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### The Early Life of St. Paul

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**The Early Life Of St. Paul.**

**A thesis  
presented to the faculty of  
Concordia Seminary,  
St. Louis, Mo.**

**by**

**E.F.Kavasch**

**in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of  
Baccalaureus Divinitatis.**

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I. Our Lord, on His departure from this earth, gave the great missionary command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." Shortly after, we hear of small established congregations, of one heart and one soul, continuing stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. However these conditions were restricted to small circles, for among the majority of the Jews, the gospel had made little headway. There were the Sadducees, the wealthy class of Epicureans, denying resurrection and judgment; there were the Pharisees, zealous for the law it is true, but having an entirely carnal conception of it, resulting in mere formalism. The condition of the Jews of the Diaspora, under the influence of Hellenism, was no better. Among the Gentiles the religious conditions were still worse. The old gods had come into disuse, but in their place came the work righteousness of philosophers among the wealthy and serious-minded, while the common people were steeped in crass superstition and immorality. To bring the gospel to such a world, required a man who was both a Jew and a Greek, to be able to reach these people; a Roman Citizen to receive protection; and above all, a man who had been singularly affected, in his innermost heart and soul, by the very appearance of Jesus himself. Such a man we have in the Apostle Paul. It is the object of this paper to show how his early life was a preparation of that chosen vessel of the Lord.

II. Geography plays an important part in a man's life and this was especially true in the case of St. Paul. His birth in Tarsus, a cosmopolitan city of a half million population, located at the junction of two great civilizations, had

a direct influence in forming that versatile genius, who became all things to all men. Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, was situated on the Cydnus River between the snow-capped Taurus mountain range and the Mediterranean Sea. Though not quite so favorably located as some of its neighboring cities, it became a great commercial center, because of the energy and ingenuity of its inhabitants. The lake below the city was transformed into a harbor. The famous Cilician Gates were cut through the Taurus Mountains, and Tarsus became the distributing center between two worlds, a bridge between Semitic and Greek-Roman civilization. It is thus no vain boast when Paul calls it "no mean city", and the inhabitants in general referred to it with a feeling of pride.

Its history goes back to ancient times, some even identifying it with Tarshish of the Old Testament(1). The Tarsus of Paul, however, may be definitely stated to begin with the reorganization into a Greek city-state under Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B.C.). He, according to Seleucid principle, planted a colony of Jews here. It is quite possible that Paul's ancestry dates back to this time, although there followed several such reorganizations, the last one taking place under Antony, which was then confirmed by Augustus (42 B.C.). Tarsus now became a free city.

The Jews in general kept themselves aloof from contamination with the Gentiles. They probably composed one of the city tribes, as was the case in Alexandria, where <sup>the</sup> tribe was called "The Macedonians". In this manner they could enjoy their Tarsian citizenship and still keep separate. Each tribe likewise had jurisdiction over its civil and criminal matters.

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(1) Ramsay: Cities of St. Paul, p. 118.

The Roman Government was friendly toward these Jews (1) and respected their religious scruples with regard to army-service and emperor-worship (except during the brief reign of Caligula). Perhaps also the presence of Athenodorus at the Roman court was instrumental in maintaining this friendship.

On the return of Athenodorus to Tarsus c. 15 B.C., he instituted reforms. He saw the defect of the democratic principles of government and introduced the oligarchic system. Property qualifications were made for Tarsian citizenship. Those who had none were dropped. Then within the property owners, were the aristocrats who had Roman citizenship and were members of the oligarchy, as a rule, wealthy and influential men (2). It is true, manumitted slaves were sometimes given Roman citizenship, but not at Tarsus at this time when Roman citizenship was so jealously guarded.

In addition to the commercial importance of Tarsus, must be mentioned the university. It was the one case of a Greek university being controlled by a city. Itinerant teachers came and demonstrated before the general public and if they could hold an audience, they were hired. We have an example of a similar case in Athens where Paul was considered such a person. With respect to the importance of the university, some would rank it above even that of Alexandria and Athens, due no doubt to Strabo's reference (3). But we are cautioned not to misunderstand Strabo. Ramsay would refer its fame rather to the eagerness for study, the large audiences and able teachers at Tarsus. This, then, was the birthplace of the future <sup>apostle</sup> apostle.

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(1) Josephus, Antiq., 16, 6, 2; 19, 5, 3.

(2) Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, P. 227.

(3) Strabo, Geography, 14, 6, 3.

III. Little is known regarding his ancestry. Likewise the date of his birth is not definite, although it can be placed c. 1 A.D. with a reasonable degree of certainty. He was born in a strict orthodox family, which evidently remained in close touch with Jerusalem. For Paul himself says he is a "Hebrew of the Hebrews", Phil.3,5. This cannot mean mere descent from Israelites or general adherence to the Jews' religion, as some have said, because in that case it would be useless repetition, as can be seen from the context. The phrase here means, Aramaic-speaking Jews. This is proved by Acts 6,1, where a distinction is made between "Grecians and Hebrews", Grecians being the Jews who had succumbed to the Gentile influence, and Hebrews being those, who still spoke Aramaic. He was the "son of a Pharisee" by birth. Some have tried to refer this to ancestors in general, denying that his father was a Pharisee. However, according to Galatians 1,14, *περισσοτέρως ἤλατῆς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων*, we see that this view is impossible. The word *πατρικῶν*, indicates hereditary traditions of the family, as also the addition of *μου* shows, whereas mere adherence to national customs, would be expressed by *πατρῶος* (1). He was circumcised on the eighth day and called Saul, probably in memory of the first great king, who was also a member of the tribe of Benjamin. But since his father was a Roman citizen, he also received a Roman name, a triple one in fact: praenomen, nomen, and cognomen. We only hear of him by his cognomen, Paul, which was the usual custom. Roman citizenship being a privilege of the aristocracy, we must conclude that his father had lived in Tarsus for some time and was a member of the

