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PAUL'S MISSIONARY METHODS

A Thesis presented to the

Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary

**in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Bachelor of Divinity

by

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**Concordia Seminary,
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Approved by

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L. Introduction

Saint Paul was the greatest church-builder of Christendom. In little more than twelve years he established the Church in four provinces of the Roman Empire: Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. A few years later he could speak of his work in the Eastern Mediterranean as finished, and could plan extensive mission journeys into the far West without anxiety lest the churches which he had founded might perish in his absence for lack of guidance and support. In a few years he built the Church on so firm a basis that it could work out its own problems and overcome all dangers and hindrances both from within and without. Accomplishments such as these surely presuppose the following of a method or methods.

The slow progress of missions since the first centuries after Paul has often been lamented in Christian circles. When reading of the evangelistic accomplishments of the Early Church we are often inclined to become downcast and wonder why our work, in foreign fields especially, has not been equally successful. We are especially put to shame when we consider that Christianity was established among thoroughly heathen peoples by one man, in the short space of twelve years!

By combining the occasional references in Paul's letters with the narrative in Acts we gain a somewhat incomplete, but as far as records are concerned, trustworthy

picture as to how Christianity was planted among the heathen of Asia Minor and the rest of the Mediterranean world. Through deduction it can be definitely ascertained that Paul followed certain methods of procedure on his missionary journeys; that his contact with people indicates definite ways of handling; that his preaching expresses design; that his letters manifest certain characteristic methods; that he did his work not in any haphazard and aimless way, but with system and farsightedness.

But it is argued: Paul was an exceptional man living in exceptional circumstances; he enjoyed advantages in his birth, his education, his call, his mission; society was so constituted as to make his progress possible; he had power of the gift of miracles. To this we must answer that Paul's missionary methods were really not his own. Paul knew of a higher power working with him and giving fruit to his efforts. Then too, we possess today advantages of incalculable value - the printing press, fast means of transportation, a civilization two thousand years old.

The circumstances under which Paul worked are without a doubt different from and in many respects not comparable to those of modern mission fields. Still we cannot but assume that the principles he applied to his mission work have a permanent value for us today, even though the method of application may vary according to the conditions in which

the missionary finds himself in foreign countries. To show that this is so is the object of this thesis. No attempt has been made to fathom the depths of the manifold problems concerning the facts of Paul's biography. Questions of chronology and literary criticism are avoided to give place to the purpose of our thesis. That Paul was called directly by God, that he was an inspired apostle, must not be overlooked. In this study, however, the historical facts pertaining to his mission endeavors will chiefly be stressed. The treatment is not intended to be more than suggestive.

When we think of Paul's method we must take into consideration a number of conditions which made his mission possible. The world situation in Paul's time was ripe for the spread of the Gospel. The "fulness of time" created mission opportunities which the world will perhaps never see again, unless God, in his divine providence, should see fit to open the doors to greater mission fields in the Orient when the present world conflagration has come to an end. Paul's greatness, in part, consisted in this, that he had insight to realize the world situation in which he lived and to take advantage of it.

Paul was quick to take advantage of conditions created by the heathen cults which were quite prevalent at his time. To a certain extent the various cults caused Paul much trouble. In Syria and Asia Minor, the cults of Baal and

Astarte, Cybele, Isis, Adonis, Diana, and Artemis opposed him. In addition, the Hermes, Zeus, Attis, Athene worshippers, and the Egyptian Isis and Serapis cults gave Paul much to worry about.¹ Nevertheless, [on the other hand, these cults unconsciously did much to promote Paul's mission. They employed forms and means of expression which, though with different content, were used by the disciples of Jesus.] The idea of a new message and the term "conversion" were spoken to the people. Since the religious and philosophical teachings of these cults dealt with the individual, the feeling for personal piety and righteousness was, to a certain extent, instilled in the people.² That the goal of religion is salvation, and that the winning of this goal involves a change of habit, repentance, and faith, was nothing wholly unheard of at this time.³ [All the cults recognized a heaven and a hell, and that the divine must come down from heaven to earth and humanity must rise from earth to heaven. The idea of a manifestation of divinity, of the deception and wickedness of demons, of a divine power become human were already contained in heathen religious beliefs. While all these things were horribly distorted and perverted, this much can be said for them: that they pointed to a more spiritual religion than that of the state-fostered worship.]

Thus religious conditions in Greece and Rome provided Paul with fertile mission fields. He recognized the iniquitous

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- 1) Gepke, D.A., "Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus", (Leipzig, F.E. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1920), p. 25.
 - 2) Warneck, D.J., "Paulus in lichte der heutigen Heidenmission", (Berlin, Verlag von Martin Warneck, 1914), p. 66.
 - 3) Gepke, op. cit., p. 16

character of the new cults and the deep void left by them in the hearts of man and was quick to realize that this antecedent condition would provide fertile ground on which to sow the saving Word of the true God. This does not mean that the heart of natural man was now more friendly to the Gospel; we simply wish to say that conditions were more favorable.

Another advantage which Paul recognized and made use of was the Roman Empire with its established political unity and uniform code of laws which guaranteed protection and made for a stable social life. In selecting as the sphere of his work the centers of Roman administration, Paul obtained for himself and for his people the security afforded by a strong government.

In Paul's time the Roman Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Euphrates; from the middle of Europe to the north of Egypt, from the Rhine and the Danube to the Sahara Desert. Within these borders the pax Romana prevailed. For at least two centuries the whole of this vast region enjoyed a general reign of peace and security such as it never knew before and has never known again.¹ On the high seas pirates would not have to be feared. On the high-way travel could be undertaken with the knowledge that Roman soldiers were patrolling against any possible enemies.

Paul was not afraid of Roman justice and used its courts to the fullest advantage to safeguard the interests

1) Tucker, T.G., "Life in the Roman World of Nero and Saint Paul" (New York, MacMillan Co., 1917), p. 9.

of his companions and the Church. It is noticeable in the book of Acts that whenever Christianity is brought to the cognizance of Roman authorities it was exonerated. In Cyprus, the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, himself becomes a believer;¹ in Philippi, the Roman magistrates, after scourging Paul and Silas, and committing them to prison without trial, formally released them with an apology for the illegal punishment inflicted upon them, for they knew that the laws Valeria and Porcia forbade the beating of citizens by the lictors rod;² in Corinth the proconsul, Gallio, refused to entertain the charges brought against Paul by the Jews;³ in Ephesus certain of the Asiarchs are spoken of as the apostle's friends,⁴ and the attempt of Demetrius and his fellow-silver-smiths to prosecute Paul and his companions was in vain because the city clerk, representative of the government of the province, denounced the attack upon them as unjustifiable and illegal.⁵ Of the three Roman officials Paul had contact with during his trial in Jerusalem, two, the chief captain, Claudius Lycias,⁶ and the governor, Festus,⁷ bear express testimony to his innocence, while the third, the procurator, Felix, shows him considerable favor, and is kept from setting Paul free because he hoped for a bribe.⁸ Prof. T. Hoyer rightly remarks: "Paul did not look to the state to decide

1) Acts 13,12.

