2, 624, 625; Zahn, Introd. 2, 54-84, 158-194, and many others that Paul was beheaded under Nero about A.D. 67 (or 68) on the Via Ostensio. We have arrived at this conclusion on basis of the following considerations: 1) Paul himself expected his liberation from the first captivity, Phil. 1, 19, 20, 25, 26; 2, 24. 2) Also Festus and Agrippa expected it, Acts 25, 18f. 25, 26.31.32. 3) Luke's silence Acts 28, 31 would be inexplicable had Paul suffered martyrdom as early as A.D. 64. cf. Zahn, Intro. 2, 58. 4) The Pastoral Epistles are by some regarded as spurious because they contain events and outline conditions which do not fit into Paul's life, since, as they hold, he was martyred A.D. 64. We must therefore, they say, not adduce arguments from these Epistles to substantiate Paul's later martyrdom. But this is a plain petitio principii. True, if Paul died A.D. 64, then the Pastoral Epistles are forgeries. But even granting this argumenti causa, "the tradition of which the pseudo Paul then made use must have existed in such clear outlines and have been so generally known, that it required only the slightest reference and the most causal connection to recall to the reader's mind the course of events and induce him to accept the forgery, which was based thus upon recognized historical facts." But to our knowledge none has ever proved the Pastoral Epistles to be forgeries. And thus we draw from them the additional arguments. 5) Paul must have left Rome and visited Asia Minor and Greece 1 Tim. 1, 3 cf. 1 Tim. 4, 13; 2 Tim. 1, 18. 6) He paid a visit to Crete, where he left Titus to organize the churches, Tit. 1, 5, and intended to winter at Nicopolis, Tit. 3, 12. 7) He travelled by Troas, 2 Tim. 4, 13, Miletus and Corinth 2 Tim. 4, 20. 8) He is a prisoner at Rome, "suffering unto bonds as an evil-doer", 2 Tim. 2, 9, comp. Acts 28, 30.31, and is expecting death. 2 Tim. 4, 6. cf also 2 Tim. 1, 15, 4, 9-12, 16. 9) An extra Biblical proof is furnished by Clement of Rome's letter (written at the latest A.D. 96) speaking of Paul's missionary labors he says, V. 6: *κῆρυξ γενόμενος ἐν τῇ τῆ ἀνατολῇ, καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει, τὸ γενναῖον τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ κῆρος ἔραβεν, δικαιοσύνην δεδῆξας ὄρον τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τρίμω τῆς δύσεως ἑλθῶν* (i.e. beyond



From want of definite and trustworthy tradition it is difficult to determine the exact duration of this first imperial persecution. We cannot, however, agree with Ramsay<sup>1</sup>. who holds that Nero wanted Christian persecution to be a permanent police measure. "It was one thing to indulge the momentary rage of the populace, another to establish the principles of religious persecution."<sup>2</sup> As yet, thank God: Christian persecution was not a settled policy of the State. It was not till the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117), that Christianity was formally placed under the ban.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, however, it may with great probability be assumed, that the Neronian persecution continued with intermissions till the death of the Emperor four years later. For while Nero undertook his long-intended

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Rome where Clement is writing) *καὶ μαρτυρήσας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων, etc.* 10) The remark of the Canon Muratori: "Profectionem Pauli ab urbe ad Spanien proficiscentis." Eusebius, Hist. 2, 25, 3, 1, makes no definite chronological statement, merely saying that both Paul and Peter's death falls into Nero's reign. Their martyrdom seems to have been contemporaneous. See Furbringer Einl. 88 and references there given. Unfortunately we lack space to refute the catholic claim that Peter was bishop of Rome for twenty-five years and upon his death gave his episcopal office to Linns. But see Zah. Intr. 2, 167ff. As to the legend that Peter was crucified head downward--"it bears on its front the impress of a later morbid piety rather than simple apostolic humility." Neander, Planting 348. Tertullian, De Praescript. 36 merely says: "Ubi (sc--Rome) Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur. "All agree that he was crucified a point sufficiently determined by John 21, 18, 19.

1. Ramsay, church in R. Emp. 240.
2. Merivale, R. und the Emp. VI, 223.
3. Fisher, Beginnings 528.

visit to Greece A.D. 66, he left the government of Italy in the hands of a cruel freedman Helius, who administered state affairs as private matters and vice versa not even deigning to ask the prince's pleasure beforehand on his arbitrary executions and confiscations.<sup>1</sup> It is at least possible, then, that Paul's decapitation happened in an afterglow of the persecution begun three years before. Whether or not the persecution extended into the provinces is a controverted point on which we have no information.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, however, the denunciation of the Christians by the Emperor would influence the attitude of the provincial officers. "There can be little doubt that the hatred of the Roman populace against the Christians was echoed in the provinces."<sup>3</sup>

However crule and wantonly inflicted the tortures of these protomartyrs were, under God's divine superintendence they must have redounded to the glory of His name and the aggrandizement of His church. With reverence be it said, the persecutions were if a harrowing, yet a loud and lasting advertisement for the Christian church: Of this as of all subsequent persecutions the words "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" undoubtedly were true. This first spasmodic and, as it were capricious persecution

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1. Suetonius in Ner. 231. Dio Cassius 63, 12.

2. Gibbon, Decline 2, 22; Milman, H. of Christianity 1, 476; Neander, Planting 311 and Gesch. d. R. u. Kirche 1, 137; Uhlhorn Kampf 197; Merivale R. u. Emp. VI, 223; Gieseler Kg. 1, 107 and the majority of modern scholars hold that it was restricted to Rome and vicinity. The other view is held by Mosheim, Buizot, Kurtz, Kg. c. 23 n and a few others.

3. Purves, Apostolic Age 280.

must in a forceful manner have directed the attention of many to Christianity, who otherwise would probably have remained ignorant of its very existence. The new and unparalleled heroism of the victims, quite innocent of the fire as many thought them to be<sup>1</sup>, must have made a powerful impression on an age marked by sensual gratification and a total absence of self-negation, must have strongly recommended Christianity to those who had lost all faith in the moral power and spiritual strength of their own religion.

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1. Tacitus, Annals 15, 44.

## Chapter 3.

## GREECE.

With the defeat of the Achaean league under Mummius B.C. 146 and the destruction of Corinth the last vestiges of Grecian independence were swept away, and Greece too became a Roman province. The signal success which accompanied the Roman arms was the natural result of a centralized government and superior military organization over against a loosely joined political league and an inferior military system. Nor was there a pronounced nationalistic feeling among the Greeks, which might have rallied them wholeheartedly to a common standard.<sup>1</sup> It is true beyond a doubt, that the conquest by the Romans was heralded with unfeigned satisfaction by many, since, as they argued, the loss of the precarious and expensive independence of the Grecian states, appeared at last to insure a permanent peace.<sup>2</sup>

When Greece, under the Republic entered the ranks of Roman provinces it was administered by a consul proconsul, or praetor of Macedonia.<sup>3</sup> These provincial governors had an immense authority. They held the power of life and death over the Greeks<sup>4</sup> and in their hands

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1. Finlay, Greece under the Romans 1, 18.

2. A saying quite common after the conquest has been preserved by Polybius. 40, 5.12: "If we had not been quickly ruined, we should not have been saved." Recorded by Finlay, Id. 1, 20.

3. Mommsen, Provinces 1, 254.

4. Mommsen, Provinces 1, 257.

was vested the control of the administrative and financial business of the province. The very nature of their office afforded many tempting opportunities to utilize its practical independence for personal ends, while the possibility of detection and punishment for any abuse of their power was reduced to a minimum, since the only body before whose tribunal they could be cited was the senate which had sent them out and into whose ranks they were again received upon their return.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is true that the policy of the Romans, even in the republican period, was never to apply the subject relation to Greece in all its galling severity. Although Macedonia, Achaia, Epirus, and Aetolia were treated with utmost severity during the time of their conquest and while the conflict seemed rather doubtful<sup>2</sup> as soon as the Romans were convinced that the subjugated Greeks had neither the ability nor the desire to revolt against their dominion, they were allowed to revive some of their civic usages and federal institutions. And indeed, the Greeks were, as we have repeatedly pointed out, in many respects rather superior to their conquerors in civilization; and the Roman governors found it quite impossible to effect many changes in the civil administration. In consequence the Greeks retained as much judicial power and as many of their communal constitutions as was compatible with the supremacy of their foreign masters.<sup>3</sup> Here again the Roman administrative sagacity

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1. The result of such a system is obvious. We are reminded of Cicero's "In Verrem". Of course, this system did not exclude good administration--if the character and ambition of the governor did not; See Finlay, Gr. u. Romans 1, 85.

2. Finlay, Greece u. Romans 1, 53.

3. Mommsen, Provinces 1, 257.

is apparent: for under this system the Grecian states and urban communities also retained all their former and so peculiarly Grecian<sup>1.</sup> jealousies toward their neighbors, which was a safeguard against a possible rising of united Grecian national spirit against the yoke of the Romans.<sup>2.</sup>

These, then, were in outline the relations which the imperial government found in Greece and along the same paths it went forward. After the battle of Actium, however, B.C. 31, Augustus made Achaia an independent province, and A.D. 27, when the provinces were divided into senatorial and imperial, it was allotted to the Senate.<sup>3.</sup> Thus Greece properly was really divided into two provinces, the northern Macedonia, and the Southern Achaia.<sup>4.</sup> From Acts chapter eighteen we incidentally learn that the proconsul of Achaia resided in Corinth.<sup>5.</sup> Troops were not stationed in this province as during the Macedonian period, since the Roman troops in Macedonia were considered near enough at hand to move into Greece, should need arise. It is difficult to determine the exact division between the provinces--

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1. In Rome these petty jealousies were aptly termed 'Ελληνικὰ ἰμπεριεπιδόματα' Comp. Ramsay 157.
  2. "The Romans conquered like savages, but ruled like philosophic statesmen." Milman. H. Cf. C. 1. 9.
  3. Most of the countries inhabited by the Greeks became senatorial provinces.
  4. As in 2 Cor. 9, 2.
  5. Of the cities celebrated in Grecian history very few attained to any prominence in early Christian times.

nor, indeed, is it of any importance to the Biblical student.<sup>1.</sup> When Augustus dissolved the administrative system of the Republic he conferred upon the whole Greek nation a religious bond of union-- afterwards misused for political ends which attached itself to the old Delphic Amphictyony, i.e., league of tribes associated to protect and maintain worship in the temple of their deity and administer its still considerable revenues.<sup>2.</sup> Thus the temple of the Pythian Apollo became the religious center of the Greek provinces. At the same time the provincials were encouraged to send delegates to a communal synod which met at Argos to consider the general interests of the country. This quasi-conservation of Greek nationalism by the Roman Empire is but one of the many tokens of its Philhellenic character, which, always greater than that of the Roman Republic, was especially marked in the Julian dynasty. The successor of Augustus, Tiberius, again united Achaia with Macedonia<sup>3.</sup> but his successor, Claudius restored the former order A.D. 44.<sup>4.</sup> Nero, "One of the race of spoiled poets," went farther still. In gratitude for the flattering recognition his poetic achievements had been accorded

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1. For the original boundaries see Mommsen, Provinces 1, 256 n. 1, who quotes Strabo. In general we might say that the province of Macedonia, included Macedonia proper, together with Illyricum, Epirus and Thesaly. Everything south of this belonged to Achaia. In this sense it is employed throughout in the N.T. Acts 18, 12, 16; 19, 21; Rom. 15, 26; 1 Cor. 16, 15; 2 Cor. 9, 2; 1 Thess. 1, 7.8 etc.