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(1) Expositor's N.T.

nobility and had at least moderate wealth. This is also evident from the fact that, later on, he was able to send his son to Jerusalem to study.

We know still less of his mother, though she too came from a pious line, 2 Tim.1,3, and must have been a woman of force and character to rear such a son (1). Whether or not they had any more children is not known, though they had one daughter, Acts 23,16, who later lived in Jerusalem and whose son was instrumental in saving Paul's life.

Although born in the Diaspora and exposed to Greek life, Paul was essentially a Jew and close relations were no doubt kept with Jerusalem. He reckons dates according to Jewish customs; uses rabbinical traditions; his dialect betrays Jewish training, as also his command of the Aramaic dialect(2). The fact that he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, would already indicate this, since we do not hear of these distinctions among the Jews of the Diaspora (3). Then, too, his sister living in Jerusalem, would suggest a close bond with the Jews.

Perhaps it is this fact which accounts for the Giscala tradition. According to this tradition, Paul's parents lived in Gischala in Galilee and were carried off by the Roman General Varrus, c.4 B.C. This is untenable in view of Acts 22,3, which states that Paul was born in Tarsus. Zahn, however, thinks that there may be at least some truth to the tradition and suggests that this may be an abridgement of a larger reference, where not Paul, but only Paul's parents are said to

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(1) Robertson, Epochs, p.9.  
 (2) Deissman, St. Paul, p.13.  
 (3) Zahn, Paulus, Realencyclopedie.

have come from Gischala (1). Nevertheless this view militates against the Roman citizenship which could not have been obtained at so late a date. Besides neither Paul nor his father would in that case have been "Tarsians", but merely "Incolae"(2).

But preservation of Hebrew customs and Aramaic speech does not necessarily indicate a late emigration from Judea. We can quite readily imagine early residence in Tarsus and yet a close connection with Jerusalem, especially in a pious family, where a yearly pilgrimage was probably made to Jerusalem for the Passover. Then also the fact that the Jews in a Greek city formed a "city-tribe", and were known as the "Nation of Jews" of that city (until 70 A.D.), tended to preserve old customs. The "kinsmen" mentioned Rom.16,7-21, may indicate membership in such a tribe. It is the very nature of the Jews to remain separate and especially in view of the privileges which the Roman Government extended to them as we have already seen. (Roman citizenship did not require joining the pagan rites at this age anymore as before).

General isolation from the Gentiles, does not, however, exclude all contact with them. Paul, no doubt, mingled with the Gentile children in the street and his father, in pursuing his trade, most likely carried on his business transactions in Greek. Paul, growing up in this atmosphere, was thus able to master both Greek and Aramaic. That he came in contact with Greek at an early age is evident from his masterful use of it in his writings. It is 'nt the Greek of the golden period of literature of a Homer, but it is the koine, the vernacular Greek of his contemporary writers (3). Even Philo and Josephus,

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(1) Zahn, Paulus, Realencyclopedie.

(2) Ramsay, St. Paul, Traveler, p.32.

(3) Robertson, Epochs, p.21.

whose Greek education is beyond question, can't surpass Paul in grace or power over the Greek language.

IV. His education began at home as in every Jewish home, as soon as he was able to understand. Cf. Timothy, *αὐτὸ ἀριστεύων*. It was essentially a religious education, based on Prov. 1,7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". It was the sacred duty of the parents to familiarize their children with the divine writings, Deut. 6,7-9. Josephus says the Law was engraved on their hearts (1). Under the direction of his mother Paul probably memorized the national creed or Shema, portions of the Torah, prayers, hymns and Bible-stories(2).

At the age of four, Paul, according to custom, entered the Infant School and with the sixth year, the Elementary School, known as the "Bet-ha-sefer". According to Schuerer(3), it would seem that the LXX was in common use, also in the synagog-services, with the exception of a few portions of the lesson. We may conclude then, that Paul's instruction and memorizing in the school was from the LXX. His later use would almost presuppose such early acquaintance with it (4), since he quotes almost invariably from the LXX, except when the sense of the Hebrew is not brought out exactly, in which case he then translates from the original. Here in the Bet-ha-sefer, he continued his study of the Scriptures, under the direction of the scribes and also learned Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Hygiene. The method of study was by rote, the children

(1) Josephus, vs Apion, 2, 19.

(2) Swift, Education in Ancient Israel, p. 60.

(3) Schuerer, Geschichte d. Jud. Volk., 3, 95,

(4) Deissman, Paul, p. 101.

sitting on the ground, facing the teacher. With increasing age, his studies also included some sciences and arts (1).