2) Acts 16,35.

3) Acts 18,12ff.

4) Acts 19,31ff.

5) McGiffert, A.C., "The History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age." (New York, Charles Scribner Sons, 1922), p. 527-3.

5) Acts 19,35ff.

6) Acts 23,29.

7) Acts 25,25; 26,31.

8) Acts 24,26.

on matters pertaining to the Church. He only asked for its¹ protection".

Never do the records of Paul's life give any indication that the Roman officials regarded Christianity as in itself contrary to the law or as something which must be suppressed. On the contrary, Rome was especially tolerant of new religions. In her conquests it had been Rome's policy to recognize, and, as far as possible, to leave undisturbed the national customs and religions of the people whom she conquered. As long as the newly acquired territories recognized her authority, paid their taxes, and remained loyal and peaceful subjects Rome was content to allow them to keep much that they held dear² in matters of law and religion.

The unity of the Roman Empire, the assurance of Roman justice and protection were factors which Paul used to the fullest advantage. That Paul appreciated the "pax Romana" is perhaps shown by the fact that he always used his Roman name, and that he designated his churches by the names of the Roman provinces in which they were situated.

The decadence of social and moral conditions in the Empire was another contributing factor in the spread of Paul's mission. Allen gives a good description of the social conditions when he says:

"In Paul's time we note first the prevalence of belief in demons. Every phase and form of life was ruled by them. Not only the educated, but the most cultured Greek and

- 1) Hoyer, T., "Mission Forward Endeavor in the Light of the Book of Acts." (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House), p. 34.
- 2) Ramsay, W.M., "The Church in the Roman Empire," (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 13.

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Roman believed in the universal powers of devils. Human sacrifice, as in India, was not unknown and belief in witchcraft was universal. Learned Plutarch associated with unlucky and evil days, the devouring of raw flesh, mangling of bodies, festings and beatings of the breast, ragings and ravings. He said that he did not suppose any god was worshipped with these rites, but that they were instituted to propitiate and keep off demons... In all Roman literature there is scarcely one note of the horror of today at the inhuman delights of the amphitheater or treatment of the slave. People like Pliny and Cicero defended them 'as affording a splendid training for the eye, though not for the ear, in the endurance of pain and death, and as inspiring disdain of death and love of honorable wounds...' In the Roman Empire the number of slaves in some of the houses was amazing. Society in the Roman Empire was built upon slavery. Now consider the effect of these conditions on the education of those with whom St. Paul had to work. From birth the child was in the care of a nurse who was a slave. When he was of school age, the pedagogue, also a slave, was entrusted with his care. The child read about Venus in Corinth beneath the shadow of the Temple of Venus with its one thousand priestesses. They read Aesculpius with the knowledge that if they fell sick their parents would go to the Temple of Aesculpius to make an offering for their recovery. They read about Diana in Ephesus, where the silversmiths sold her shrines. When he had completed his education he went out into the world with an education in the history of the gods, with the fear of demons. He could attend the games in the amphitheater, in which he found every possible incitement of his animal nature. He visited the temples on the feast days and found them the homes of riot... The religious rites performed in the temples, both in respect of the filthy objects of devotion and the indecent worship, were disgusting beyond words. The temples of Ephesus and Corinth were no more the homes of virtue than the temples in Peking and Shanghai. The language of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians exactly describes the condition of the people from whom his converts came." 1.

Confronted with such conditions Paul no doubt reflected how he could best win these people and make them accept the glorious message of free grace. From his epistles we know his attitude was firm and uncompromising with respect to the

1) Allen, R., "Missionary methods: St. Paul's or ours." (London, World Dominion Press, 1930), pp. 43-45.

prevalent sins. Nevertheless, he did employ tact in preaching against the vices of the heathen temples. In chapter four an examination is made of Paul's method of preaching to these heathen peoples.

Still another condition which aided Paul's mission progress was the presence of Jews, scattered by the diaspora, in all the important cities of the Roman Empire. In Syria, in Asia Minor, in Egypt, and in the far East they were especially numerous, and before the rise of the Empire they had already found their way to the West and were numbered by the thousands in Rome itself. As for the number of Jews in Rome we have two statements: first, that in 4 B.C., a Jewish embassy from Palestine to Rome was joined by eight thousand local Jews, and secondly, that in 19 B.C., when Tiberius banished the whole Jewish community from Rome, four thousand Jews were deported to Sardinia.

As at all times, when a large enough group had gathered in a city, a synagogue was built. There were few cities in the empire which did not contain several synagogues. It is estimated that a million and a half Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire by the diaspora.¹

These antecedent conditions: the religious decadence of the cults, the unity of the Roman Empire, the social and moral rot, and the diaspora played a great role in deciding Paul's mission policy. Paul recognized their value for his

1) Harnack, A., "The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries," trans. by J. Moffatt, (New York, Putnam's Sons, 1908), Vol. I, p. 8.

work and used them to his advantage. But the most important factor which influenced his mission method was the realization that he was called by God.

II. The conviction of his call as a missionary.

Every missionary to the heathen must have the bottom conviction that God has called him to that service and has endowed him with all the powers of the Holy Spirit. Paul had that conviction. He calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ and lays the greatest stress upon this fact.¹ He believed and reiterated that contact with the living Jesus had transformed him,² and that continued fellowship with Jesus was the source of his strength.³ The burning love for God and man which this conviction engendered moved him to desire that those whom he might contact might also have the same sense of being in Christ.

No detailed account of the circumstances under which his conversion occurred (Acts 9,1ff) are given us by Paul himself in his epistles, but in Gal. 1,12ff, he refers to it in such a way as to indicate with sufficient clearness its cause and nature. In the passage mentioned he was emphasizing the fact over against those who were attacking the validity of his apostolate and the truth of his Gospel that he had received his Gospel not from man, but from God. "I neither received it of man," he says, "nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."⁴

1) Rom. 1,5; 8,38; I Cor. 4,9. 2) Acts 26,11; Gal. 1,15.
3) LaFourette, K.S., "A History of the Expansion of Christianity",
(New York, Harper Brothers, 1937), p. 76.
3) Phil. 4,15; Gal. 2,20.
4) Gal. 1,12. 15. 16.