2. Mommsen, Provinces 1, 254 n. 1; 255.

3. Finlay, Gr. under Romans 1, 35.

4. Tacitus, Ann. 1, 76; Suetonius in Nerone 25.

in the land of the Muses, he declared Greece free from the Roman government and tribute A. D. 66.<sup>1</sup> True to their national character the Greeks immediately set about disputing and quarreling--a state of conditions which Vespasian used as a pretext for revoking the freedom conferred upon them by Nero. During the greater part of the period then, in which Christianity took root in Achaia it was a senatorial province.

The habits and character of these two great people were very different, so different, indeed, as to arouse feelings of antipathy between them by familiar intercourse. Enough has already been said and will yet be said to show the peculiarly marked contrast between the Greek and the Roman. It is true, the Roman authors of the first century A.D. do not give us a truthful picture of the genuine i.e. European Greek of this period. We may trace this back to their envy and jealousy of Grecian superiority in many branches of intellectual and artistic achievements<sup>2</sup> and partly also to their unjust estimation of the real Grecian character by many of the despicable Alexandrian and Asiatic Greeks who thronged to Rome as adventurers and were but too often found in occupations of doubtful character. Then too, the fact that the Greek tongue was the medium of communication of the great body of Eastern nations lead many Romans, however, unjustly, to draw conclusions from their character to the entire Grecian people. There were, however, ex-

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1. Suetonius. Ner. 24; Dio Cassius 63, 11.

2. Finlay, Greece under the Romans 68.



ceptions. Many of the literary men, professors of philosophy, rhetoric, mathematics, and music at Rome, both in public and private capacity, were Greeks and these were quite favored and respected by the wealthy aristocracy. On the other hand the Greek repayed the aversion of the Roman with a despite equally as unreasonable. When upon their conquest by the Romans they were thrown into close contact with them than heretofore, their culture and civilization were undoubtedly superior to those of their masters and of all other "barbarians." The Romans also recognized this state of affairs and, practical and common sensed as they were, turned pupils of their subjects in many respects. The Greeks saw this quite clearly and immediately became so inflated by national vanity that they noticed not how the pupils were bidding fair to outdistance their teachers.<sup>1.</sup>

Social and moral conditions in Greece during this time were anything but encouraging. Depopulation of the country had set in long before the year A.D. 64.<sup>2.</sup> Undoubtedly international and civil wars, numerous and bloody as they were during these times were one of the great immediate causes of this diminution in population.

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1. Fisher, Beginnings of Christianity 107; Finlay, Greece under the Romans 70.71.

2. As a matter of fact the decline in Greece proper set in after the time of Alexander, while the population of the Greek nation was probably never more numerous than at the time of the Roman conquest.

Plutarch thought that in his days Greece was not in a position to furnish from the better circles of her citizens the three thousand hoplites, with which the smallest of the Greek districts, Megara, had fought at Plataeae.<sup>1</sup> It was the policy of the Roman conquerors to exterminate the population of a country in process of subjugation, until it was too weak for effective or even troublesome resistance to Roman supremacy.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, we must not forget that Greece was often the camping ground and battlefield of the Roman legions during the late civil wars and that the few troops Greece still possessed were compelled to fight the battles of one faction or the other. Julius Caesar and Augustus subsequently sent Italian colonies to Greece in an attempt to check or remedy its depopulation;<sup>3</sup> for the Greeks themselves no longer possessed social or moral strength enough to replace and repair their declining population. It is true that the inward independence and proud selfconsciousness of the Hellenic nation in spite of the flexibility and humble parasitism usually concomitant with subjection had not entirely disappeared.<sup>4</sup> But it is equally true that the Greek character too was

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1. Quoted by Mommsen, Provinces 1, 268.

2. See Finlay, Greece u. Romans 1, 53, 54, who adduces many instances of such terrible and wholesale extermination.

3. Such colonies were Corinth, Patrae, Tricopolis, et al. They were among the most populous of Grecian cities.

4. Encycl. Brit. s.v. "Greece". Mommsen, Provinces 1, 271; Finlay, Greece under Romans 1, 57.

infected with the degeneracy so characteristic of this age.<sup>1</sup> The age of greatness had forever left Greece and it could no longer produce an Alexander, a Socrates or a Plato. Greece, in short, had lost its genius while retaining much of its superficiality and falsity.<sup>2</sup> The economic conditons were akin to those of Rome. and Italy. The bulk of the population of Greece proper were landed proprietors who, purchasing the Roman citizenship by their wealth, devolved the burden of taxation upon the poorer classes. There were as in Italy so in Greece tow great classes, the rich and the poor.<sup>3</sup>

Above all that relation which is so fundamental to all tohers, whose soundness, therefore, is a prerequisite to the healthfulness of a nation's life, and whose stability, for this reason, is the surest criterion of the moral character of an age--marriage and family life had also in Greece fallen into disrepute.<sup>4</sup> The female sex in general occupied a low position in Greece and may be divided into two classes, those who were educated and openly profligate and those who were ignorant and lived in domestic seclusion.<sup>5</sup> In was different in legendary Greece. There woman occupied an im-

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1. Uhlhorn, Kampf 15, 16; Conybeare and Howson 1, 11; Merivale, Rom. Emp. 2, 399.

2. Farrar, Paul 1, 331.

3. Fanlay, Gr. u. Romans 1, 13, 15, 21, 36, 38, 58 et passim.

4. Fisher, Beginnings 206.

5. Conyb. and Howsen 1, 11.

portant and influential position<sup>1</sup> while the entire sex relation yet had an air of purity and modesty.<sup>2</sup> But now not only domestic chastity and morality had almost disappeared, but children, if, indeed, there were any at all, were either destroyed,<sup>3</sup> or considered burdensome and their education neglected and intrusted to slaves, who but too often catered to the lowest appetites of their pupils. Family life in the true sense of the word the Greeks never knew. It had now become quite a general rule to live with concubines educated for this purpose from a class of female slaves.<sup>4</sup> Relative chastity and modesty, that choicest inheritance of the Jephetic races, were two great factors in Roman and Grecian greatness. Conversely we find, that the decline of their greatness was hastened, if not, indeed, brought on directly by the decay of their sexual life. The contributions of slavery to social decay and moral degeneracy among the Romans, we have above noted. Its effect in Greece, while not so great, was nevertheless, felt. Certain it is that by preventing the rise or growth of a middle class, which could act as a partial check to the degeneracy issuing from the higher circles of society, it was also an element contributing to the moral disintegration of the nation. We must, however, remember that the lot of the slave in Greece was quite superior to that of the slave in Italy. In no

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1. Grote, History of Greece 2, 83.

2. Fisher, Beginnings 86.

3. Fisher, Beginnings 206f.

4. Uhlhorn, Kampf 71.

country of the ancient world were slaves treated with greater consideration.<sup>1.</sup> Only Greece could produce the respected slave-philosopher Epictetus. And yet, while treated with greater humanity we find men like Plato rather hesitant to concede to the slave any capacity for virtue, while he finds slavery as such an institution destined by nature herself. Aristotle simply divides household instruments into two classes, the animate (slaves) and the inanimate.<sup>2.</sup>

Reluctantly we must forego to point out at greater length how the economic and social conditions superimposed by the many political vicissitudes beginning with and subsequent to the Macedonian conquest effected the morals of the Greek nation.<sup>3.</sup> Suffice it therefore to say that all sources of information regarding the political, social, moral, and religious health of the Greeks was doing but poorly.<sup>4.</sup> In more than one sense the words of Apollonius were true: "Greece but living Greece no more".<sup>5.</sup> What is worse still, there was no apparent remedy. Neither political nor social regeneration could remedy this disease, for such a regeneration could not strike at the root of the malady--the heart, the soul. But, we ask,

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1. Mommsen, Provinces 1, 273. It is remarkable as an evidence of Grecian nationalistic pride and sympathy, that a Greek might hold a Greek in slavery, but captive Greeks might not be sold to "barbarians".

2. By Uhlhorn, Kampf 99.

3. See on this subject especially: Merivale R. Empire VI, 174ff (Chap. 54); Finlay, Greece and Roman 1, 73-83; Friedlander, Sittenges. Roms--and the many references there given.

4. (Fischer, Beginnings, 77); Merivale, Rom. Emp. 2, 399.

5. Quoted by Farrar, Paul 1, 530.

could not the Grecian religion or its regeneration check this foul cancer of moral putrefication?

As might readily be deduced from the character of the Greeks, no people ever possessed a more varied and fanciful mythology. In general one can recognize in the religious belief of Greece three stages: The Homeric Stage, the classic stage, when Greece was in the prime of life, and lastly the state of decline.

The Homeric Gods were human beings, males and females, dwelling on Mt. Olympus. While neither represented as creators of nature nor of man,<sup>1</sup> power yet eclipsed their own divine attributes. The Gods, while having a beginning and sustaining their life by food and drink, were immortal--their main distinguishing feature from man. Their relation to one another was often harsh and their assemblies disturbed by mutual incrimination.<sup>2</sup> Holiness could never be predicated of the Grecian Gods. They were even thought to possess a certain Satanic element which tempted men to sin to their own destruction. The moral element in the Homeric religion was, therefore, not great. The gods were dwelt upon more as avengers of injustice and wrong than rewarders of goodness and justice. While dreams and personal intercourse<sup>3</sup> with men were their modes of revelation, they

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1. Fisher, Beginnings 77.

2. Even Zeus, the Supreme God, and Hera had little domestic concord. The Iliad and Odyssey abound in examples of discord and petty contentions between the gods.

3. Compare the well-known incident of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, Acts 14, 8-18.

gave no body of written teaching to men as an objective guide to belief, and conduct.<sup>1</sup> The consciousness of sin and guilt which the Greek could escape as little as all heathen<sup>2</sup> was sought to be removed by offerings and prayers. Death was considered a negative blessing, bringing cessation from pain and anguish and the ghosts in Hades had but a feeble intelligence of past and present. This was the early religion of Greece, imaginative and fanciful withal, a true product of the Greek mind. In the second state the moral<sup>3</sup> and religious elements became more prominent and the divinities were more spiritualized. The righteousness of the divine government as evidenced in the punishment of the evil-doer was greatly stressed<sup>4</sup> and the Satanic element in the nature of the deities gradually disappeared.<sup>5</sup> At the same time the divinities were multiplied and expiatory sacrifices, lustrations and purifications connected with their worship. The transition into the last stage, the state of final decay and dissolution, was gradual but steady. During this period the oracles, especially the Delphic, and the mysteries, especially the Eleusinian, gained new and vast importance of which more anon.

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1. Fisher, Beginnings 77.

2. Comp. Romans 1, 19.20.

3. The famous *σωπποσύνη* was the great goal.

4. Milman, Hist. of Christianity 1, 27.

5. Fisher, Beginnings 108.

Fanciful and beautiful though the Grecian religion was as furnishing subjects for art and poetry, its influence upon the moral conduct by the people was negligible<sup>1</sup>.--a fatal weakness which it had in common with all pagan religions ancient and modern. With all its beautiful imagery and its great contributions to art and poetry it left man powerless against his passions and lower appetites and only amused him while it gave religious sanction to even an immoral life.<sup>2</sup> Greece had the religion of Arts, of games, of theatres, of a people worshiping the beautiful and perfect in art and nature.<sup>3</sup> Like the Romans, but with a mind of vastly superior artistic fertility the Greek endued the separate parts of nature and the various movements in human affairs with personal life and agency. In many respects, however, Grecian religion was quite different from other pagan religions. While a grossly materialistic tendency dominated the religions of the Orient, an idealistic tendency ruled the cultus of the Greeks.<sup>4</sup> Also ascetic, bloody, and cruel rites could find little place in their creed, because faith was not earnest enough to endure much self-abandonment and self-abasement. Their worship was bright and cheerful a sentiment and a taste rather than a deep seated conviction.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Conybe and Howson, Paul 1, 11.