To this must also be added the learning of a trade. This is no indication of poverty, but the duty of every father toward his son. "He who teaches his son no trade is as if he taught him to steal" (2). Paul learned the trade of a tentmaker, Acts 17,3. This was the chief Cilician industry (3). Some have supposed that Paul's father was a merchant in this industry. This cloth was in great demand for making tents for the Roman army. It consisted in weaving the long hair of goats of that province and was therefore called Cilicium. The knowledge of this trade was of great value to Paul later on.

But since his life was destined for the rabbinate, which may be concluded from Gal. 1,15, it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem to continue his studies. Here he entered the Bet-ha-Midrash. The usual age for entering this secondary school, was between ten and fourteen years (4). We must accept so early a date if the term ἀνατρέφω "brought up in this city", Acts 22,3, is to have any meaning at all. Likewise the reference in Acts 26,4, "he was known to the Jews in Jerusalem from his youth", ἐκ νεότητος. We may assume then, that it was about the time when he became responsible to the Law. While at Paul's time this was the age of puberty and therefore not the same in every case, we know that shortly after, this age was fixed at thirteen years (5). We may, therefore, with a

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(1) Kretzmann, Notes on Jewish Education.

(2) Kretzmann, Education of the Jews, p.85.

(3) Schuerer, Gesch. d. Jud. Volk., 2, 59.

(4) Kretzmann, Educ. Jews, p.90.

(5) Schaefer, Gesch. d. Jud. Volk., 2, 426.

reasonable degree of certainty, assume Paul to have been about twelve or thirteen years old when he left Tarsus, accompanied perhaps by his father or some other relative, and journeyed to Jerusalem. Besides it must be kept in mind that oriental children mature early, and Paul could thus quite readily manage his studies at Jerusalem at this age.

The close connection existing between his home-life and Jerusalem, would naturally suggest that city for his further training. Then too, there were here the famous schools of Hillel and Schammai, and finally, there was the temple, which to the orthodox Jews of the Diaspora meant even more than to the people living in Jerusalem (1).

Paul was fortunate in being a student of Gamaliel, one of the foremost teachers of that age in the Jewish nation. Gamaliel may have been the grandson of Hillel, though Schuerer denies this. At any rate, Gamaliel was the most outstanding representative of the school of Hillel. The difference between the two rival schools, Hillel and Schammai, both Pharisaic, is said to have been this, that Hillel was more liberal in its teachings. However, Schuerer maintains that in practice there was practically no difference, since both schools insisted on the minute observance of the letter of the law (2). Of the two schools, Hillel was by far the more influential. The importance and esteem in which Gamaliel was held is indicated by his title "Rabban", and the fact that he was called "the glory of the law".

Some have objected to Paul's studying under the mild and peaceful Gamaliel, since he shows such fanatical zeal in

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(1) Fischer, Beginnings of Christianity, p.475.

(2) Schuerer, Gesch.d.Jud.Volk., 2, 361.

persecuting Stephen, entirely at variance with Gamaliel's advice in connection with Peter, Acts 5,33-44. However, we must remember, that Stephen was charged with destroying the temple and subverting the laws of Moses, which charges were not brought against Peter. Besides, it need not follow, that the student must have the same characteristics as his teacher.

The subjects taught in Jerusalem, were advanced religious and theological literature, both written and oral. Here Paul received a solid Hebrew instruction in the Scriptures to counteract any excessive Greek influence. Finally, he must have entered the College, for advanced work, after finishing the Torah and the Mishna and other elementary branches. Here too, religious subjects were of primary importance. The method employed, being discussion and argumentation, which furnished excellent practice in logic and rhetoric. The result was expert proficiency in dialectics. Of how great importance this was to Paul, is evident from his later life.

On completion of this work, Paul returned to Tarsus and most likely attended the university, even though Deissman would make him a mere artisan. Being the son of a wealthy Roman citizen of high social standing, living in Greek surroundings, an intellectual atmosphere even, it is only natural that he should attend the university. The fact that he was a Pharisee does not oppose this view, since the Greek language was held in high esteem. One Rabbi is quoted as saying, "the Greek language may in every respect be used"(1). Gamaliel's son said, "there were 1000 students in my father's school, 500 of whom studied Greek wisdom and 500 Jewish law"(2).

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(1) Laurie, Historical Survey, p.91.

(2) Hayes, Paul and His Epistles, p.24.

The objection may be raised that Paul himself says, 1 Cor.2,4:"I came not with enticing words of man's wisdom". But here he no doubt considers philosophy as foolishness in contrast to God's word. Again 2 Cor.11,6;"Though I be rude in speech", may be urged. It is true, ἄνευ μαθημάτων, is a layman, without professional training, but the meaning is, that he didn't possess the oratorical finesse of the Greek orators. 1 Cor.2,1:"I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom". The manner of Paul's preaching was determined by its matter and therefore, he didn't adopt the arts of rhetoricians and philosophers. This is also evident from 2 Cor.10,10:"His speech contemptible". The Judaizers at Corinth belittled his speech because he spoke in a conversational manner and showed no oratory like Apollo, Acts 18,23. Paul can very well have attended the university, for his speeches do show similarities with those of the Greeks(1) He shows knowledge of Roman and Greek law. He pleads his cause at Rome and the opposing lawyers were no doubt as crafty as they are today. He shows expert handling of the Greek language at Athens (2). Ramsay thinks he preached in Latin at Lystra. At Athens he is able to hold the attention of the cultivated audience and quotes Greek authors. His few quotations of course, are negligible to the many of his contemporaries, but he may have avoided such quotations because he despised them in comparison to God's word.