The statement of Galatians agrees with the words of I Cor. 15,8: "and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he (that is, Christ) appeared to me also." The passage in Galatians excludes the idea that his conversion was the result of a gradual change in his own mind, or the consummation of a process beginning with doubts and fears as to the truth of Christian claims and terminating in his final decision to accept Christianity.¹ To the elders at Ephesus he could speak of "the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God," Acts 20,24. This consciousness that it was the Lord's work he was doing, that the Lord had sent him out into the world; this conviction gave him courage and boldness to go and preach the gospel to every creature.

He had confidence in the effectiveness of the Gospel under all conditions and circumstances. He could face people who were friendly and willing to hear his message with the same courage as he met the howling mobs, who dragged him to the city gates and stoned him. After having been beaten many times he was not afraid to again face another mob, that of the silver-smiths at Ephesus.² When we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears," II Cor. 7,5. These assailants from without were the Jewish and pagan persecutors whose terrors had reduced the Church around Corinth to a state of great distress.³ Then there were also those

1) McGiffert, op. cit., p. 119.

2) Acts 19,29.

3) II Cor. 8,2.

who caused fears within, the Christians Paul could not speak of without tears, whose god was their belly.¹

Then, too, Paul was afflicted with a disease, which only a strong faith in Christ could withstand. We know nothing of the nature of this trial, except that it was exceptionally severe, since Paul, accustomed as he was to suffer, found this one almost greater than his strength could bear, and caused him to think his end was near.² But, even in this agonized state of mind and body, he could look forward to new mission fields.³

The missionary to the heathen must have the certain conviction that he is called to bring the gospel to the lost and condemned of the world. Otherwise, he may despair at the first subjection to trial and temptation. Only such a conviction as Paul's can enable him to withstand all that would have him give up his sacred trust in the Lord. His prayer-life, his obedience, and his faith, working through love, must fill him with the desire and zeal to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God.

All mission work, whether at home or abroad, whether in 60 A.D. or 1942 A.D., is really Christ's work. This is the first essential in all mission endeavor: that we are confident it is the Lord's work we are doing, and that He will bless it. We are His instruments. Behind us and with us is God, an Almighty God, who will see us through every trial.

1) Hoyer, op. cit., p. 24.

2) II Cor. 1,8.

3) Fouard, C., "St. Paul and his Missions", (New York, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), p. 235.

III. Method in travels.

Perhaps the first question that would occur to us in considering Paul's missionary methods would be to ask ourselves if his journeys show any particular plan. For, surely, if Paul had system in the lesser undertakings of missions, the more important tasks of teaching and preaching the Word of God follow as a matter of course.

Paul, and all other missionaries, realize that the Lord holds all things, great and small, in His hands and uses them to save souls. In many instances, Paul was not the master of his plans. He was bound, as Christ was, by a higher will which saw fit to send him out as a missionary to the heathen, and to plan things for him.

When Paul sent out by the church at Antioch the Holy Ghost said: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," Acts 13,2. In Acts 14,26, we are told that the apostles returned to Antioch "from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled." And in Acts 15,38, Paul complains that Mark "withdrew from them in Pamphylia and went not with them to work." These words seem to imply that Paul and Barnabas started out with a definite plan before them; that they actually carried out their plans; and that John Mark's fault lay in the fact that he had deserted a work which he had undertaken to do. On the

1) Richter, D.J., "Die Eriafe des Apostels Paulus als missionarische Sendschreiben," (Guetersloh, C. Bertelsman, 1929), p. 66.

second missionary journey it is doubtful whether Paul had any predetermined plan when he set out from Antioch. It is expressly stated that he tried to preach in Asia¹ and was forbidden by the Holy Ghost, and then attempted to go to Bithynia and again was forbidden by the Spirit. So he found himself in Troas, not knowing where he was to go until he was directed by a vision to Macedonia. "There stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them," Acts 16,9.10.

At times he was restrained from executing his plans by what seems to have been a trying illness, cf. I Thess. 2,18. Many times the Lord permitted the pressure of the Jewish mobs to hinder his plans. On his first missionary journey we know he was forced to leave Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. Having preached in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, he was apparently driven out of Macedonia and fled to Athens. From Athens he went to Corinth only to be again troubled by the Judiazers.² In his strong faith he was assured that God Himself was planning his work, and without the Lord's guidance he knew his work would come to nought. Nevertheless, we may say of Paul's mission that it was grand-scale

1) Acts 16,6.7.

2) Richter, op. cit., 26.

planned. He worked according to Jesus' statement: "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye from the housetop," Matt. 10,27. Just as his conception of the Church was broad, his teaching being that the Church embraces all Christians, so he desired to preach the Gospel to all people.¹

On his third missionary journey Paul had been visiting and revisiting the churches established on his first and second journeys. While at Ephesus he expressed a plan for future work, as we see from this report: "Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem saying: After I have been there, I must also see Rome," Acts 19,21. He may have cherished the idea of going to Rome long before; witness his words: " Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also," Rom. 1,13. Furthermore, we get the idea of a far-flung master-plan when we consider the words: "But having not more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you. For I trust to see you in my journey (to Spain), and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled by your company...But now I go unto Jerusalem for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at

1) Warneck, D.J., "Paulus im Lichte der heutigen Heidenmission," (Berlin, verlag von E. Warneck, 1914), p. 50.

Jerusalem...when therefore I have performed this, I will come by you into Spain," Rom. 15,23-28.¹

We know from Acts and the Epistles that on the first missionary journey he especially visited Cyprus because it was the homeland of Barnabas. We may suppose that Paul purposed to go to this territory because it was familiar to Barnabas. Here they could find their way more easily among the people whose customs and habits were known to Barnabas. This first leg of the journey may be considered a 'feeler', which was to decide Paul's later general plan of action. In his journeys to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece, his efforts centered on those cities along the main trade routes where there were Jewish colonies and from which the Gospel could spread to outlying districts.² His aim was naturally to evangelize the districts opened up by the ancient main roads and especially the cities of the Jewish dispersion. Most of these cities were cultural centers from which Hellenism trickled into the surrounding hinterland. The suggestion is that, in Paul's view, the city would serve as a base of operations for the evangelizing of the province. Paul's idea was not to preach in every place itself, but to establish centers of Christian life in two or three important places from which the knowledge of Christianity might spread into the surrounding country. All the cities, and towns in which he planted

1) Richter, op. cit., p. 67.