2. Conybe and Howson 1, 363, 364.

3. Comp. Hibbert Journal, Vol. XXI, #1 (Oct. 1922) p. 141.

5. Finlay, Greece and Romans 1, 12.

4. Uhlhorn Kampf 22.



The exact extent to which the unquestioning credulity of former days had passed away by A.D. 64 no one knows, while no one doubts that faith in the old divinities was thoroughly shaken and, by some, quite destroyed. The causes of this decline, this third and last stage of Grecian religion are complex. In Greece as in all ancient nations state and religion were largely interdependent; and so the political changes and reverses of the Greek nation contributed much to the disintegration of its religion and "confidence in the gods was gone when the commonwealth entrusted to their care was seen to fall."<sup>1</sup> Then too we find that the protest against Greek religion on moral grounds dates back as far as Pindar, and Socrates and Plato refused to believe in the ancient divinities because they possessed attributes unworthy of gods. We may therefore put it down as certain, that A.D. 64 the literati and the educated and cultured classes in general had torn themselves loose from the moorings of their ancient religion.<sup>2</sup> In the room of the old religion philosophy and scepticism even atheism and nihilism—now sat enthroned.<sup>3</sup> "From the time the Romans became masters of Greece," says Finaly, "the majority of the educated were votaries of the different philos-

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1. Curtius, Hist. of Greece 2, 56, quoted by Fisher, Beg. 120. See the entire quotation.

2. On this subject see especially Grote, Hist. of Greece 1, Chap. 16--the entire chapter. Milman, Hist. of Christianity 1, 46 relates that Penzanius while not speaking disrespectfully of the temples and deities of Greece in his religious survey of that country, yet takes pains not to create the impression of a personal faith in the fables he narrates.

3. Friedlander, Sittenges. 3, 425; Uhlhorn, Kampf 33, 37.

ophic sects.<sup>1</sup> Atheism, it is true, was voiced by but a few and even by these in terms betraying, that, as is usually the case with this impossible breed, "the wish was mother to the thought." The great majority of apostalized educated turned to philosophy, preferably Epicureanism and Stoicism.

Of the mysteries the Eleusinian, a local rite till Eleusis<sup>2</sup> in the seventh century B.C. became Athenian territory,<sup>3</sup> attained to national renown and Pan-Hellenic significance and not only survived Grecian independence but seems to have continued down to the time of the elder Theodosius.<sup>4</sup> The mysteries uncleaned about the story of Demeter and Kore,<sup>5</sup> whom Hades had abducted. Demeter wandered about the earth in search of her daughter--and it was winter. At length Zeus had compassion on Demeter's anguish and prevailed on Hades to permit Kore to revisit the earth during a certain period of the year--then it was spring, summer, and harvest-time. Due to the great secrecy which surrounded the mysteries based on this story<sup>6</sup> we have little testimony, direct or indirect as to their

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1. Finlay, Greece and Romans 1, 82.

2. On the original connection of the myth with Eleusis see Hibbert Journal, Vol. XXI #1, 142f.

3. Grote, Hist. of Greece 1, 42.

4. We can in this article, of course, only adumbrate the rites and probable significance of these mysteries. For a fuller treatment consult especially Encycl. Brit. (11th ed.) s.v. "Mystery" (And references); Hibbert Journal Vol. XXI. #1 (Oct. 1922) pgs 127-148; McCl. and Strong, Bib. Cycl. s.v. "Mystery."

5. The abducted daughter was called Kore, not Persephone, in the official language of Eleusis. For a full account of this cf. Grote, Greece 1, 37-44.

6. At Athens the revelation of the secret rites entailed the death penalty.

nature and significance. We only know that the candidate for initiation, was ceremonially purified by holy water and the blood of a sacrificial swine. He then proceeded to Eleusis where further purification took place, combined with the sacrifices of sacred bulls and the partaking of their flesh. Upon still other initiatory rites the neophyte received instructions regarding the significance and benefit of the mysteries, which were celebrated every year from the fifteenth to the twenty-third of the Attic Boldromion.<sup>1.</sup> People of both sexes and of all ages, people of all political and social stations and of all moral or immoral conditions were admitted. The general object of the Eleusinian mysteries was well known. They were to guarantee to the initiated a vivid and happy existence in the hereafter<sup>2.</sup> and begin by dispelling the gloom of death and the grave. That the mysteries preached a higher morality than the popular standard (which is not saying very much to be sure) cannot be proved. Though not positively enticing to immorality<sup>3.</sup> as many other cults their ethical strength and value were slight and superficial. "The cult neither diagnosed the origin of evil nor effected a radical cure by striking at its root."<sup>4.</sup> Of the psychic effect of the mysteries Aristotle says: The initiated

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1. Corresponding approximately to our September. The Encycl. Brit. has a detailed description of the celebrations.
  2. Comp. Supra p. 105 l 12. An epitaph on the grave of one of the hierophants reads: "Death was not an evil but a blessing." Only the *ιεροφάντης* could "reveal the orgies" and show the sacred things connected with the story of Demeter.
  3. Milman Hist. of Christianity 1, 41.
  4. Hibbert Journal, XXI, 1, 146.

do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put to a certain frame of mind."<sup>1</sup>.

The Orphic mysteries, somewhat akin to the Eleusinian, were introduced into Athens from Italy and Sicily in the sixth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Though subsequently enjoying quite an extensive popularity in Greece they were never raised to an established religion. Their ritual is very difficult to establish and the length of their popularity hard to determine, as they seem to have been gradually crowded into the background by other cults and mysteries. No evidence of their playing any important part in Grecian national life as late as A.D. 64 is extant, wherefore it is sufficient but to allude to them.<sup>3</sup>

Belief in prophecy was ever a strong element in both Roman and Grecian religion. So ingrained was this faith of being able in some way or other to lift the veil shrouding the future, that it was never quite destroyed.<sup>4</sup> Greece at a very early date possessed a prophetic institution which subsequently attained to even greater than Pan-Hellenic renown and importance.<sup>5</sup> At Delphi<sup>6</sup> in a glen

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1. Aristotle as quoted by the Ency. Brit. s.v. "Mystery".

2. Hibbert Journal, XXI, vol. 1, 155.

3. For further data see Ency. Brit. 7-c.

4. "Niemals", says Friedlander, Sittg. 3,465, "ist eine der anerkannten Arten der Weissagung aus Mangel and Glauben ganz ausser Gebrauch gekommen."

5. There were many other oracles: Zeus gave responses at Dodona (and Olympia). The gods Trophonius (at Lebadeia), Amphiaraus (at Thebes\*—all had their own sanctuary and rendered the same service. cf. Grote Greece 1, 50, 51; IV, 189.

6. On the interesting and fanciful mythological etymologies of the names Pythia, Apollo, Delphinos, and the surname Pythian Apollo see Grote, Greece 1, 47, 48.

of Parnassus, upon a tripod sat the priestess of the Pythian Apollo. Her oracles were delivered under convulsions produced by gases supposed to issue from crevices in the rock and were couched in rather inebherent hexametric verses. The oracles were resorted to on all occasions and for all purposes, public or private, political or religious. In delivering answers the priests were such adept verbal acrobats as to make their reply mean everything desirable or everything undesirable, according to their interpretation it pleased the recipient to give the words.<sup>1</sup> Such ambiguous or even contradictory replies tended much to bring the oracles into disrepute among not a few. Then too it was noticed that Apollo and his Pythia were not immune to bribery, whence already Demosthenes accuses the oracle of "Philippizing".<sup>2</sup> From the time of the Peloponnesian War (431-404\*) they began to lose their hold on the more intelligent class of the Greeks. The Epicureans, Cynics, and followers of Aristotle always rejected prophecy as such,<sup>3</sup> holding that, if there were any gods they neither could nor would concern themselves about such creatures as men. The Epicureans especially were wont to jeer at Apollo, the god of poetry, for composing verses, whose meters were far inferior to those of Homer, whom he was supposed to have inspired. Yet popular and traditional superstition dies hard; and

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1. On the famous ambiguity of the reply given Croesus see Grote, Greece IV, 190f.

2. Fisher, Beginnings 103.

3. Friedlander, Sittenges. 3, 463.

so we find the oracles eking out their existence even after Christianity had become the religion of the Empire and until the time of Theodosius the Great (A.D. 493-553). The schools of Plato and Pythagoras and especially the Stoics were always warm advocates of divine revelation and prophecy, deducing their reality and possibility from the very existence and nature of the gods.<sup>1</sup> Thus the oracles, though having lost much of their political importance through the subjugation of Greece, were still consulted by many A.D. 64. Suetonius tells us that Nero himself sought their council during his visit to Greece A.D. 66.<sup>2</sup>

Another important prophetic factor in Grecian religion which at this time engages our attention are the Sibylline books. The Sibyl was in heathen antiquity a Cassandra-like figure uttering its dread prophecies upon cities and men.<sup>3</sup> The home of this prophetic art seems to have been Asia Minor. While the most ancient writers know of but one Sibyl, later authors give the names of a series.<sup>4</sup> During the period of Roman supremacy the most famous sibyls were the

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1. See Zeller as quoted by Friedl, *Sitteng. Roms* 3, 463.
  2. Suetonius in *Ner* 40. See the ambiguous reply Nero elicited from the oracle. *Merivale Rom. Emp. VI*, 277.
  3. Schurer, *Jewish Peoples* 2, iii 271 f. The results of modern research seem to point to a purely mythological origin of the sibyls.
  4. Thus Euripides, Aristophanes, and Plato know of but one; while Pansanias counts four and Varro as many as ten, one of which is the Delphian Sibyl, said to have been born in the Temple of the Apollo and to have foretold the Trajan War:- On the entire subject see Schaff-Herzog, *Ency. s.v. "Sibyl"*; Schurer 2 iii, 288-292 (excellent list of references). McCl and Strong, *Bib. Cycl. s.v. "Sibylline Books"* et al.

Erythraean in Asia Minor<sup>1</sup> and the Eumanian in Lower Italy. Soon written records of supposed oracles were in private circulation and a legend has it, that a sibyl came to Tarquin II (Superbus) and sold him nine volumes of Sibylline verses at an enormous price.<sup>2</sup> Thence forward the Sibylline books though in reality more native to Greece and Asia Minor than Italy, play a most important part in Rome. There they were kept in close custody from the public in the Temple of Jupiter and a college of priests was appointed to take care of them. The consultation of these verses was a rare occurrence and restricted to times of fearful disaster and national calamity.<sup>3</sup> Though destroyed by fire four times (once under Nero), they were restored as often and consulted as late as the sixth century.<sup>4</sup> While thus not as much influencing religious life of the individual of this or, in fact, any other time, yet these unique productions deserve mention in a review of the religious condition of this period.

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1. On the Ionian coast, opposite Chios. Erythae was considered one of the earliest centers of sybillism. cf. Grote, Greece 1, 28.
  2. Fisher, Beginnings 123; Schurer, J. People 2, iii, 274.
  3. Milman, Hist. of Christianity 2, 123.
  4. Sibyllism from its very nature readily lent itself to propaganda of every nature preferably religious. In consequence a vast collection of Sibylline verses, comprising in all twelve books, the critical arrangement of whose text defies the acutest scholarship, is extant. Their contents, a strange mixture of pagan, Jewish, and even christian elements dating from various ages, consist in the main of historical narratives, predictions regarding temples, cities, nations, and kingdoms, interspersed with ethical and social prescriptions all clad in a cloak of mystical prophecy, v. supra p. 117, n#3. McCl. and Strong 7 c.