The fact that he uses the Judaistic mode of argumentation need not militate against the view that Paul studied at a Gentile university, for that may be the influence of his

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(1) Expositor, vol. 14,(1917), p.338.  
 (2) Deissman, St.Paul;Robertson,Epochs,p.160.

early Jewish training. That Paul doesn't give more evidence of his Greek education, may be due to the fact that he did not possess the artistic and poetical qualities for which the Greeks were so famous (1).

The cosmopolitan Paul thus received a most versatile education, embracing all subjects and studies possible in conformity with an orthodox view. An education by which he could hold his own before Jew and Gentile, command attention before councils and governors and kings, whether Aramaic, or Hebrew, Greek or Latin. A knowledge of the Torah in the original as well as the LXX, Greek classics as well as Roman law, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Hellenist to the Hellenists. "In the mind of Paul a universalized Hellenism coalesced with a universalized Hebraism"(2). Yet primarily, he was a Jew, with the training and outlook of a Jew, a view strengthened and fostered to the extreme by his Pharisaic training. That accounts for the difference between Paul and other luminaries of the age, Philo and Josephus, for instance.

Both of them Jews by birth, yet what a divergence in their outlook on life. Both Jews of the Diaspora like Paul, both grew up in cosmopolitan cities like Paul. But where Paul kept aloof from the Gentile influence of these cities, both Philo and Josephus were not only affected by it, but overcome by it.

Philo lived in Alexandria, where Gentile influence had broken down the barriers of Judaism to a greater extent

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(1) Expositor, vol. 14, (1917), p. 338.  
Ramsay, Cities of St. Paul, p. 73.

than in Tarsus. For Alexander, the Great, lived here and was probably able to realize his ambition, of universalizing his domains, more than elsewhere. Nevertheless, Philo received a good Jewish education but he also came under the direct influence of Gentile learning and succumbed to it, especially Platonism(1). His doctrine was a combination of Greek learning and Jewish religion (2), and in his Scriptural interpretation, he imitated the allegorical method of the Stoics.

Josephus, likewise attempted to accommodate his Jewish religion to heathen tastes and prejudices. But while Paul's education was in no degree inferior, he remained unaffected by Greek philosophical speculations. Born in a pious home which was out of sympathy with the Hellenizers, growing up at headquarters of Judaism and Pharisaism, he came forward the foremost representative of the most prominent school, a zealot for the law.

The question arises, whether Paul saw Jesus during his stay in Jerusalem. We know that he was there, both before and after Christ's work in Jerusalem. 2 Cor. 5,16, is sometimes urged for an affirmative answer: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet know we him no more". Ewald, for instance, holds this view and identifies Paul with the young man who was present at Christ's capture (Mark 14,51f.) and who escaped (3). But this is mere fancy. The passage quoted, however if it refers to Paul, would mean that he had extended inter-

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(1) Weber and Perry, Hist. of Philos., p.124.

(2) Fischer, Beginnings of Christianity, p.253.

(3) Ewald, Geschichte d. Volkes Israel, vol.6, p.336.

course with Jesus and that is not possible. The most satisfactory solution would seem to be, to take "we" in this passage, as referring to the whole Christian community who had seen Christ. Had Paul been in Jerusalem at the time of Christ, we would expect to hear about him. He would have referred to it as the ground of his remorse, instead of expressing his sorrow for his opposition merely to Christ's followers (1 Cor. 15,9., Acts 22,20.). Though we need not exclude the possibility of having heard of Christ.

V. Before proceeding to his activity in Jerusalem, it may be well to call to mind what qualities Paul possessed which would be directly beneficial for his apostolate. We must mention first of all, that he was a Hebrew, of the tribe of Benjamin. This as we have already seen, assured a thorough instruction in the law and kept him unaffected by the Gentile speculations. His Jewish nationality, enabled him to reach audiences which a Gentile could not have reached. The example of Titus will show how fanatical the Jews were toward a Gentile; even when Titus brought food to them, they grumbled. Likewise being a Jew, he could use the synagogues as a starting-place and base from which to work. We call to mind the instant attention the mob gave him on the steps of the tower Antonia (Acts 22), when he addressed ~~the~~ them in their tongue.

He was a Tarsian and consequently had grown up in a cosmopolitan atmosphere. He had a perfect knowledge of the Greek language and also understood the characteristics of the Greeks better than a mere Jew. This is also seen from the many references he makes to Greek customs. To a Greek audience, he always emphasizes his Tarsian citizenship. To Claudius

Lysias, for instance, after having told him first of his Roman citizenship. Greek was the universal language and the command of it enabled Paul to carry on his missionary work over so great an area. He was able to absorb the best things in Greek culture without forfeiture of his Pharisaic loyalty. When he spoke to the captain, Acts 21,37, he obtained license to address the people and also removed the suspicion that he was that dangerous Egyptian. It enabled him to speak to the cultured Greeks at Athens and to hold their attention, until he mentioned the resurrection, which was offensive to them.