2) LaFourette, op. cit., p.79.

churches were centers of Roman administration, of Greek civilization, of Jewish influence, or of commercial importance, and therefore, easily accessible to out-¹lying districts.

These cities were connected by a fine network of roads. Paul could not help but use the fine Roman roads which linked the great centers of the empire together and made for sure and fast travel. Beside the great highways stood milestones in the shape of short pillars and generally there were in existence charts giving all necessary directions as to turnings, distances, stopping places, inns, and even sights worth seeing were listed. In order to assist quick traveling, there existed individuals or companies who let out a form of gig or other conveyance to those who wished fast travel. Although Paul traveled mostly by foot, we cannot but think that such a practical man would hesitate to make use of any means that would help him in his work. Paul chose Roman roads too, not only because they were best kept and safest, but because they were shortest, making for faster travel. For a man who wanted to evangelize the world as quickly as possible this was an important factor.²

Though the lines of Paul's journeys lead through hundreds of miles of the interior of Asia Minor, yet frequently they cling to the roads of the coastal region

1) Allen, op. cit., p. 19.
2) Tucker, op. cit., p. 16.

and reach out over the expanse of the Mediterranean. Paul frequently traveled by boat. He was many times shipwrecked, but was not deterred from using a means which he thought would aid him in bringing the message of salvation more quickly to the lost and condemned souls of the Mediterranean world. If Paul were alive today he would not hesitate to make use of the swift travel of the modern transport airliner.

Paul traveled wherever he could make the Gospel known to the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. In the great populated cities of the Roman Empire he could reach more people. Churches planted in such places could work as a leaven on the surrounding territory. The large cities attracted the people of the surrounding country and the neighboring towns and villages. Here people would come to transact business, to buy and sell, to see lawyers and doctors. Here were the courts and the temples. Here were the great markets where the material and intellectual wealth of the world was exchanged.¹ Paul does not trespass into the hinterland of the Roman Empire. He speaks of the Gospel as being for the barbari-²ans also, but never did mission work among them himself. On the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas quickly passed over the less populated districts of the Tarus mountains to Antioch.³ When he came to Europe he

1) Hoyer, op.cit., p. 27.

3) Warneck, op.cit., p. 49.

2) Rom. 1,14; Col. 3,11.

did not stop in Neapolis, a small harbor town, nor did he go to the ancient city of Amphipolis; he went straight to Philippi, "the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony," Acts 16,12.

Another examination of Acts shows that Paul's journeys are lines drawn from the most important city centers of culture and commerce in the East to the most important centers of commerce and culture in the West. Antioch, in Syria, was the capital city, the residence of the imperial Roman legate of Syria, a vast city of perhaps a half million inhabitants, ranking third among the Roman cities, and containing an immense colony of Jews. Antioch, in Pisidia, was a garrison city, the military and administrative center of the province. Ephesus was one of the busiest ports of the world, and its harbor, though gradually filling up, was still one of the largest along the Asiatic shores. Merchantmen from Italy, Greece, and all points of the Mediterranean came there to deal with the caravans from the far East. The worship of Diane was prominent in the city and her temple, standing outside of the town, was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It was the capital of the province of Asia, and the residence of the ¹procounsel. A city so active and opulent as Ephesus was sure to attract the Jewish trader. Philippi, the leading city of Macedonia, was on the road from Asia to Rome. Because the city was so

1) Davis, J.D., "A Dictionary of the Bible," (Phila., The Westminster Press, 1936), an adaptation.

Roman in language, government and custom, McGiffert calls it a miniature Rome.¹ Thessalonica was the capital city, and at the same time, the most populous city of Macedonia. It was located on the chief road, called Via Egnatia, connecting with the whole region north of the Aegean Sea. Athens had no renown as a commercial and industrial center, but it was the home of a great university and the resort of philosophies of all schools. It was the intellectual Mecca of the world. At the same time it was probably the most religious city in the empire. The Athenians were widely famed for the multitude of deities whom they worshipped, and for their hospitality toward new gods and new religions. Corinth prided herself greatly as the capital city of Achaia, and claimed to be the true heir of the glories of ancient Greece. The geographical situation of the city made it the gateway between the Orient and the Occident, and through it passed a large part of the trade of the East with the West. It was cosmopolitan in the fullest sense - Greek, Roman, Oriental - and it was characterized by all the features that commonly mark such a city.² Deissman goes to some length to show that these centers of commerce and culture have remained such even to the present day.³

In these large cities Paul was certain to find great numbers of Jews, and hence, Jewish synagogues.

1) McGiffert, op. cit., p. 239.

2) Davis, op. cit., an adaptation.

3) Deissmann, A., "Paul, a study in social and religious history," trans. by V.E. Wilson), (New York, G. Doran Co., 1926), p. 229.

During the time of the Roman Empire there existed a known 150 Jewish congregations. Paul, therefore, did not enter these great cities as a mere stranger. When Paul came to a new city he had an immediate opening, an audience provided for him which was familiar with a part of his message. He, however, did not look for the Jews in these large cities first, to make things easier for himself, but because this method would serve his ends best - to evangelize strange country as quickly as possible.¹

The centers in which Paul established his churches were, moreover, all centers of Greek civilization. Alexander the Great had conquered the Macedonian provinces of Europe and Asia Minor, and everyone of these provinces subsequently formed the eastern part of the Roman Empire. But the language and culture remained Greek. Hellenism was everywhere the fashion in life, thought, letters, and art. Egyptians, Jews, and Syrians therefore naturally spoke in Greek. This is the reason why the Septuagint appeared in Greek, why Greek as well as Hebrew and Latin was written on the Cross, why our New Testament was written in Greek, and why Paul could travel about the eastern half of the Roman world and talk fluently wherever he went. He could address the Roman governor at Paphos because the governor had learned Greek. He could address the Areopagus in Athens, in its own tongue, because

1) Warneck, op. cit., p.59

he had as a child perhaps learned Greek. Greek was the
common travel language.¹

In all his travelling Paul tried to be as inde-
pendent as possible. What he needed he earned by his work
as a journey-man tent-maker. He was the first artisan
missionary and was proud of his independence: "It is good
for me rather to die than that any man should make my
glorying void," I Cor. 9,15. In his epistles he testifies
with pride, that as a missionary, he had earned his whole
living by working with his hands.² Being independent he
could forestall all suspicion of self-seeking.³ This
attitude perhaps was one of the main contributing factors
in the success of his missions. The mere appearance of
money-seeking in the servants of the Lord seriously hampers
the spread of Christianity.