If the interest of Sibyls and the Sibylline books was of more national than individual importance, the famous games of the Greeks exerted an influence alike national and individual. The very obscurity which envelopes the origin of these famous games points to their antiquity and the first on record, those at the funeral of Patroclus, show us their early connection with religion.<sup>1</sup> The four games whose influence became Pan-Hellenic were the Olympian, Pythian,<sup>2</sup> Isthmian,<sup>3</sup> and Nemean.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Homer, Iliad XXIII.
  2. These games (first in B.C. 586) were second in importance only to the Olympian and comprised besides physical contests also music and poetry. See Grote, Greece IV, 64.
  3. The Isthmian games occurred in the first and third year of each Olympiad. They were celebrated at Corinth on the isthmus in honor of Poseidon. It was at these games A.D. 66 that Nero proclaimed the liberty of Greece. These, apparently, are the games to which St. Paul so often refers and at which he may have been present on his first visit to Corinth. cf. Conyb. and Howson. The application of the race to the Christians life is well-known and one of the most striking metaphors in all literature. The competitors (1 Cor. 9, 25: ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος; 2 Tim. 2, 5: ἐν ἀλλήτοις) required special diet while in training (1 Cor. 9, 25, 27: πάντα ἐκπετεύεται). Any infringement of the rules layed down for the different contests (2 Tim. 2, 5: ἐὰν μὴ νόμιμος ἀλλήτου) disqualifies the competitor (1 Cor. 9, 27: ἀδόκιμος). At the close of the race run in the stadium (1 Cor. 9, 24: ἐν στάδιω - Thayer s.v. στάδιον) the prize (1 Cor. 9, 24: τὸ βραβεῖον) a crown (2 Tim. 2, 5; 4, 8: στέφανος) was awarded by the judge, which crown, though perishable (1 Cor. 9, 25: φθαρτόν; comp. 1 Pet. 5, 4) was considered inestimably precious. There are many other indirect allusions to Greek athletic contests in Paul's letters. See C. and H. 2, 108f.
  4. These games were celebrated in the Nemean valley in honor of the Nemean Zeus in the second and fourth year of each Olympiad. In this manner there were games somewhere or another every year.



Of these games the Olympian were the earliest, to the last remained the most celebrated, and their prizes the most coveted. Their importance as a "tutelary bond of collective Hellenism" can hardly be exaggerated. During the months of their celebration the entire territory of the state in which the games took place was protected by a "Truce of God."<sup>1</sup> At the Olympian games there was a variety of twenty-four contests<sup>2</sup> of which racing, a-foot and in chariots, was the most ancient and at all times among the most popular. The severe bodily discipline to which a candidate for the Olympian prizes subjected himself, the enormous concourse of people at the games, the motley crowds of aristocrats and paupers, philosophers, soldiers, and mechanics, the religious-political air which surrounded the celebration, the gorgeous setting beneath the azure skies of Greece, the immense crowd of spectators bending forward with bated breath to see the great contests; finally the thunder of applause which greeted the victor, the crown of wild olives presented to him, the banquets and sacrifices given to and offered for him, the honor<sup>3</sup> conferred upon him, his family, his native city--all of this is so well known that detailed description is quite unnecessary; who has not read

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1. Grote, Greece 1, 72.

2. Among these were boxing (πυγμαχία), wrestling (πάλη), quoiting (δίσκος), leaping (ἄλμα), javelin-hurling (ἄκρόντιον) et nml. al.

3. Cicero with his usual contempt for Greek frivolty sneers at the fact that a victor in the Olympian games received more honor than a Roman General returning in triumph.

it again and again from childhood on and still finds in it one of the most engrossing chapters of ancient history.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, these games long survived the fall of Grecian independence, and were attended by many Romans, including people of no mean station than some of the Emperors themselves.<sup>2</sup> In fact, under the Empire the most important games were treated as imperial institutions and the pensions given the victors were charged to the royal exchequer.<sup>3</sup> These games, then, were still celebrated with great pomp and splendor A.D. 64. That they contributed in no mean measure toward welding a bond of brotherly feeling between the dispersed and politically dissevered Greek nation is readily apparent.<sup>4</sup> When A.D. 392 the decree of Theodosius the Great at length abolished the Olympian games they had enjoyed nearly twelve centuries of splendor and renown.<sup>5</sup>

But to turn to something which touched more deeply the inner man. The two systems of theological philosophy which were most firmly rooted in the minds of the cultured and educated were stoicism and Epicureanism.<sup>6</sup> Of these systems hedonic Epicureanism was

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1. For comprehensive treatments see Enc. Brit. and Grote, Greece.
  2. Romans even participated in the contests. The victor in the first Roman Olympic was no less a person than Augustus' stepson, subsequently Emperor Tiberius. Mommsen, Prov. I 288. Nero himself took part in the games--to the boundless disgust of many a noble Roman--and was, of course proclaimed victor. v. supra p. 78 note 3.
  3. Mommsen, Provinces I, 289.
  4. Grote, Greece I, 70.
  5. Ency. Birt. s.v. "games, classical".
  6. Epicurus was born of Attic parents in Samos B.C. 342, and died B.C. 270. His philosophic system was but little supplemented or modified by his disciples.

most homogeneous to the Grecian mind,<sup>1</sup> while the sterner Stoicism was more accordant with Roman character--wherefore we have considered it more as a factor in Roman paganism.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, however, Epicureanism also had its adherents among the Romans, though little is heard of them, due probably to their avowed principle of withdrawal from all public care and notice.<sup>3</sup>

The theology of Epicurus has not improperly been called negative. While acquiescing in the existence of the gods, he denied them any participation in the creation or preservation of the universe. Themselves the product of nature though of an immortal and far superior type than man, they dwell afar off in sublime indifference to the universe in general and man in particular.<sup>4</sup> This categorical cashiering of the gods while recognizing them is practical atheism.<sup>5</sup> The soul, taught Epicurus, is itself a sort of body composed of very fine atoms--a rather senseless, incompatible equation of the immaterial and material seems to be Epicurus' estimate of the soul.<sup>6</sup> This soul, furthermore, is quite as mortal as the body. Man dies, decays--that ends all;<sup>7</sup> "the rest is silence."

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1. Milman, *Hist. of Christianity* 1, 43. As sect the Epicureans had dwindled into smaller numbers than their rivals.

2. V. supra p. 25 ff.

3. Friedlander, *Sitteng.* 3, 578.

4. Tacitus, *Annals* 6, 22. Tacitus contrasts Epicureanism and Stoicism.

5. Conybeare and Howson 1, 369; Fisher, *Beginnings* 160.

6. Friedlander, *Sitteng. Roms.* 3, 616-618.

7. Some of the epitaphs on Epicurean tomb-stones are: "Dem ewigen Schlaf." "Nach Verhohnung des Wahns liege ich hier in unerwecklichen Schlaf." -- "Ich war nicht u. ward, ich war u. bin nicht mehr, so viel ist wahr. Wer anders sagt, der lügt; denn nicht werde ich sein." --Quoted by Friedl. *Sittg.* 3, 617.

The moral power of such a theology is not worth mentioning. If, indeed, Epicurus was as moderate and sober in his famous garden as some record him to have been,<sup>1</sup> this virtue can certainly not be ascribed to any moral principles of abstemiousness, inherent in his philosophy; for it the gods are totally indifferent to the actions of man; if, indeed, the grave is the final chapter in man's existence as a conscious being; if eternity is a blank, then man has nothing to fear, no account to give of himself, and in consequence may live in selfish indulgence of what ever desire arises in his corrupt nature. And pleasure selfish indulgence, regulated only by motives equally as selfish, this was the key-note of the great majority of those who represented this school;<sup>2</sup> for "sterner and loftier Epicureans of the type of Lucretius and Cassius were rare;<sup>3</sup> and the dogma of their teacher, that the best source of pleasure was virtue remained purely a dogma and was rarely realized in practice. It will appear that Stoicism, originating almost contemporaneously,<sup>4</sup> was quite a reaction against the extravagance of Epicurean fortuitism and materialism.<sup>5</sup> Epicurus taught the universe was an accidental conglomeration of Atoms. Zeno held, it was a

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1. Epicurus is said to have taught "the happiness of a cultivated and self contented soul." But some of the scenes witnessed in his garden seem to indicate that he often sought happiness in more material enjoyments.

2. Fisher, Beginnings 161, 162; Friedl. Sittg. 3, 619.

3. Farrar, Paul 1, 536; Conyb. and Howson, Paul 1, 370.

4. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 360.

5. Farrar, Paul 1, 537 not improperly calls these two philosophic schools "The Pharisees and the Sadducees of the ancient world," an analogy noted already by Josephus.

divine organism presided over by an immutable fate; Zeno taught everything was decreed by the unalterable will of an all-governing Providence, Epicurus held, that the gods preserved and unalterable nonchalance regarding the universe and man. Enjoy said Epicurus. Forego advised Zeno. The ruling principle of the one was Pleasure, of the other Pride--ever two archenemies of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

The last development in Grecian philosophy was Neoplatonism. In origin almost coeval with Christianity, it developed along strictly antichristian and pantheistic lines. The tenets considered peculiar to this school were A.D. 64 not yet completely unfolded; for in the usually accepted sense<sup>2</sup> Neoplatonism as a doctrinal system was founded at Alexandria in Egypt by Amonius Saccas, an apostate Christian, and his pupil Plotinus in the third century of our era.<sup>3</sup> We therefore do not feel ourselves called upon to give a detailed account of this school, while we would at the same time emphatically state our conviction that Christianity owes neither her origin nor any of her doctrines to Neoplatonism.<sup>4</sup> Attaining to importance during the last great reaction of heathenism

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1. Conyb. and Howson, 1, 366, 370; comp. Fisher, Beg. 178.

2. The wider meaning of the term implies in general a philosophizing which combined with the views of Plato other primarily Oriental conceptions; and by means of this eclectic philosophy sought to harmonize or reconcile the various philosophical systems. Precursors of Neoplat, in the narrow sense were Philo (b. ca B.C. 20), Plutarch of Chaeronea, the great biographer (ca 40-120 A.D.).

3. Uhlhorn, Kampf. 255; Schaff-Herzog. Ency. s.v. "Neoplatonism."

4. Christianity originated by revelation, not evolution: comp. Eph. 3, 5; 1 Cor, 2, 8-10.

against christianity the realization of its object and ambition, to offset the growing influence of Christ's religion, was sought by specious similarity in certain doctrines.<sup>1.</sup>

The reception or rather resistance with which the Greek mind met Christianity evidences the nature of both and in general emphasizes the radical difference between paganism and christianity. The Greeks, we know, were not intolerant. On the contrary "Eeresy was a concept absent from Greek religious thought."<sup>2.</sup> The Greek was at liberty to worship any particular god or gods he pleased as long as he did not deny the existence of the other inmates of the Pantheon. From this their attitude toward foreign cults and religions is readily deducible. The foreign deities with which the Greeks came into contact were without hesitation Grecianized in name and while the similarity between them and the native Gods of the Hellenes was stressed, their differences were either lightly regarded<sup>3.</sup> or, however inconsistently, reconciled. In this way sacrifices offered to Egyptian, Persian, or Syrian divinities were quite compatible with what was considered true Grecian worship.<sup>4.</sup> In consequence, too, the cults of Egypt (Isis), Syria, and the Orient in general had no difficulty in recruiting votaries in Greece.<sup>5.</sup>

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1. On this subject see Fisher, *Beg.* 178ff and Uhlhorn, *Kampf* 255-260.