He was a Roman citizen and this too was of vital importance. Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship which he received by birth, in contrast to Lysias, who had bought it at a high price. It was an indication of high social standing in the provinces and of at least moderate wealth. It gave Paul certain privileges. When he was beaten and imprisoned uncondemned, he caused the magistrates no little anxiety on his mentioning his Roman citizenship (Acts 16,35). When the Jews accused him before Felix and Festus and he could get no satisfaction, it enabled him to appeal to Caesar, where justice was assured him (Acts 25,11). How much his mission-work would have been hindered without Roman citizenship, is quite evident, for in working among the Gentiles, the Jews would have given him no end of trouble.

But all these advantages were of no use in the service of Jesus, because Paul was a Pharisee, "after the straightest sect of his religion". In order to realize what this meant, it may be well to characterize the Pharisaism of that age and show how Paul's entire education, coupled with a natural zealous

disposition, was thrown against Jesus.

The Pharisees, in their special relation to God, considered themselves His chosen people who would never be forsaken by Him. Even though, for the time being, they had come under Haccabean rule (1), they did not despair, for they awaited the coming of the Messiah, who would reestablish their kingdom and be their temporal ruler. They were mindful, of course, of the fact that it was their sinfulness which brought about their destruction. For that reason, they endeavored all the more to keep God's commandments, in an effort to hasten the Messiah's coming. They knew that the time was at hand, which the numerous uprisings and pseudo-messiahs clearly show. But their righteousness and holiness, amounted to mere formalism and ceremonialism, as Christ says, Matt. 23, 23: "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith" and again, v. 25: "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within are they full of extortion and excess". The idea was not to see how much, but how little they could do and still keep within the outer letter of the law.

It was among such surroundings, that Paul grew up, and since he came from a pious home and was destined for the rabbinate, he imbibed the same spirit and in his zeal and enthusiasm, he surpassed all his contemporaries and even Gamaliel himself. Phil. 3, 6: "Touching the righteousness which was in the law, he was blameless", Gal. 1, 14: "He advanced above many of his equals, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions

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(1) Already since 168 B.C., Fischer, Beginnings, p. 228.

of his fathers". And consequently, all his natural gifts and endowments, were placed in the service of his God, whom he served ignorantly, in the extreme form of Pharisaism. His feeling of religious superiority (Rom.2,19), impelled him and his sect, to carry the teachings far and wide, "compassing sea and land, to make one proselyte", Matt.23.

## VI.

It did not take long, however, before he came in contact with the budding Christianity. It was in the Cilician Synagog, at Jerusalem, where we first hear of his contact with the Christians. While they had been growing in numbers, they were still loyal to the temple and were not molested by the Pharisees. All the opposition seems to have come from the Sadducees, Acts 4,1;5,17, who did not believe in the resurrection. But the Pharisees, followed Gamaliel's counsel, "if it is not of God, nothing will become of it". But as the church grew in membership, people began to realize, more and more, that the old covenant was past. This was true, especially of the Hellenistic Jews, among whom was Stephen. He was less entangled in the prejudices of Hebrew nationality and had a fuller understanding of the Gospel, than even St. Peter (cf. Acts 10), and the apostles had yet reached. And as he preached boldly, that the ceremonial laws were only transitory, and not essential to salvation, and calling the Sanhedrin "betrayers and murderers of men", Acts 7,52, he attacked the very heart of Pharisaism. No wonder, then, that they gnashed their teeth and Paul, above all others, in his keen intellect, realized that this teaching of Jesus would ultimately, lead to the downfall of the whole Pharisaic system. Consequently, he put his whole heart and soul into the

work of uprooting Christianity. It is quite likely, that Paul, himself, was among those disputing with Stephen. For, being a Tarsian, it is only natural to find him in the Cilician Synagog and he tells us that he "gave his vote against Stephen". So Stephen was rushed out by mob violence and stoned. Paul stood by, perhaps being in charge of the stoning.

But before proceeding with the persecution, it may be well to discuss two questions, which arise here: whether Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin and whether he was married.

We will answer the latter question first. In 1 Cor. 7,8, Paul says: "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them to remain even as I ". It is evident, Paul was not then married; he chose this state to be able to serve the Lord the better, 1 Cor.7,33. But he may have been married before and now been a widower. However, in 1 Cor.9,5, Paul says, he has a perfect right "to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as the other apostles". We wouldn't expect this speech, if he already had been married. It is quite reasonable, however, to say, "I have a right to marry etc.", when the readers know what his views were, from chapter 7, (if you have continency, to serve the Lord the better ). This seems to indicate, though of course not conclusively, that Paul was a celibate. However, when we take into consideration the circumstances, causing this statement, we may arrive at a more definite conclusion. The Corinthians, especially the Jewish element, it seems, doubted Paul's apostleship, for several reasons, for he later on uses O.T. illustrations as proof. They said he was no apostle, because he had not seen Christ; he abstained from marriage, which was unusual among

the Jews; the Talmud says, "He that does not marry is no man" (1); he accepted no support, as though he were conscious of the fact that he had no pretensions to the apostolic office. In reply to these charges, Paul now answers that he could marry, if he so chose (v.5); he did see Christ; he could accept support, not only for himself, but also for his family, if he had one (v.6), just as the other workers (except Barnabas), were being supported (v12). Now, if Paul had been merely a widower, they would not have objected to his unmarried state. Ramsay (2) would also find a proof in Paul's continual reference to his Pharisaism. It seems some of the Sadducees, followed the Roman custom and remained unmarried. The Jews, then, seeing that Paul was unmarried, always took him for a Sadducee and therefore, Paul's continual insistence on his Pharisaism. Here, likewise, we wouldn't expect objection, if Paul had been a widower at the time. Finally, a widower would not be called a *zavias*, Acts 7,58.