It was through his tent-making handicraft too,
that he occasionally gained his first acquaintanceship in
a strange city. We may surmise that he found work where-
ever he went, and that he naturally had to work with heathen
workmen. When he refused to accept their invitations to
participate in their temple rites he no doubt was asked
why. Then Paul utilized an opportunity to tell them of
Christ.⁴

The hospitality accepted by Paul of Lydia at
Philippi was an honor paid to Lydia which is the only

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- 1) Tucker, op. cit., p. 34.
 - 2) Deisemann, op. cit., p. 48; I Cor. 4,12; I Tim. 2,9.
 - 3) II Cor 12,14.15.
 - 4) Hoyer, op. cit., p. 38.

record we have in which Paul consented to live at the expense of his disciples.¹ A similar case may be spoken of, Rom. 16,23, ("Gaius, mine host, etc!"), but the words are somewhat indefinite.

While Paul made this a rule unto himself he did not expect his fellow workers to abide by his standards for he says: "The laborer is worthy of his hire," and, "They that preach the Gospel shall live by the Gospel," I Cor. 9,14. He took it for granted that the Gospel was worth to any people incalculably more than all the cost of food and raiment, and traveling expenses of the messengers of the Gospel. "For," says Paul, "if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."²

To say that Paul was independent does not mean that he would not accept the help or companionship of others. Paul was seldom alone on his missionary journeys. He always traveled in company with at least one or two chosen companions. And Paul did choose his companions. When John Mark had left him at Perga, he refused to take him along on the second missionary journey even at the risk of losing the friendship of Barnabas. When Barnabas decided to go his way he had Silas ready to go with him. When Timothy wished to go with him Paul first sought the advice of the church in whose midst Timothy had grown up.

1) Fouard, op. cit., p.114.

2) Taylor, Wm., "Fauline Methods of missionary work," (Phila., J.S. Inskip Co., 1879), p. 5.
Acts 16,40.

Not content with the kind testimonials of the brethren at Lystra he received further opinion from the congregation at Iconium as to the qualifications of this young man. Luke, the beloved physician must have proved of invaluable service to Paul on his journeys, not only because he perhaps cared for Paul in his illness, but also because he was careful in his letter writing and could serve Paul in that capacity. He was of Gentile birth and, according to Eusebius, a native of Antioch, Col. 4,13-15. Titus, of whom little is known, was likewise chosen from among the Gentiles to serve in Crete.

These companions joined in and shared in his work. Titus gathered the collection for the poor saints of Jerusalem; Timothy went to Corinth to straighten out the troubles there; Titus follows him to Corinth; later he goes to Crete and Dalmatia; Tychicus goes to Ephesus, where Timothy worked; Timothy also at some time had gone to Philippi; Epaphroditus is sent to Philippi. Some of his companions carried letters. Paul dictated letters to them. They helped him preach. Some were with him in his imprisonment. Sopater of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius and Timothy of Derbe, Tychicus and Trophimus of Ephesus, and Luke accompanied Paul on the last journey to Jerusalem as the deputies of

1) Acts 16,2; I Cor. 4,17.
2) Gal. 2,1.
3) II Cor 8,6.
4) I Cor. 4.
5) II Cor. 7,13.
6) II Tim. 4,10.
7) II Tim. 4,12.

8) I Tim. 1,3.
9) Phil. 2,19.
10) Phil. 2,25.
11) Col. 4,7; Eph. 6,21; Phil. 2,25
12) Rom. 16,22.
13) II Cor. 1,19; Col. 1,7.
14) Phil. 1,1; 2,19,30.
Warneck, op. cit., p. 202

the different congregations which had gathered the collection for the congregation at Jerusalem.¹

Paul, in turn, is very thankful for their every manifestation of loyalty and sacrifice.² He is deeply concerned about their welfare, even as a father.³ The second epistle to Timothy is a stirring witness of how he was concerned about the welfare of his co-workers.⁴ He mentions Titus as "his son in the common faith," Titus 1,4, and praises him as one "who walks in the same Spirit as himself, in the same footsteps," II Cor 12,18. They are so close to Paul that he is moved to coin expressions full of personal feeling for them: Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Tychicus, Artemas, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Gaius, Trophimus, Silas, Demas, Luke, Mark, Archippus, Urbanus, Tertius, Clemens, Silvanus, Syntyche, Euodia, Aquila, and Priscila. He calls them familiarly, "fellow-workers," I Cor. 3,9; II Cor. 8,23; Rom. 16,39; Phil. 2,25; 4,3. In the spirit of comradeship he calls them "fellow-soldiers," Phil. 2,25. Looking to one Master in common, his helpers are his "fellow-slaves," Col. 1,7; 4,7. The recollection of imprisonment suffered together, causes him to coin the title, "fellow-prisoners," for Aristarchus, Col. 4,10, and Epaphras, Philemon 23, Andronicus and Junias, Rom. 16,7.⁵

In all his travels Paul is compelled to move on to new mission fields after having established the Word at one

1) Richter, op. cit., p. 79.

2) Phil. 2,20.

3) I Tim. 5,23.

4) Richter, D.J., "Evangelische Missionslehre und Apologetik," (Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927), Ed. II, p. 24.

5) Deisemann, op. cit., p. 240.

place. Paul did not want to tie himself down to one congregation. He wanted to set the whole world on fire with the Gospel. At no place does he remain for more than a period of months. Only in Corinth did he remain for more than a year, and in Ephesus for three years. His restless desire to travel on to new fields was prompted by the compelling impulse, as has been frequently stated in the previous pages, to contact as many people as possible in the shortest space of time. "Necessity is laid upon me if I preach not the Gospel," I Cor. 9,16. "From Jerusalem and round about even to Illyricum I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ," Rom. 15,19. "I must also see Rome," Acts 19,21. "Whensoever I take my journey to Spain, I will come to you," Rom. 15,24.¹

Paul's consciousness of his mission was strengthened by his conviction that the time was short and that he might have no successor,² and that the end was near.³ This conception of his mission inspired and possessed Paul with a passion for souls. In his epistles he always urges his readers to be ready to see the Second Coming of the Savior. The motive for urgency in preaching the Gospel is set forth quite as clearly as is the doctrine of the judgment, the appearing of Christ, and the establishment of His Kingdom.