2. *Hibbert Journal*, XXI No. 1 (Oct. 1922) p. 156.

3. *Finlay, Greece and Romans* 1, 12.

4. *Milman, History of Christianity* 1, 13.

5. *Comp. Farrar, Paul* 1, 558.

Especially the Roman religion, sprung, as it were, from a common stock with the Greek<sup>1</sup>. was quite at home in the land of the Hellenes, and its ultimate degeneration, Emperor-worship, was most readily received by the Greeks<sup>2</sup>. who, indeed, placed a statue of Divus Augustus beside the colossal image of Zeus in the very temple of that God.<sup>3</sup>

Conditions very much like these prevailed in Greece A.D. 53, when St. Paul, then at Troas, was implored in a vision of the night by a Macedonian to come over to that country and help them.<sup>4</sup> Whereupon Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke<sup>5</sup> set sail for Neopolis. From thence they travelled about ten miles inland<sup>6</sup> to the famous city of Philippi. Here the Gospel of Christ Jesus was probably for the first time proclaimed on European soil by an apostle. The progress of Christianity in Greece cannot fail to be of great interest to every Christian. This consideration and the fact that the Christian religious conditions in Greece A.D. 64 can be fully understood only if the circumstances of its advent and progress of ten years are known,--these considerations have lead us here to subjoin a

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1. Fisher, Beginnings 121, 123; Milman, H. of Christ. 1, 26.

2. Fisher, Beginnings 125.

3. In Corinth, in Sparta, in Delphi, and in Elis images and temples of the Emperors arose.

4. Acts 16, 8.9.

5. Luke modestly introduces the fact of his participation in this journey by the plural *ἔζητήσαμεν* etc.

6. Conyb. and Howson 1, 288.

brief sketch of the great apostles' missionary activities in Greece. Philippi says Luke with that historical accuracy so characteristic of his writings, was "the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony."<sup>1</sup> Its historical fame was indeed great. Founded by the father of Alexander the Great, Philip of Macedon, it was after the battle which on its plains dealt the death-blow to Roman Republicanism, raised to the dignity of a Roman colony by Augustus.<sup>2</sup> Paul's usual missionary method to preach in the synagogue of whatever place he entered could here not be followed, since there were not enough Jews in Philippi to erect a synagogue. He and his companions therefore went out to the *proseuchae*<sup>3</sup> by the river side on the Sabbath. The Word which Paul here proclaimed to the Jewish community found its way to the heart of a proselyte,<sup>4</sup> Lydia of Thyatira, who became baptized, with her house." Thus far the work of preaching the Gospel in Macedonia had progressed peacefully and successfully,

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1. "Chief" here denotes political importance. Some render *πρωτή πόλις* etc. Acts 16, 12 "the first city (geographically) of that part of Macedonia"--quite incorrectly. See for the different views Farrar, Paul 1, 484, n. 2; Meyer, Comment. i. 1. and P.320. (Amer. ed.).
  2. Dio Cassius 51, 4: "The characteristic of a colony was, that it was a miniature resemblance of Rome. Roman colonies were primarily intended as military safeguards of the frontiers, and as checks upon insurgent provinces. Their affairs were regulated by their own magistrates. These officers were named *Dummoiro*; and they took great pride in calling themselves by the Roman title of Praetors (*στρωτηγοί*)". --Conby. and Howson 1, 290, 293, 294.
  3. On the *prosenchae* see Thayer, Lexicon s.v. *προσευχή* - 2b.
  4. Acts 16, 14: *Σεβομένη τὸν θεόν.*



when, however, a soothsaying damsel<sup>1</sup>. had for several days annoyed Paul and his companions by bearing loud testimony to their divine mission and Paul had expelled the evil spirit from her in the name of Jesus, matters took an unfavorable turn. For the proprietors of the damsel, robbed of the profit her soothsaying netted them, dragged Paul and Silas before the rulers<sup>2</sup>. who "pranked out in the usurped peacock plumes of 'praetorian' dignity",<sup>3</sup>. readily believed the charges brought against them by the mob, had Paul and Silas stripped, mercilessly scourged and then turned over for safe-keeping to the city jailer. Paul and Silas singing in the miserable dungeon, the earthquake, the conversion of the Gooler and his house, the fright of the magistrates on hearing of Paul and Silas Roman citizenship--all are so vividly pictured by the pen of Luke that a mere allusion to these unique events brings them up before us in lively colors. Thus Paul and his companions journeyed onward, while Timothy and Luke remained at Philippi with the young Christian congregation,<sup>4</sup>. the first fruits of Paul in Greece. Travelling in a generally westerly direction they passed through Amphipolis and Apol-

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1. This is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the demoniac possessions recorded in the New Test. We are firmly convinced that there was a possession by personal evil spirits, and are content to hold this view with Christ and His apostles over against most modern critics. See this matter ably treated by Conyb. and Howson, l. 297-302, who also abide by the scriptural view. Cf. also Stoeckhardt, Bib. Gesch. N.T. 379. Comp. Meyer on Acts 16, 16 and Farrar, Paul 1, 491 for untenable views.
  2. The *στρατηγοί* Acts 16, 20--V. supra p. 86, n. 2. Acts 16,16-18.
  3. Farrar, Paul 1, 494.
  4. Acts 17, 1. *ἤρθον εἰς Θερμαζονίαν—τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς*, 16, 40 quite necessarily implies that the congregation consisted of men and women.

lonia and had traversed one hundred and two miles upon entering Thessalonica.<sup>1</sup> This famous city, formerly called Therma (Hot Springs) was by Cassander, son of Antipater, called Thessalonica after his wife, a sister of Alexander the Great B.C. 41 and it was made a free city (urbs libera),<sup>2</sup> whose civil magistrates were called politarchs.<sup>3</sup> However, when the four regions of Macedonia were united by the Romans, Thessalonica was chosen as the capital of the province and the home of the proconsul.<sup>4</sup> Being besides a great center of trade and commerce it had quite naturally a considerable Jewish population. This is indicated by the importance of the synagogue<sup>5</sup> in which Paul as usual strove to convince his "brethren after the flesh" that the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah had been predicted in the O. Testament and now fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>6</sup>

For three consecutive Sabbaths this preaching continued and some of the Jews believed, while the main body of converts were Gentiles.<sup>7</sup> As a class the unbelieving Jews here too "proved to be the plague

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1. Acts 17, 1. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 1, 317, 318. Today Thess. has about 90,000 inhabitants of which 3/5 are Jews.
  2. Such cities were self-governed in all internal affairs within their assigned territories, the governor of the provinces having under normal circumstances no right of interference.
  3. Acts 17, 6: οἱ πολιτάρχαι.
  4. Farrar, Paul 1, 505.
  5. Acts 17, 1: ἡ συναγωγή. Meyer correctly retains the article.
  6. Acts 17, 3.
  7. Cf. 1 Thess. 1, 4, 9; 2, 14-16--The Old Test. is not once quoted in 1 and 2 Thess.

of Paul's suffering life."<sup>1</sup> Forming a mob with the idlers of the city, they dragged Paul's host, Jason, "and certain of the brethren" before the politarchs charging them, as their master before them, with seditious doctrines.<sup>2</sup> The politarchs, somewhat more just than the inflated "praetors" of Philippi, took security from Jason and the others and dismissed them. The difference between the persecutions at Philippi and Thessalonica is characteristic and as such worthy of note. The Jews were always stirred up by religious hatred and envy, while the Gentiles were moved to resistance by political and personal interests which were accidentally involved in religious questions. Fully aware of the danger in which they were involved Paul and Silas departed for the out-of-the-way village of Berea by night.<sup>3</sup> The Jews in whose synagogue Paul here preached the gospel were more noble<sup>4</sup> than those in Thessalonica and received the word gladly. Together with many converts from the respectable classes of the Greeks<sup>5</sup> their diligent search of the Scriptures to ascertain whether Paul's doctrines were indeed those contained in their holy Writings, has become proverbial and exemplary.<sup>6</sup> Matters

1. See Farrar, Paul 1, 512 who eloquently points out with what fanatic hatred the Jews opposed Paul and his message. He says in part: "Without they sprang upon him at every opportunity as a pack of wolves; within, they hid themselves in sheep's clothing to worry and tear his flocks."

2. The similarity between Luke 23, 2; John 19, 12 and Acts 17, 7 is unmistakable.

3. Acts 17, 9.10.

4. Acts 17, 11: *Εὐγενέστεροι* Vulg. nobiliores. Luther incorrectly: "Diese waren die Edelsten unter denen zu Thessalonich."

5. Acts 17, 12: *ἐπιστευσάν - (ἐκ) τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι*

6. Acts 17, 11. Curiously enough this short but successful visit of Paul to Berea and the zealous searching of the Scriptures by the converts is all we know of this church. Comp. Acts 20, 4.

were very promising when the Jews of Thessalonica received word of Paul's success. Like hunters after their prey they immediately came to stir up the Bereans, wherefore Paul was brought to the sea-shore, probably to Dium,<sup>1.</sup> whence he set sail for Athens, leaving Timothy and Silas in Berea to water the tender Plant of Christianity. When the Apostle set foot on Athenian soil he had arrived at the most sacred shrine of pagan culture. But, though enjoying the privileges of an *urbs libera* under the Romans, Athens was not what she had been, and at Paul's visit retained little more than the memory of her political greatness and preeminence. Yet ever her Roman Conquerors could never wholly rid themselves of their veneration of her and especially their young men were sent to Athens to receive what was considered the best education of the time.<sup>2.</sup> There were also Jews at Athens, though the success of Paul's effort to convert them by disputations in their synagogue seems to have been negligible. Since the characteristics of the then Athenian was in insatiable<sup>3.</sup> curiosity for the latest bit of news, it is not surprising to find St. Paul standing upon the historic and far-famed Mars Hill setting forth those eternal truths which the greatest minds of mankind at its best could not arrive at and speaking to an audience

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1. Thus Farrar, Paul 1, 519; Conyb. and Howson 1, 343.