It was not unheard of for a man, who had the gift of continency, like Paul, to remain unmarried, to serve the Lord the better. We have the example mentioned, of Rabbi Asai, who took no wife and said, "my soul cleaves to the law, let others see to the upbuilding of the world" (3). If Paul had been married, we would expect to have some reference to his wife and children. Then we have the testimony of the Church Fathers. Clement of Alexandria, says, in connection with 1 Cor. 9,5, "Et Paulus quidem certe non veretur in quodam epistola suam appellare conjugem, quam non circumferebat....." (4).

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(1) Hasting's B.D., Marriage, par.9.  
 (2) Expositor, 1900, vol.2.p.301.  
 (3) Expositor, 1900, vol.2.p.301.  
 (4) Ante-Nicene Fathers, Stromata,3,6.

He is the only one to affirm that, Tertullian, Hilary, Epiphanes, and Jerome deny that Paul was married.

As for the first question, whether Paul belonged to the Sanhedrin or not, we must consider Acts 26,10: <sup>αὐτὸν</sup> ἀδραν <sup>κατὰ ψήφον</sup> , "I cast my vote against them". Literally, the vote of a judge. From this it would seem that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin. However, the "voting", may also be taken in the sense of <sup>συνοδοκίῳ τῷ ἡγεμένῳ</sup> Acts 8,1, "to consent to his death" (1). In that case Paul was not a member. The Sanhedrin, as a rule, was composed of mature and influential men who were members of high-priestly families. It does not seem that Paul, a <sup>στρωμαῖος</sup> , would be eligible. Then, in Acts 23,5, Paul does not recognize the high-priest, which we would expect, if he were a member of the Sanhedrin. Finally, it seems, that the members of the Sanhedrin had to be married and have a family (2). So, then, it seems, that Paul was neither married, nor did he belong to the Sanhedrin.

Continuing the activity of Paul in Jerusalem, we find him at the height of his persecuting activity. He was determined to blot out this vicious heresy. It was a matter of conscience with him, Acts 26,9. He was serving his God and Acts 8,3, "laid waste the church, entering every house", dragging them out with full approval of the Sanhedrin, Acts 26,10. Some he punished, some he forced to blaspheme Christ, some he put to death, Acts 26,10f. No doubt all who had been stopped by Gamaliel's counsel, before, now rejoiced and rallied about Paul.

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(1) Expositor's N.T., Robertson, Epochs.

(2) Conybeare and Howson, Quotation, p.71.

Paul was exceedingly mad against them, he was not satisfied with any half-way measures. "He persecuted them even to strange cities", Acts 26,11. His zeal was beyond measure, Gal.1,13. How far Paul was heard of and feared, is seen when he went to Damascus and Ananias hesitated to go to the man "who had done so much evil to the saints in Jerusalem", Acts 9,13. "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter", got letters from the High-priest, enabling him to pursue the fleeing disciples, "who were of this way", in Damascus. The Christians had been definitely set apart from the Jewish church and were recognized as a distinct sect now.

The Sanhedrin was able to give this power, because Damascus was under Roman jurisdiction and had such special privileges. Or even if Damascus was under the rule of Aretas, he, being a Jew, would not interfere. Besides Paul could depend on receiving assistance from the Jews in Damascus. We know that, especially among the women, there were many proselytes there (1).

Paul was determined to uproot this heresy in the service of his God. Acts 9,1: ἐμπνίωσιν ἀπειλήσιν, threatening and murdering were, as it were, the very atmosphere which he breathed, persecuting with such fury, as though he were a savage, bloodthirsty and enraged monster. If it had been possible for man to annihilate the church, Paul would have surely done it.

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(1) Josephus, Wars, 2,20,2.

VII. And thus, confident of victory, in the very height of his persecution, mindful only of one thing, to annihilate this sect in the service of his God, he approached Damascus. "And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven", in which he saw Jesus, "and he fell to the earth and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest". What a feeling of awe, what horror, must have seized Paul as he heard the voice of Him, whom he thought dead. And not only that, but Jesus reveals his intimate relation with that despicable sect, which Paul was bent on destroying. Jesus considers it a persecution of himself. He adds "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks", Acts 9,3-5. The illustration is taken from the oxen, who, when driven by a goad, resist by kicking, injuring no one, however, but themselves. Paul was fighting against the gospel, resisting the teaching of Jesus, attempting to uproot the kingdom of grace, but Jesus, the Mightier, overcomes the mighty. He, the Guardian of his flock, steps into Paul's path and tells him that it is hard, yes, impossible, to destroy the church by his "threatenings and slaughter". There lay Paul, his power broken; Jesus had overcome him and taken him into His service. And now, Paul's hate is replaced by love, and the gospel becomes the goad, to lead him on henceforth, to still greater activity, in the service of his master, Jesus. Already the next words which Paul, trembling and astonished, utters, "what wilt thou have me do?", are an indication of faith. Paul now realized what he had done, saw the truth. All his previous activity and perse-

cution, with which he was striving to serve his God, were in reality, a persecution of Jesus, the Son of God. Now he places all his ability and power and resources, into the service of Jesus.