The eschatological teachings of Jesus had a deep effect upon Paul. The sense of urgency connected with

1) Richter, "Sendschreiben," p. 65.

2) I Cor. 7,29.

3) Rom. 13,11.

great center of work long enough not only to effect a complete organization, with administrative elders, but to develop the Christian character of each member up to the standards of holiness indicated in his epistles. To the church at Philippi he says: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain," Phil. 2,14.15.16. Driven out of Thessalonica by mob violence before he had time to build up his church in that city, their lack of perfection occasioned a heart struggle of suspense that was relieved in part by tidings of their steadfastness when he said: "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," I Thess. 3,8.¹ He planted the mustard seed of small congregations, trusting that the Holy Ghost would strengthen their faith in Christ and cause their faith to spread the seed further.

1) Taylor, op. cit., p. 8.

IV. Method in his preaching.

How did Paul plant the seed of the Word? We have seen that Paul's desire to evangelize the world as quickly as possible made him to preach Christ and Him crucified wherever he was. This was how Paul planted the seed - through the preaching of Christ Crucified. Though a prisoner, bound night and day by a chain, according to Roman custom, to the soldier who guarded him,¹ he made good use of the opportunity² and thus succeeded by talking with his guard in making the name of Christ known throughout the whole praetorium.

We can assume that Paul's lengthened stay in Ephesus on the third missionary journey was induced because of the approaching festivities in honor of the great goddess, Artemis. In the preceding year, while mingling with the crowds of pilgrims, come together from all parts of Asia Minor, he realized that this was an exceptionally fine opportunity for preaching the Gospel to the Gentile world. He writes: "A great door and effectual is opened," I Cor. 16,9. Similarly when he came to Troas, after having left Ephesus, "a door was opened of the Lord," II Cor.2,12. He had arranged with Titus to meet at this place, and he was anxiously awaiting news which his disciple would have to give him on his arrival. Forced to wait for his appearance, he went to work preaching the Gospel in this town through which he had merely passed on his second

1) Acts 28,16.20; Eph. 6,20; Phil. 1,7.13.14.17.
2) Eph. 4,19; Col. 1,29; 4,3.11.

missionary journey. Success came so speedily that, when after a few days he took ship for Europe, it may be that a whole congregation gathered to see him off on board ship.¹

In establishing his churches it was only natural for Paul to use the synagogue as a means of approach. But it was not only in the synagogue that Paul sought converts. In the streets and market-place successful mission work was done. According to Acts 14,7ff., we can rightly conclude that the healing of the sick, etc., often lent him opportunity for street preaching. That the preaching was accompanied by the performance of miracles is substantiated in the epistles.² But the argument that we cannot employ Paul's mission methods today because he used miracles, a means beyond us, is untenable. Various miracles are recorded of Paul; we mention merely the following: in Iconium we are told that the Lord "gave testimony unto the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands," Acts 14,3; at Lystra occurred the healing of a cripple, Acts 14,8-10; at Philippi he expelled the spirit of divination, Acts 16,18; At Ephesus, "God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and diseases departed from them, and the evil spirit went out of them," Acts 19,11.12; at Troas he restored the life of Eutychus," Acts 20,9.10.

1) Fouard, op. cit., p. 287.

2) I Cor. 2,4; 12,9; I Thess. 1,5.

It would seem that Paul used these miracles to promote the evangelization of the Mediterranean world. But he never used them to induce people to receive his teaching. Luke never tells of the conversion of anybody upon whom Paul worked a miracle of healing. Then, too, Paul does not give miracles the highest place among the gifts of the spirit. While we today do not have the powers Paul had, we nevertheless, have the utterance of the Word which will not return void and is a power unto salvation. Therefore, we cannot say that the absence of miracles renders Paul's methods inapplicable to present day missions, nor that our preaching cannot be as effective.¹

There is no doubt that Paul's manner of preaching can be duplicated today. We could say it was argumentative, rhetorical, etc. It had to be. But more important, it was simple and of course sincere. His first letter to the Thessalonians gives us some notion of the manner of Paul's preaching, as he sat there "like a father in the midst of his children, comforting and exhorting them to walk worthy of God,"¹ Thess. 2,11,12. Everything was presented with the greatest simplicity: "I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it," I Cor. 3,2. Of his preaching in Corinth, Paul says: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony

1) Hoyer, op. cit., p. 6.

of God," I Cor. 2,1.¹ It was simple Gospel-preaching. There is no striving for effect, for sensationalism. There is evidence of eloquence in the sermon of Paul in Athens. But it is an eloquence arising from the desire to convince his hearers how desperately they need this message. He spoke to Festus and Agrippa with the same simplicity as to the jailor at Philippi. There is no hint in any of his preaching that he engaged in it to gain personal renown. His very simplicity of preaching made the desired impression on his hearers. Paul's manner of preaching is always unpretentious so that all his hearers might understand the Word of God.²

How did Paul preach? How did he present the Gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles? Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia is perhaps a typical example of his preaching to the Jews, Acts 13,16-41. We may consider this a sermon divided into three parts.²⁰ In the first part, he rehearses the history of Israel to show that his Gospel is rooted there, and that the whole history of Israel is the divinely ordered preparation for the Messiah, verses 16-22. In the second part he sets forth the facts of the Coming and of the rejection of Christ, and His Crucifixion. Jesus is described as being of the lineage of David, and as having been heralded by John the Baptist, verses 23-25. Then Paul tells of Christ's Crucifixion and resurrection, verses 26-37.

1) Deissmann, op. cit., p. 244.
2) Hoyer, op. cit., p. 18.

In the third part, he proclaims his message of pardon for all who will receive it, and utters a solemn warning of the consequence which will follow its rejection.¹⁾ *Reuben Fran.* In addressing a Jewish audience, then, Paul sought to prove that Jesus was the Messiah by showing that, according to Scriptural prophecy, the Messiah must suffer, die, and rise again, just as Jesus had suffered and died, and risen. The summary of his preaching, offered in I Cor. 15, would seem to indicate that this was the same presentation of the Gospel which he had given the Jews at Damascus at the beginning of his missionary labors, and also at Corinth, toward the end of his work.