2. Comp. Acts 17, 21. Uhlhorn, Kampf 11, 17.

3. Acts 17, 21: εἰς οὐδέν ἕτερον ἠνκαίρου.

containing people of such contradictory tenets as Stoics and Epicureans.<sup>1.</sup> The meager results--the failure we had almost said of the Apostle's address and missionary activity in Athens is an eloquent commentary on such a passage as 1 Cor. 1, 26-29. We hear of but a few converts among, "Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris,"<sup>2.</sup> but at Athens Paul founded no church, to Athens he wrote no letter, and in Athens he vener again seems to have set his foot.<sup>3.</sup> It was different at that other great and ever-memorable Grecian City, Corinth.<sup>4.</sup> Even in Paul's days Corinth was one of the most flourishing commercial cities of the Empire, a Roman colony, the capital of Achaia, and a stronghold of a corrupt paganism.<sup>5.</sup> Here was a sanctuary of the Ephesian Artemis, here in the market

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1. Paul's "anknuepfungspunkt," the superreligiousness of the Athenians as evidenced by their altar to the "unknown God", has been alluded to above, p. 16 and n. 2. For the picture of such an altar see Barton Archeolog. and the Bible, Figure 299; plate 116. Unfortunately we must deny ourselves an analysis of this unique address, which shows such a surprising amount of psychological oratory. See however, the observations of Milman, Hist. of Christianity, 1, 448; Farrar, Paul 1, 539-548.
  2. Acts 17, 34.
  3. Verse 15 records the command to Timothy and Silas, then at Berea (v. 14) to "come to him with all speed." Some difficulty attaches to the movements of these coworkers during this time. Acts 18, 5 we read that they rejoined Paul at Corinth--apparently coming together; but 1 Thess. 3, 1.2 Paul speaks of his solitude in Athens occasioned by a journey of Timothy to Mac. The difficulty is quite satisfactorily solved by assuming that Tim. after his arrival at Athens was by Paul sent to Mac. (Thessal.?). Comp. C. and H. Paul 1, 407f.
  4. Acts 18, 1-17. Cicero calls it "totius Graeciae lumen"--Meyer, Comment. Amer. ed note.
  5. Farrar, Paul 1, 556 calls it "the Vanity Fair of the Roman Empire, at once the London, and the Paris of the first century after Christ."

was a statue of Athena and a sanctuary of the Capitoline Zeus, here on a prominent rock a temple of Aphrodite.<sup>1</sup> Besides this there were two sanctuaries of Isis and two of Serapis. The great and varied commerce of Corinth had attracted many Jews in whose synagogue Paul now proclaimed "Christ and him crucified."<sup>2</sup> Here too he met Aquila and Priscilla<sup>3</sup> whose zeal for the cause of Christ was so noteworthy.<sup>4</sup> Soon, however, the Jews began their old fanatical counterworking against the Apostle of the Gentiles. With such blasphemy and hatred they opposed Paul that he at length declared himself resolved henceforth to turn to the Gentiles.<sup>5</sup> The converts now left the synagogue and met in the house of Justus, adjoining the synagogue, whose chief ruler, Crispus had also espoused the cause of Christ.<sup>6</sup> However, the hostilities of the Jews did not cease, and when the new proconsul, Gallio,<sup>7</sup> arrived at Corinth they accused Paul before him of violation of the law. But Gallio, quite consis-

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1. In this temple were 1000 religious prostitutes (hierodouloi), All circumstances conspired to make Corinth proverbially immoral-- Cf. *Κορινθιακή Επιστολή*. "In coming to Corinth from Athens Paul had "exchanged an intellectual for a sensual atmosphere", Purves, *Apost. Age*. 194.
  2. 1 Cor. 2, 2.
  3. Acts 18, 1-3. On the banishment of the Jews from Rome V. p. 38, n.3.
  4. Acts 18, 26.
  5. Acts 18, 6.
  6. Acts 18, 8.
  7. Acts 18, 14. Junius Gallio or Marcus Annaeus Novatus was the elder brother of Seneca. Gallio was Seneca's favorite brother, a fact readily deducible from the many compliments Seneca pays him in his writings. He dedicated two books to him: "On anger" and "On a Happy Life." The great Stoic is fond of speaking of his brother as the "dulcis Gallio." Cf. Farrar, *Seekers after God*, 16ff.

tent with himself, decided that as the matter revolved about Jewish religious technicalities,<sup>1</sup> it was no infringement of the Roman law and curtly dismissed the exasperated Jews, whose chief ruler of the synagogue, Sosthenes<sup>2</sup> was then beaten by the Greeks who stood by, while Gallio looked on with contemptuous indifference and unperturbable disdain. So Paul's safety was ensured for the nonce, and when after a sojourn of eighteen months he left Corinth he had there established a congregation destined to occupy a most important position in the history of early Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

This tour of evangelization through Greece A.D. 52-54<sup>4</sup> was, however, not the only time Paul was seen in that country. On his third and largest missionary journey A.D. 54-57 he again set foot on Grecian soil. Crossing as before, from Troas he met Titus at Philippi who gave him a favorable report of conditions at Corinth.<sup>5</sup>

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1. The *ζητήματα περὶ τοῦ ἰσοῦ καὶ ὀνοματίων* (Acts 18, 15) were probably disputes about the Messiahship of Christ.
  2. Sosthenes seems to have been the successor of Crispus.
  3. From Corinth Paul wrote his first two letters, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Both were written A.D. 53 (See Buerbringer, Einl. 49, 50) upon Timothy's reporting the weal and woe of the congregation at Thessalonica to Paul.
  4. For a comparative chronology of Paul's entire life see, Farrar, Paul 2, 624, 625. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 2, 542, 543.
  5. Paul had been succeeded in Corinth by Apollos, sometime after whose appearance in that city but "apparently before the correspondence with the church which took place just before 1 Cor. was written, the Apostle himself had made a visit to Corinth." See (1 Cor. 1, 12), to correct which disorder Paul wrote what to us is known as 1 Corinthians from Ephesus A.D. 57. For an outline of this letter see Zahn, Intr. 1, 273ff. That Paul wrote a letter to Corinth prior to our 1 Corinthians follows from 1 Cor. 5, 9, on which passage see Meyer, Guericke, Isagogik (3A) 299, n. 2.

Thereupon Paul sent his second Epistle to the Corinthians<sup>1</sup> and in the winter of A.D. 57 followed it in person. During the three months of his sojourn there, December 57--February 58, he no doubt completed the discipline and organization of the Corinthian church. From here Paul also wrote two more of his Epistles, the Epistle to the Galatians and that to the Romans, whom he intended to visit.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of A.D. 58 he then set out on his last journey to Jerusalem accompanied by friends of the various gentile churches.<sup>3</sup> His plan to sail directly to Syria was changed to a route through Macedonia<sup>4</sup> in consequence of a plot by the Jews.

Of the visit which St. Paul payed Greece after his liberation from his first captivity at Rome we know very little in detail.<sup>5</sup> We learn, however, from 2 Tim. 4, 20 that he passed through Corinth; whether or not he carried out his intention of wintering in Nicopolis we cannot tell. Paul's movements during the closing period of his life are somewhat uncertain.<sup>6</sup>

And thus Christianity in its triumphant though despised march had entered Greece too, had invaded and gained a foothold in the very shadow of some of paganism's most famous temples, had encountered

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1. Fuerbringer, Einl. 58.

2. Acts 19, 21; Romans 15, 23,24,28,29; 16, 1.

3. Acts 20, 4.

4. Acts 20, 1-6.

5. See Phil. 1, 26; 2, 24.

6. On his first captivity in Rome, A.D. 61-63, his liberation, and probable journey to Spain V. supra, p. 53, n. 4 and p. 54, n. 1.



on home-ground the most finished products of mythology, superstition, and philosophy and could be met with only two arguments, both of which evidenced the weakness of its opponents, violence and ridicule. And although "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called,"<sup>1</sup> yet the word of God "returned not void,"<sup>2</sup> and those who received it found what all philosophers, all pagan cults and religions could never give them, peace, sweet peace through the blood of Jesus Christ.

If, however, the truth that Christ's kingdom of grace, the church militant, has "fightings and fears within, without" yet needs historical attestation, the early Christian church in Greece will furnish such. Consistently enough<sup>3</sup> the concomitant circumstances of the resurrection of Christ and of His second Advent caused the Grecian churches no little anxiety, while some in the congregation at Corinth went to the length of denying the resurrection altogether.<sup>4</sup> To make matters worse, the Christians at Thessalonica combined with their faulty understanding of the resurrection and its attending circumstances super-eschatological enthusiasm. Paul undoubtedly had often directed their attention to Christ's return with their crown of eternal life and peace alike as an incentive to holiness<sup>5</sup> and a source of consolation amid the many trials and sufferings which their new faith entailed.<sup>6</sup>

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1. 1 Cor. 1, 26.

2. Is. 55, 11.

3. Comp. Acts 17, 32.

4. 1 Cor. 15, 12.

5. Comp. 2 Pet. 3, 11.

6. Acts 17, 5; 1 Thess. 1, 14.

And indeed, what the hope of the Messiah's birth had been to the Jews, that the anticipation of Christ's second advent was to the early christians and is still to-day. The Thessalonians, however, had in their zeal quite misinterpreted the apostle's meaning; concluding that the consummation of all things was at hand,<sup>1</sup> they had deserted the hard road of routine duties for the dreamy sweetness of deferred expectations. To control into soberness and shame into diligence this eschatological enthusiasm St. Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians. In order cogently to prove how groundless their procedure was, the apostle reminds them of<sup>2</sup> and expatiates on "that man of sin"<sup>3</sup> whose appearance before and destruction by the return of Christ to judgment was yet to take place.

Did the Thessalonians understand Paul's language? Did they a few years later identify "that wicked one" with the Emperor Nero, as many modern critics do?<sup>4</sup> Quite unnecessarily 2 Thess. 2 has

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1. Their enthusiasm probably fastened upon such expressions as "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thess. 4, 15). Voluminously, often almost angrily, the question whether Paul and the Apostles expected Christ's second advent during their life-time has been disputed. We shall not enter into any discussion of the matter. We hold that Paul indeed believed in the possibility (Cf. 1 Thess. 4, 15; 1 Cor. 15, 51; Phil. 3, 20-21; 4, 5b), but not in the probability of his living to see his master's return (cf. 2 Thess. 2, 1-10; 2 Cor. 4, 14; Rom. 11, 24-27; Phil. 1, 20-23). This view, it seems to us, satisfies all conditions--stressing both the nearness and the uncertainty of Christ's advent--"It is the tremendous 'now' of the Day of Judgment"--Luther as quoted by Farrar, Paul 1, 591. See also Purves, Apost. Age 202, who holds the same view.
  2. 2 Thess. 2, 5.
  3. 2 Thess. 2, 3ff.
  4. Thus also Farrar, Paul 1, 609ff; Early Days 11, 411. See McCl. and Strong s.v. "Antichrist" for the history of this doctrine and its many aberrations.

been made a popular and wreck-strewn battle-ground for contending exegetes and weak theologians.<sup>1</sup> We have once more carefully weighed the arguments advanced by all schools of interpreters and have come away with a yet firmer conviction that "that wicked one"<sup>2</sup> is indeed to be found in Rome--the Pope.<sup>3</sup> Nor let it be called an extraordinary and god-pleasing "spirit of charity and toleration" to deny the identity of the Romish Pope with the "Son of Perdition."

But to return to the doctrinal doubts which agitated the Christians in Greece. Hand in hand with the super-eschatological expectations of Christ's immediate return went their sceptical and vague ideas of the resurrection.<sup>4</sup> While, as above stated, some at Corinth actually denied the resurrection,<sup>5</sup> it appears that others at Thessalonica supposed that those who had died, though they had been true Christians, would be deprived of some important advantages which those yet living at the coming of the Lord would enjoy.<sup>6</sup> To combat the denial of the resurrection Paul wrote the grand fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians

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1. "Jeder Lehrer in der christl. Kirche ist schwach in der Theologie der obwohl er mit der historischen Erscheinung des Pabsttums bekannt ist, im Pabsttum nicht den 2. Thess. 2. geweisagten Anti-Christ erkennt." -- F. Pieper, Christl. Dog. 3, 534.

2. 2 Thess. 2, 8.

3. See D. Pieper's irrefutable treatises on the Antichrist in his Christl. Dogm. 3, 527ff (and references). Cf. also Gerhard, Loci Theol. V, 338ff; 407, 413ff; Baier, Compend. Theol. (ed. Walther) 3 a 672ff.

4. 1 Thess. 4, 13f.

5. 1 Cor. 15, 12.

6. 1 Thess. 4, 13f.

deducing from Christ's resurrection, historically so well attested,<sup>1.</sup> the resurrection of the Christians, and showing at the same time its mode and manner.<sup>2.</sup> In like manner the apostle calmed the solicitude of the Thessalonians for their dead by assuring them that "the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."<sup>3.</sup> Thus the uncertain and wavering faith of the early Christians in Greece a few years before A.D. 64 has, under the divine guidance of Him, Who "out of darkness calls up light," given us a full treatment of the sublime doctrine of the resurrection of the body, has given to the world words which like a triumphant trumpet blast shall sound to the end of time and beyond. "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4.</sup>

However, that dark side of early Grecian Christianity which is most memorable and which, for a time, seemed about to undo all

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1. 1 Cor. 15, 5-11.