Various interpretations have been suggested for what had taken place. So much is admitted by all: Paul was persecuting the church before he went to Damascus, and afterwards, became the most ardent servant of God:

In the first place, regarding the alleged discrepancies, in the different accounts, Acts 9,1-9; 22,6-16; 26,12-18. These do not prove Luke's unreliability as an historian, as Bacon says. The standing speechless of those with him in the one case and falling down to the ground, in the other, offers no difficulty, because both actually took place. They stood speechless and they fell to the ground. With reference to the hearing and not hearing, the wording is different in each case. Acts 9,7, "hearing τῆς φωνῆς " (genetive), hearing the sound, and Acts 22,9, "not hearing τῆν φωνήν " (accusative) not understanding the sense, is quite in harmony with Greek usage.

Some would base an argument on Rom. 7,(1). Paul, as a Pharisee, wanted to keep the law. But he realized that mere outward observance was not sufficient. Therefore, tormented by a feeling of guilt, he sought relief in persecuting the Christians. But still he found no peace. Then seeing the bravery of the disciples, he began to have doubts and thus the

(1) McGiffert, Apostolic Age, p.121; Deissman, Paul, p.122.

law became his schoolmaster and he was ready for the vision. But this explanation does not hold. Paul nowhere shows a feeling of guilt, in fact the exact opposite is the case. He was perfect so far as Pharisaic righteousness was concerned. And the passage cited in Romans 7,7-25, refers to the struggle between flesh and spirit, after ~~the~~ regeneration. Paul could not persecute people toward whom he was favorably inclined, because of his sincerity and "he did it in ignorance" 1 Tim.1,13.

An explanation is proposed on the basis of 2 Cor. 12,1-8, the recurrent malady, and Gal.4,14, <sup>οὐκ ἐφάρτισα</sup> "you did not spit out", spitting out, indicating epilepsy, during which attack, he had an hallucination. But in 2 Cor.12,1-8, Paul distinguishes between "visions" and "buffetings of satan", and in Gal. 4,14, "spitting out", is used figuratively, as meaning, "you did not reject me". Consequently, this explanation falls.

With reference to all other naturalistic interpretations, suggested by Renan and others, which would make it epilepsy, hallucination, ophthalmia, lightning, thunderstorm, heat, doubts, or a combination of these, we must hold: First, the conversion was not the fruit of reasoning, but came unforeseen and sudden, due to God's grace (Gal.1,12-15; 1 Cor.15,10). Second, he had no doubts, he was not acting against his better conscience (basing this argument on the goad ). He was halted by Christ when his fury was at its height (Gal.1,13-15; 1 Tim. 1,13), and Paul says, he carried on the persecution in ignorance. He is penitent for his sin, but nowhere for acting against his better conscience. Third, Paul saw Christ as the

other apostles saw him, (1 Cor.9,1), Christ appeared to him, (1 Cor.15,8), as he appeared to Peter and James; ὡφθῆ κημοί is the LXX technical expression for the appearance of the Divinity (1). Fourth, Paul heard Christ's voice and understood his words (Acts 9,4-6; 22,7-10; 26,14-18). The psychological soul conflict argument of the Tuebingen School, would make the scene at Damascus, the result of the conversion, rather than the cause.

Paul came to Damascus. He had a knowledge of Christ's life and death, "for it was not done in a corner". The occurrence at Damascus, put a new meaning on his knowledge. No mere hallucination would make a hater, love Christ, especially not a man of Paul's character. It is evident that he saw Jesus and His words of love and grace, were sufficient to convert Paul, from hatred to love and faith in Jesus. It is clearly and purely a miracle. The conversion was essentially the same as that of every other person, it was God's work through his word, law-"Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me", gospel-"I am Jesus", the Savior. But in Paul's case the gospel was brought directly, by Jesus Himself, not by His ministers, and upon this fact, this immediateness, Paul is willing to stake his whole life; upon it he bases his apostolic authority.

It is rather difficult to fix the exact date of the conversion. We will attempt to furnish an approximate date, on the basis of an inscription found at Delphi (2). According to this, Gallio was Proconsul of Achaia. From this and other data,

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(1) Deissman, Paul, p.120.

(2) Barton, Archeology and the Bible, p.510, ed.4.

it can be deduced that this letter was written c. 52 A.D. Gallio, must have come there (Acts 18,12), c. A.D. 51. Paul was in Corinth 18 months (Acts 18,11) and it seems to imply that the larger part of Paul's stay was over when Gallio got there. So Paul must have reached Corinth, c. 50 A.D. and the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15), not later than 49 A.D. Since, according to Gal.2,1, this visit occurred 14 years after the visit which followed his return from Damascus, Paul must have gone to Jerusalem no later than 36 A.D., and no earlier than 35. This visit was three years after the conversion. Thus, making allowances for Jewish reckonings, we may assume that the conversion took place around 32 A.D., at any rate, no later than 34 and possibly as early as 31 A.D.