The substance of Paul's preaching to the Gentiles ²⁾ is indicated in I Cor. 12,2, "Ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols," and in I Thess. 1,9.10: "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

In his address at Athens, nothing is said about the Messiahship of Jesus. Rather the emphasis is laid upon monotheism, upon the living God, upon the resurrection, and the Second Coming of Jesus, the Son of God, and upon the approaching Judgment from which they must be delivered.²⁾

In broader outline, Paul knows only one God.³⁾ This almighty God has created and preserves all things.⁴⁾

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- 1) Oepke, op. cit., p. 175.
 - 2) Harnack, op. cit., p. 89.
 - 3) Acts 17,23; I Cor. 8,4.6; I Tim. 2,5.
 - 4) Acts 14,15; 17,24.

He is the living and true God,¹ while the heathen gods are nothing,² and are dumb.³ This God is near to his people.⁴ Idolatry is sinful and must be forsaken.⁵ The wrath of God rests upon all sin.⁶ The judgment will come quickly and unexpectedly.⁷ Jesus, the Son of God,⁸ given over to death,⁹ raised from the dead, is the Savior from the coming wrath of God. The Kingdom of Christ is now set up, and all are invited to enter it,¹⁰ Those who believe in Christ wait for His Second Coming.¹¹ Meanwhile their life must be pure, useful and watchful.¹² To this end God has given his Holy Spirit.¹³

As examples of Paul's preaching to the heathen, Acts contains the speech at Lystra,¹⁴ and the speech at Mars Hill, referred to before. The speech at Lystra is an extremely simple address and can hardly be thought of as a sermon since it was used to check an excited crowd which wanted to sacrifice to the Apostles in the belief that they were gods. It contains a simple statement of the nature of God, the creator, and of His personal care for His children, of the folly of idolatry, with an exhortation to turn from it.

In the Areopagan speech, Paul also begins with a declaration of the nature of God as the Lord of heaven

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| 1) I Thess. 1,9; I Tim. 6,17. | 8) I Thess. 1,10. |
| 2) Acts 14,15; I Cor. 8,4. | 9) I Thess. 5,10. |
| 3) I Cor. 12,2. | 10) I Thess. 2,12. |
| 4) Acts 17,27; Eph. 2,12. | 11) I Thess. 1,10; 4,5. |
| 5) I Thess. 1,9. | 12) I Thess. 4,11. |
| 6) I Thess. 4,6. | 13) I Thess. 4,7. |
| 7) I Thess. 5,13. | McLeish, op. cit., p. 100 |
| | 14) Acts 13,14 ff. |

and earth. Here too, he brings out in sharp contrast the contradiction between idolatry and the nature of God. To meet the objection that his teaching is new, he reminds them of their natural knowledge of God.¹ Paul could not speak of the Messianic hope or of the righteousness of God because these were strange concepts to the heathen Athenians.² Christ, the Savior, is not mentioned because Paul had to first establish that his was the true God. In Corinth, Paul could preach crucifixion, without a long introduction, because there was a synagogue there with "god-fearers" who were prepared to receive the message of the Cross.³

To approach the heathen, Paul appealed to things familiar to them. He tried to establish a common meeting ground by quoting from the Cilician poet, Aratus. On other occasions he quoted from Epimenides, Titus 1,12; and from Menander, 1 Cor. 15,33. These citations had their value in that they were a contact with the past, and would stimulate interest because they were things near to the heathen. The Chinese missionary relates how a critical audience suddenly becomes interested when a saying of Confucius is quoted.⁴

It has been asserted that Paul's address in Athens was a failure. However, it must be remembered that the people Paul spoke to were not god-fearing

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- 1) Harnack, op. cit., p. 382.
 - 2) Oepke, op. cit., 176.
 - 3) Harnack, ibid., p. 73; Acts 18,4.
 - 4) Warneck, op. cit., 83.

proselytes. His hearers did not wait for a full explanation of Christ, but began to disperse just as he began to speak of Christ. Paul was permitted to finish his sermon. Every missionary to the heathen today would no doubt be pleased if the results were the same as Paul's for "certain men clave unto him, and believed: among them, Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them," Acts 17,34. Hence it cannot be said that his sermon was a failure.

As the first and chief thing in methods, the preaching of the Word should receive first consideration. This emphasis on the Word as the chief means of mission work is a method which should be taken for granted, but sad to say, is not by many churches. Until recently the message of modern missions was not the subject of discussion. It was taken for granted. There was little question among the missionaries or the home churches as to why they were going into heathen lands, or as to what they should say when they arrived. None of the early missionary conferences raised the question as to the message. Now, on account of modernism, this point must receive special consideration.

The contents of Paul's message was always one word, Christ. The certainty of the nearness of Christ is reflected frequently in his writings. "Christ is in me," is a confession coming from the depths of his soul. Christ

is not only in Paul, but he has the corresponding assurance that "I am in Christ." The formula "in Christ" occurs 164 times in Paul's writings. Phrases as, "the Gospel of Christ," "the Gospel of the Lord," "the Gospel of His Son," are conclusive witness of the Christ-centricity of Paul's preaching and should leave no doubt in the mind of the missionary today as to what the content of his message should be. The declaration of purpose, "I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I Cor. 1,2, excludes the propriety of any other content. Christ is the one and only foundation "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," I Cor. 3,11. Specifically Paul tells us that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose from the dead, and through Him God will judge all mankind. The death of Christ on the Cross was the central theme of Paul's preaching. But the message of the death on the Cross is always joined with the message of the resurrection. He reminds the Galatians how he had pictured Christ to them, as though He had been crucified among them. He also tells of Christ's ascension into heaven, of his sinless life and obedience. Faith is pointed to in Paul's phrase "in Christ"; it is the prerequisite

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- 1) Deissmann, op. cit., p.139.
 - 2) Rom. 15,19; I Cor. 9,12; II Cor. 2,12; Gal. 1,7; Phil. 1,37.
 - 3) II Thess. 1,8.
 - 4) Rom. 1,8.
 - 5) Oepke, op. cit., pp. 57-8; I Cor. 3,11.
 - 6) I Cor. 15,1 ff.
 - 7) Acts 17, 31.
 - 8) Acts 17,31; I Cor. 15,3; Rom. 1,4.
 - 9) Gal. 3,1.
 - 10) Rom. 8,34; Eph. 1,20; Col. 3,1.
 - 11) Warneck, op. cit., p. 104; Phil. 2,7; I Cor. 5,21; Rom. 5,29.

of union with the Savior. Alongside of "faith in Christ," we find "the love of Christ,"¹ "the hope of Christ,"² "the peace of Christ,"³ "the meekness of and gentleness of Christ,"⁴ "the tender mercies of Christ,"⁵ "the patience of Christ,"⁶ "the obedience of Christ,"⁷ "the truth of Christ,"⁸ "the fear of Christ,"⁹ "the circumcision of Christ,"¹⁰ "the suffering of Christ,"¹¹ "the affection of Christ,"¹² and other such expressions. "Separated from Christ," Paul says,¹³ "we are without God in the world;" in union with Christ, "we have boldness to approach God," Eph. 3,12. This all flows from faith in Christ.¹⁴

And Christ is also the central theme of our mission preaching. The world is not to us an ignorant, uncivilized world that must be raised to a higher level of culture or to a better social standard. It is rather a world lost and condemned because of its sins, and the only help for all lost and condemned souls is the Gospel of Christ Crucified.