2. 1 Cor. 15.

3. 1 Thess. 4, 16b. See Meyer i. 1.

4. 1 Cor. 15, 55-57.

the missionary labors of Paul, were the factions at Corinth.<sup>1</sup> We have already noted that a short time after Paul's departure from Corinth the eloquent<sup>2</sup> Jew of Alexandria, Apollos had gone thither.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks were lacking the spirit of true unity and warmly admiring rhetorical and fluent speech, soon formed a separate party which professed to follow Apollos the Eloquent,<sup>4</sup> while despising the unadorned simplicity of Paul's teaching. Whether this faction was doctrinally at an entire agreement with that party professing adherence to Paul, does not clearly appear, though it seems very probable.<sup>5</sup> The Pauline party, which seems to have been the largest, apparently looked with contempt upon the scrupulosity of their weaker brethren. But this was not all; for shortly after the departure of Apollos Judaizing teachers, supplied probably with letters of recommendation<sup>6</sup> from the church at Jerusalem arrived at Corinth and preached the Gospel in a spirit of direct and personal antagonism to Paul, seeking in every way to depress his apostolic claims.<sup>7</sup> This

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1. 1 Cor. 1, 10-12; 3, 3.4.21.22; 4, 1-5; 11, 18. We can in the following only outline our view of the factions. For more exhaustive treatments See Zahn, *Intr.* 1, 299ff; Conyb. and Howson, *Paul* 1, 443ff; Guericke, *Isagogik* (3 Auf.) 300ff; Meyer's *Intr.* to 1 Corinthians. Fuerbringer, *Einl.* 54, n. 10 divided the factions thus: "Eine heidenchristliche (paulinisch, apollisch) u. eine judenchristl. (keplisch, christlich)."--But cf. Zahn, *Intr.* 1, 300.

2. Acts 18, 24. Comp. 2 Cor. 10, 10; 1 Cor. 2, 1.4.

3. Acts 19, 1.2.

5. Comp. 1 Cor. 16, 12--For a conjectural difference see Farrar, *Paul* 2, 52f.

4. 1 Cor. 1, 12.

6. 2 Cor. 3, 1.

7. 1 Cor. 11, 2.

party, using Peter's name and place among the apostles to the disparagement of St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> bitterly opposed the liberal and spiritual system of Paul and inclined to one which aimed at refettering Christianity with the restrictions and outward rituals of the Mosaic dispensation. Thus the question at stake touched the very essence of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Finally there was a fourth party under the name of "the followers of Christ,"<sup>3</sup> which at first probably sought to separate itself from factious adherence to particular teachers, but was eventually, and by an overstrung application of this very principle, driven by antagonism into positions and tenets equally at variance with the unity and universality of Christ's church.<sup>4</sup> The peace and unity of the church being so sadly disrupted by warring factions "St. Paul feels himself necessitated to remind them that adverse factions ranging themselves under human leaders, involve a contradiction to the Christian name."<sup>5</sup> That church discipline and morality in general suffered under such conditions is not surprising. The Christian agapae, the social meal of the primitive Christians, which generally succeeded the celebration of the Lord's Supper,

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1. 2 Cor. 11, 5 (6)--Therefore Paul's "foolish speaking" (c. Cor. 11) in order to vindicate his apostolic authority. 2 Cor. is indeed the "most subjective and personal" of Paul's letters.

2. Cf. Conybeare and Howson, Paul 1, 443.

3. 1 Cor. 1, 12.

4. Views regarding this faction greatly differ. See especially Meyer on 1 Cor. 12; Purves, *Apost. Age*, 215; Zahn, *Intr. I*, 292f; 300. Conyb. and Howson, Paul, 1, 444.

5. 1 Cor. 1, 13--Conyb. and Howson 1, 445.

were stained by gluttony and excesses.<sup>1</sup>

The mode of celebrating these feasts was simple. The food, before eating which the guests washed their hands and offered prayer, was according to circumstances prepared either at the houses of the guests or at the place of meeting. The Scriptures were read and questions asked by the presiding person. Thereupon followed a congregational meeting, as it were, in which the weal and soe of the congregation and the church at large were discussed. At the close of the feast money was collected for the poor, the orphans, the widows, and prisoners. After the kiss of charity was exchanged, the meeting closed with prayer.<sup>2</sup> We can understand how the heathen who attended such a service but once should in many instances have been won thereby forever.<sup>3</sup> In their temples, worship by dead ceremonials, here by the living, regenerating word: there a dumb, inactive mass of specators, while the sacrificer alone had intercourse with the deities, here a participating, praying, and singing communion, all priests of the living God.<sup>4</sup> But these love-feasts, at which the early Christians met to realize their fellowship with

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1. 1 Cor. 11, 20ff. Whether 2 Pet. 2, 13 refers to like abuses is a controverted question whose answer depends upon a correct reading (*ἐν ταῖς ἀγαπῆς ἀδελφῶν* or *ἐν ταῖς ἀγαπῆς ἀδελφῶν*). See Zahn Intr. 2, 235, n. 3.

2. On the Agapae see Tertullian, Apolog. 39; Fisher, Beg. 546; Schaff-Herzog s.v. "Agape".

3. Comp. 1 Cor. 14, 24.25.

4. 1 Pet. 2, 9. For the powerful impression the lives of the early Christians must have made upon the heathen around them See Uhlhorn, Kampf 128ff.

one another, had at Corinth led to abuses which subverted the very principles underlying their institution, by providing different food for the poor and the rich, the latter of which became guilty of gluttony while the former hungry-eyed, were left unprovided. Nor was this all. A crime of so deep a dye that even the gentiles turned from it with abhorrence had been committed by one of the members in the Corinthian congregation. He was openly entertaining incestuous relations with his step-mother, and that during the life-time of his father.<sup>1.</sup> And what was worse still, the offender was not excluded from the congregation.<sup>2.</sup> But this person, though the most notorious, was by no means the only offender. There were more Christians in Corinth who were guilty of uncleanness, lasciviousness, and fornication. Immorality was, as we have noted, the sin peculiarly prevalent and most shamelessly practiced in Corinth; and it is quite natural that a congregation there situated was in great danger of being infected by it, considering also, that its Grecian element was quite unused to look upon infringements of this moral law as particularly sinful.<sup>3.</sup> And therefore we find that in none of his writings Paul's warnings against this sin are more numerous, more emphatic, or more solemn.<sup>4.</sup>

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1. 1 Cor. 5, 1.

2. It would appear that the step-mother and father of this person of some importance to the congregation, were not Christians since Paul does not deal with them. That the incestuous person was at length summarily dealt with becomes apparent from a comparison of 1 Cor. 5, 1-5 with 2 Cor. 2, 6-10. But see Fuerbringer, Einl. 58, n. 12 who denies the identity.

3. It will be remembered that illicit sexual intercourse was part of the Grecian worship, V. supra p. 92, n. 1.

4. See 1 Cor. 5, 11; 6, 15-18; 15, 33.34; 2 Cor. 12, 21 et passim.



We have seen that the religious conditions of the congregations at Thessalonica and Corinth in the decade A.D. 54-64 were far from being perfect. Yet not all aspects and centers of Early Christianity in Greece were thus discouraging. When the great apostle, A.D. 61-63, was a prisoner at Rome the Christians at Philippi gave proof of their faith and love in word and deed.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this the only time the Philippians had materially aided the Apostle.<sup>2</sup> And it is remarkable that, while Paul almost curtly refused to accept any financial support from the converts at Thessalonica and Corinth, where, indeed, he labored at his trade of tent-making for his sustenance,<sup>3</sup> --it is remarkable that he accepted pecuniary assistance only from the Philippians.<sup>4</sup> Having gladly received the gospel of Christ Jesus upon its first proclamation among them,<sup>5</sup> the relation between the Christians at Philippi and the Apostle Paul ever after was marked by sympathy and sincere regard.<sup>6</sup> And--curiously enough we had almost said--the Philippians never seem to have given Paul occasion to chastise them for such excesses and internal dissensions and defections as stained the congregations at Thessalonica and Corinth. On the contrary, all notices we have of the religious conditions at Philippi A.D. 64 bear witness to the joy<sup>7</sup> and thankfulness

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1. Phil. 1, 17.13.17; 2, 25; 4, 10.14.18 (Philippians was written A.D. 63).
  2. Phil. 4, 15.16.
  3. Acts 18, 3:20.34; 1 Cor. 9, 15; 1 Thess. 3, 9; 2 Thess. 3, 8.
  4. 1 Cor. 9, 15; 2 Cor. 11, 8.9; Phil. 4, 15,16.
  5. Acts 16, 14.15.40; Phil. 2, 12.
  6. Phil. 1, 5.8; 4, 1. (See references of Note 5).
  7. Bengel has, with this characteristically happy phraseology called Philippians "Epistola de gaudio."

which the faith and love of the congregation at that place caused its captive founder at Rome.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly the fact that this church consisted primarily of heathen converts<sup>2</sup> and Jews were peculiarly few at Philippi contributed much to the more quiet and undisturbed growth of Christianity in that city. We must, however, be on guard against the idea that the aspects of Christianity in Thessalonica and Corinth were altogether unfavorable. Though disturbed by doubts and torn by factions, we may rest assured that the proclamation of the word continued to regenerate many and mightily confirmed the faith of the weak and wavering.<sup>3</sup> In fact we have positive evidence that there were also encouraging features in the religious conditions at Corinth. That distinctively apostolic feature, the possession of supernatural gifts forces itself upon our notice at this very place. The importance and prevalence of these gifts in the apostolic church is quite evident from their frequent mention. Unfortunately this speaking of them as of quite ordinary occurrences which need no explanation, makes it difficult for us exactly to define their nature and extent, while recognizing their importance in an adequate picture of early Christianity and its manifestations. The peculiar prevalence of the charismatic gifts in the Corinthian congregation, independent as they were of the will of the possessor, bears witness that in spite of their many faults and failings the

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1. Phil. 2, 12; 2, 15 (we regard *παρίστανε* as the present tense, denoting existing conditions); 4, 1.15.16.

2. Phil. 2, 15.16; 3, 2.3.

3. Comp. such passages as 1 Thess. 1, 8.

Spirit of God was yet mighty among them. Much exegetical ingenuity has been consumed to arrive at a logical or psychological arrangement of the various gifts and their manifestations. In general we are inclined to accept Meyer's outline<sup>1</sup> as being the simplest. The exact definition and limitations of the gifts themselves is not so easy. Paul himself defines the gifts of grace in general as "a revelation of the Spirit for the common good."<sup>2</sup> We may therefore call them "a particular, supernatural energy and utterance of the believers life, prompted and guided by the Holy Ghost, for the edification of the church."<sup>3</sup> The external concatenation of the Apostle is as follows: The Spirit of God gave to one the

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1. Meyer says (Comment. on 1 Cor.--4th Gen.-ed): "Die obwohl nicht streng logische Einteilung aber (by means of the ὡ μ εν (12,8) ἑτέρω δε' (12, 9) ἑτέρω δε' (12, 10) Paul indicates an external division) ergibt sich ungezwungen so:

1. Charismen, welche sich auf die intellektuelle Kraft beziehen:

1. λόγος σοφίας.
2. λόγος γνώσεως.