Continuing the discussion of Paul, we note that after Christ had appeared to him, he was blind and had to be led to Damascus. There followed three days (Acts 9,9), in which "he was without sight and neither did eat nor drink". Forsaken, no doubt, so far as personal friends were concerned, for he had deserted Judaism and the Christians as yet feared him, Paul must have felt great remorse and deep penitence for persecuting Jesus with such fury. But, nevertheless, he did not despair; "behold he prayeth", we read. He had seen the risen Savior and accepted Him also as his Savior.

VIII. Already on the road, he said, "Lord what wilt thou have me do?", and the Lord told him to arise and go into the city and it shall be told him what he must do". And so, spending his time in prayer, he awaited further revelation from the Lord. Christ did not let him wait long, for he sent Ananias to

Paul, at the same time telling Paul in a vision, that Ananias was coming to restore his sight. Ananias came and placed his hand upon Paul, that he may receive the Holy Ghost, i.e., in a special measure, to do miracles (2 Cor. 12,12), and to signify his apostleship. Paul received his sight and was baptized. Paul was now definitely set apart and commissioned to preach the Gospel. He had been commissioned already, when the Lord appeared to him on the way, (Acts 9,6, cf. 22,10) and told him what is appointed for him to do, and later Paul tells Agrippa, (Acts 26,15 f.), that Christ already on the way told him it was "for this, to make him a minister and a witness". In Gal. 1,16, Paul says, Christ appeared to him just for that purpose, to preach the Gospel, especially to the Gentiles. He was exceptionally fitted for that purpose; all his training and life, from the time of his birth, was a preparation for his later life as apostle, to the Jews as well as to the Greeks. He was God's chosen vessel for this purpose. Having grown up in hostility to Jesus, he was now, after Jesus appeared to him in such a singular way, so much more prepared to undertake his difficult mission. He glories in the fact that to him "who is less than the least of the saints, this grace given, that he should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ", Eph. 3,8.

After receiving his sight, Paul at once sought the fellowship of the Christians, "and straightway he preached Christ crucified, in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God", Acts 9,20. How long he preached Christ is not known. The account in Acts evidently stops here and we must insert the flight to Arabia, Gal. 1,12ff. After a certain time, he returned again

and the account in Acts 9,23, continues. He remained in Arabia "three years", from the time he first left Jerusalem, figuring according to Jewish methods, this would not necessarily mean full years. Much has been conjectured as to what Paul did in Arabia. He may have gone to recover from the prostrating effect of the conversion, because for a man to reverse his life so suddenly, certainly cannot be thought of, without a physical strain. He may also have gone for meditation and reflection, like Jesus was wont to do. He may also have been engaged in missionary work while there (1).

And now as we look at Paul, after his conversion, he who persecuted his God in ignorance, we see him sincerely penitent; he calls himself "chief of sinners". Yet, how great is his faith, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain". He places all his natural abilities and endowments, all his ideal qualifications and powers into the service of his Master. He sees only Jesus, "the love of Christ constraineth us". He is willing to be thought beside himself, if so be, he succeeds in his ambition to please Jesus. He gave up everything for Jesus, suffered all, no doubt apostate in his own family and cut off from the paternal wealth. We find him working at his trade for support most of the time (1 Thess.2,9; 2 Thess.3,8). He did, of course, receive contributions, the church at Philippi, being the first to send money and others followed. We know that he had command of money, for Felix, evidently expected a bribe (Acts 24,25); he had his own lodging in Rome; the trial too, no doubt, involved great expenditures. It has been thought that Paul may have converted his family, later on and thus brought

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(1) Fischer, Beginnings, p.516.

about a reconciliation and again come into the possession of the family resources. However, nothing definite can be stated; when he was at Rome, for example, he sends for his cloak, a distance of about a thousand miles, so he may not have been in such prosperous surroundings after all and may have been entirely dependent upon contributions.

At any rate, Paul, at the time of his conversion, was ready to forsake all for Jesus. When he says, "why break ye my heart" (Acts 21,13), he may have reference to his relations in Jerusalem. "He endures jeopardy every hour", is dying daily, the sufferings of Christ abound in him, he had a thorn in the flesh and, in short, suffered and endured everything. And what zeal he showed, canvassing house to house, (Acts 20,20), among both Jews and Greeks, 20,21, urging and persuading, with a tenderness that reached to tears, 20,27-31. How he yearned to be with his Fellow-Christians! How sad he was, when he could not reach them! And when his end approaches and he is imprisoned and forsaken, how he longs to be with Jesus! What confidence he expresses, "I know in whom I have believed", and he is ready and happy to depart and be with Jesus, "for it is very far better".

And thus, in looking back, we see- set apart from the time of his birth, led by God through various experiences and finally, by a miraculous revelation, made and commissioned that chosen vessel of the Lord, who was to bear His name before the Gentiles and Kings and the Children of Israel, the foremost representative of Christ for all time, who heard things into the third heaven not lawful to utter, yet the servant of all for Christ's sake, - the Apostle Paul.

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