2. Charismen, welche durch den Glaubensherismus bedingt sind:

1. die πίστις selbst.
2. die tatsächlichen Wirksamkeiten derselben, nämlich:
  - a. ἰδ' ἡ δ' τὰ
  - b. δυνάμεις

3. 3. die mündliche Wirksamkeit derselben, nämlich die

4. die kritische Wirksamkeit derselben, die
5. die auf die γλώσσαι sich beziehenden Charismen:
  1. das zungenreden.
  2. das Zungenauslegen.

For other divisions see Neander, Planting of the Christian Church, Chap. 1. McCl and Strong. s.v. "Gifts, Spiritual."

2. Φανερωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸν σύγγρονον 1 Cor. 12, 7: πρὸς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν τῆς ἐκκλησίας, 1 Cor. 14, 12. Comp. also 12, 12.

3. McClintock and Strong, Id- this is an ably written article-- though we cannot indorse it unconditionally.

ability, as it were exegetically to interpret the revelations of God,<sup>1</sup> while to another the more systematic, dogmatical arrangement was vouchsafed in a higher degree.<sup>2</sup> Another was blessed with heroic faith,<sup>3</sup> another with the gift of miraculous healing,<sup>4</sup> while this last gift was by some a power to perform miracles in general.<sup>5</sup> Still others were endowed with the ability convincingly to preach the word and reveal the hidden will of God to man.<sup>6</sup> Yet others could discern whether the Spirit manifesting itself in any person were of God or the Evil one.<sup>7</sup> Finally there were those who could speak in tongues though themselves unconscious of the import of their utterances,<sup>8</sup> for whose interpretations still others had received the supernatural ability.<sup>9</sup>

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1. 1 Cor. 12, 8: λόγος σοφίας.
  2. 1 Cor. 12, 8: λόγος γνώσεως.
  3. 1 Cor. 12, 9: πίστις Mayer i.1.: "Glaubensheroismus."
  4. 1 Cor. 12, 9: χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων.
  5. 1 Cor. 12, 10: ἐνεργήματα δυνάμενων Comp. Gal. 3, 5, which passage incidentally proves that the charismatic gifts were not restricted to one congregation.
  6. Thus we understand 1 Cor. 12, 10, χαρίσματα προφητείας. Cf. Meyer i.1. Comp. Rom. 12, 6.
  7. 1 Cor. 12, 10: διακρίσεις πνευμάτων . At the same time there appears to have been some doubts among the Corinthians in general as to the author of some of the gifts. 1 Cor. 12, 4-6.
  8. 1 Cor. 12, 10: ἑτέρω γένη γλωσσῶν . A comparison with 1 Cor. 14, 13.15 will substantiate our view. This "Glossolalie," then, is to be distinguished from the miracle of Pentecost (Acts 4) and its unintelligibility to be attributed to the absence of ἀποκάλυψις and γνώσις in the speaker. C. and H. Paul 1, 430: "The understanding was suspended, while the spirit was in a rapt state of ecstasy by the immediate communication of the Spirit of God." Similarly Purves, Ap. Age, 219.220.
  9. 1 Cor. 12, 10: ἡ ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν.

These gifts, however, were by the richly blessed Corinthians abused for ostentation and pride and resulted in disorderly conduct in their services,<sup>1</sup> where those possessing some *χαρισμα* would speak promiscuously and "at sixes and sevens."

As to the places in which early Christians convened for worship we know little enough. Paul's method, as we have so repeatedly noted, was to preach in the synagogue of the Jews or if there was none at that particular city, to repair to a place most likely to be frequented by "missionary material." When, however, the Jews antagonized the apostle beyond the limit the little flock of converts would transfer their meetings to other dwellings, in most cases private houses of some of the believers.<sup>2</sup> And the meetings of the early Christians were not confined to one day of the week; they met oftener, in some places even daily. Especially the resurrection day of the Lord was commemorated on every Sunday, which thus soon began to acquire the name of "the Lord's Day."<sup>3</sup>

In the beginning we may assume, their festivals were the same as those of the Jews, the difference being that the Christians attached the correct spiritual meaning to them. This obtains es-

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1. 1 Cor. 14, 27-34.40.

2. Thus the congregation at Rome convened in the home of Aquila and Priscilla. Cf. S. oeckhardt on Romans 16, 3. See also Acts 18, 7 already alluded to, and 1 Cor. 16, 19.

3. Though John first employs the expression *ἡ Κυριακὴ ἡμέρα*, Rev. 1, 10, it certainly must have been a current expression before that time (A.D. 98?) as, indeed, his mentioning it without further comment proves.

pecially with the Paschal feast, which, indeed, was a prefiguration of the New-Testament's Lord's Supper. This sacrament, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> was in the Apostolic church regularly, daily, celebrated after the Agapae. With respect to the other sacrament, baptism, which is also clearly traceable through the entire New Testament, it is demonstratively proved that infant baptism was Apostolic practice.<sup>2</sup>

When the Great Apostle brought home the truth to the Corinthians that the gifts of the separate members of their congregation were to be used for the common good and that none was to employ them for selfish ends and spiritual arrogance,<sup>3</sup> he stated a truth closely analogous to that other, which is the principle governing the organization of the church, viz., that "Christ is the head of the Church."<sup>4</sup> The church has often been called a democracy. But precisely speaking it is neither a democracy, nor an autocracy, nor an oligarchy, but a monarchy, Christ Himself, and only He being its king. The coordination and subordination of ecclesiastical offices is therefore a purely human institution.<sup>5</sup> If we keep this truth ever present we shall avoid the many inconsistencies and absurdities

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1. V. Supra p. 102.

2. Comp. Mark 10, 13-16 with Col. 2, 11.12--Origen, quoted by D. Pieper, Dogm. 3, 326 n. 1114 says "Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem accepit etiam parvulis baptismum dare."

3. Comp. 1 Cor. 14, 36.37.

4. Eph. 5, 6; Col. 1, 18.

5. "Nec popa est episcopus, nec episcopus est superior presbyteris in re divino."--Luther quoted by D. Pieper, Dogm. 3, 525, n. 1638.

of many writers on this subject.<sup>1.</sup> Whether the church organization outlined in Paul's Pastoral Epistles obtained earlier than their composition, and if so, just when it was begun does not appear. We may, however, not altogether incorrectly assume that it was substantially in existence A.D. 64. The office of Apostle was, of course, unique, as being instituted by Christ himself during his earthly ministry,<sup>2.</sup> and it ceased upon the death of the Apostles. A specific Apostolic succession is a pure figment worked up in the interest of denominational aggrandizement. The office of bishop, and that of elder were identical. Throughout the New Testament the words elder, presbyter, and bishop are used interchangeably.<sup>3.</sup> Bishop and elders are, therefore, never joined together, like bishop and deacons as though they were two distinct classes of officers. Timothy, for example, appoints bishops and deacons;<sup>4.</sup> and when Paul sends greetings to bishops and deacons at Philippi he omits all mention of elders and presbyters, presumably because they were included in the conception of bishops.<sup>5.</sup> Again, when the Apostle in his Pastoral Epistles describes all church officers he mentions only two classes,

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1. See Gunther, Symbolic (3 Aufl.) 372-403; D. Pieper, Dogm. 3, 525, n. 1639.

2. Paul, though "an abortive" (1 Cor. 15, 8) was nevertheless a true apostle, called immediately by Christ. Acts 9, *lff et passim*.

3. Conyb. and Howson, Paul 1, 434. -- Acts 15, 23; 16, 4; 20, 17.28; Phil. 1, 1; 1 Tim. 3, 4.14; 5, 17-19; Tit. 1, 5-7; Jas. 5, 14. Cf. Rev. 4, 4; 5, 5.6; 7, 11.13.

4. 1 Tim. 3.

5. Phil. 1, 1.

bishops or elders and deacons.<sup>1.</sup> Furthermore, Peter, who calls himself "also an elder" urges the elders to "tend the flocks of God" and to fulfill the office of bishop."<sup>2.</sup> To the office of deacon belonged primarily the supervision of the poor, while the position by no means excluded other Christian work in the measure of existing gifts.<sup>3.</sup> The elders or presbyters on the other hand were appointed primarily to teach and administer the sacraments, but the general government of church affairs was also their duty.<sup>4.</sup> The priestly function of the Old Testament, it is true, pertained to the ministerial office only in the sense that all believers are Priests,<sup>5.</sup> because under the New Testament dispensation salvation is equally accessible to every soul seeking the forgiveness of its sins.

Such, then, were in brief the religious conditions of Italy and Greece A.D. 64. A few recapitulatory remarks by way of conclusion might not be improper. We have seen that paganism was far from extinct and had by no means entirely fallen into disuse. No reproach would be more unjust than to call this age irreligious. And the paganism which Christianity upon its advent had to dethrone was not

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1. 1 Tim. 3, 1-13; 5, 17-19; Tit. 1, 5-7.

2. 1 Pet. 5, 1-2; we retain hr (R) Nestle--11 Aufl) Ἐπισκοποῦντες  
As late as AdD. 95 Clement of Rome uses bishop and presbyter interchangeably. Also in the Didache and Shepard of Hermas the words are synonymous.

3. Acts 6, 1-5 comp. with 6, 8-10 and 8, 26-40, esp. v. 38.

4. Acts 20, 28 etc.

5. 1 Pet. 2, 45.



paganism uneducated and rude, but at the height of its culture. Rome and Greece had shown what the human spirit can accomplish in its own strength. And truly, no one will deny that in many respects it had achieved great things. But its greatness sank into ruin, its glory turned pale and one thing it had not achieved, one question it could not answer: "What must I do to be saved?" The end of Paganism in regard to religion is utter inefficiency, a deep, morbid despair of itself. All the popular religions, the many cults, the different schools of philosophy all could give no satisfaction, no abiding peace to a soul conscious of its fault and terrified at the thought of death and eternity. Nor was paganism more successful in coping with the problems of this world. The few grains of moral salt which it ever contained were entirely insufficient to give battle to a human nature by heredity fatally biased in favor of all that is sinful and evil. And thus Paganism weighed at the height of its achievements is found altogether wanting.

Then Christianity was given to the world. "Given" we say because if history teaches anything at all it is that the world, that man, did not evolve Christianity. We are fully conscious of contradicting by this statement a large school of modern scholars. Yet in spite of all scholarly and rhetorical volumes written to the contrary it remains true that if there is any evolution about religion it is not at all evolution but devolution. Christianity is emphatically a revelation. It is that wisdom "which none of the princes of this world knew."<sup>1</sup>

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1. 1 Cor. 12, 8.

And finally, as stated already in the introduction,<sup>1</sup> everyone who studies history with an open eye and believes in God's governance of human affairs, will see that God had indeed prepared the way "for this final and perfect revelation, that 'the fulness of time' had come." This has been explicitly and implicitly pointed out. The dispersion of the Jews, the abundant means of communication, the wide spread understanding of the two leading languages, Latin and Greek, the community of interests, the fusion of laws, of customs, of nations under the universality of the Roman Empire--who will deny that under God's guidance these were preparations for Christianity? And thus A.D. 64 Christianity opposing the might of Empires and their rich splendor of a thousand fold paganism with the plain preaching of Christ and Him crucified had begun its world-conquering career; and the unflagging zeal of an unpretentious Jewish missionary even Paul, and the prayers rising to heaven from the living torches in Nero's garden and the blood-soaked sands of the Arena announced to the world, reeling and drunken with vice and crime against which all forms of Paganism were helpless, that Christianity was indeed the power of God and its faith the victory which overcometh the world and the things that are in the world and that though despised, persecuted and martyred no man need be "ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."<sup>2</sup>

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1. V. supra, p. 13.

2. Romans 1, 16.

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