Paul preached the whole Word of God, both the Law and the Gospel. He tells the elders of Ephesus: "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God;" Acts 20,27. "We preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews a.

- 1) II Cor. 5,14.
- 2) I Thess. 1,3.
- 3) Col. 3,15.
- 4) II Cor. 10,1.
- 5) Phil. 1,8.
- 6) II Thess. 3,5.
- 7) II Cor. 10,5.

- 8) II Cor. 11,10.
- 9) Eph. 5,21.
- 10) Col. 2,11.
- 11) Phil. 3,10; II Cor. 1,5.
- 12) Col. 1,24.
- 13) Eph. 2,12.
- 14) Deissmann, op. cit., pp. 162-5.

stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. 1,23.24.30.

It has been asserted that Paul knew little of the life of Christ, that only His death and resurrection were known to him, and for that reason Christ of the flesh is little mentioned by him. This is a misunderstanding of II Cor. 5,16, where Paul says: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." Lenski says that this statement amounts to a claim that he had now come to know Christ, not simply as a human personality, but in a higher and more spiritual sense, as Savior and Lord. According to this view Paul did know the earthly Christ. Paul, Lenski claims, is convinced that the merely historical is but of secondary value; the real stress should be placed on His voluntary humiliation as the suffering and sinless Messiah, His death and burial, His resurrection and appearance, and His glorification.¹

Furthermore, the epistles do not attempt to narrate the circumstances of the Savior's life. The epistles are addressed to Christian congregations already familiar with the story of Christ's life. What Paul is

1) Lenski Commentary on Corinthians.

chiefly concerned about in the epistles is to urge upon the addressees the importance of so ordering their lives that their whole conversation should be such as will befit their name as Christians. Also, in Paul's writings it would be unreasonable to expect such allusion to earthly life of Jesus because his direct contact with Christ occurred first when the risen Christ appeared to him on his way to Damascus.¹ From the hour of that vision, realizing that the crucified One was identical with the glorified Jesus, he became His devoted disciple. Moreover, his acquaintance with the historical tradition concerning Christ is evidenced by his statement in connection with the institution of the Last Supper,² and with His resurrection.³ From his allusion to "the night in which He was betrayed,"⁴ and to the successive appearances of Jesus after His resurrection; from his reference to the Lord's teaching about marriage;⁵ from his declaration, "by the word of the Lord,"⁶ regarding the future resurrection of believers; and from his quotation of the Lord's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20,35, it is reasonable to assume that Paul was not ignorant of Christ's earthly life. It is also within the range of probability that Paul may have obtained valuable information from James, the brother of the Lord

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- 1) Acts 1,17; I Cor. 15,8.
 - 2) I Cor. 11,23.
 - 3) I Cor. 15,12.
 - 4) I Cor. 11,23.
 - 5) I Cor. 7,10,25.
 - 6) I Thess. 4,15.

and the head of the Church of Jerusalem, whom he met on his return from Damascus,¹ as well as on later occasions,² from Peter, and from John, who also was in repute as one of the "pillars" of the Church.³ It is not improbable, too, that he had intercourse with many eye-witnesses of Christ's life. Nor is it to be forgotten that even before he became a Christian his activity as a persecutor must have familiarized him to a large extent with the life and teachings of Jesus.⁴

Paul took a firm stand against all false ideas which already in his day began to win adherents among followers of Christianity. He was uncompromising in his contacts with all perversions of Christ's teachings, especially those of Judaism and Gnosticism.

According to Acts 15,1, certain men came down from Judea to Antioch and taught the Christians there that they could not be saved unless they received circumcision and thus become members of the family of Israel. These circumstances forced Paul to go to Jerusalem to settle once and for all with the older apostles this question which was now also vexing the Church in Galatia. His words in Gal. 2,2, imply that he laid the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles not only before the disciples in general, but also privately before James, Peter, and John.⁵ Not only did the apostles agree with Paul, but he succeeded in convincing also

1) Gal. 2,1.

2) Acts 15,13; 21,18.

3) Gal. 2,9.

4) Richter, "Sendschreiben," p. 70.

5) Gal. 2,9.

the church as a whole that men might be saved without circumcision. But his opponents, when they found themselves defeated, proposed apparently that at least Titus should be circumcised.¹ Paul and Barnabas absolutely refused to give their consent to this proposal;² "because of the false brethren who came in to spy out our liberty, we stood out firmly in this matter also and did not yield even for a moment." Both he and Barnabas received the right hand of fellowship from Peter, James, and John. This was an acknowledgment of their divine call to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles and thus a sanctioning their evangelistic methods.

Not long after this conference, however, the question of Gentile liberty arose at Antioch, upon the occasion of a visit of Peter to the Christians of that city. Peter had freely and openly associated with the Gentiles. But when other members of the Jerusalem church came to Antioch he drew back and separated himself from the Gentiles, and his influence was so great that many of the Jewish Christians, even Barnabas, did the same thing. Paul then publicly rebuked Peter.³ Thus we see Paul uncompromisingly taking issue with one of the apostles themselves in a matter which he knew to be against the teaching of Scripture.⁴

In Acts 16,3, it is stated that Paul circumcised

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- 1) Gal. 2,3.
 - 2) Gal. 2,4.
 - 3) Gal. 2,14.
 - 4) McGiffert, op. cit., p. 192-205.

Timothy "because of the Jews that were in those parts, for they knew that his father was a Greek." The cases of Timothy and Titus were by no means parallel. Titus was a Greek; Timothy, though his father was a Greek, was the son of a Jewish mother. In the case of Titus there was a principle at stake, and to have him circumcised under the circumstances would have meant to sacrifice the Gentile liberty fought for by Paul against the Judaizers. He was willing to conciliate his countrymen in the case of Timothy because no principle was involved. The outward rite of circumcision he realized had no value. What Paul would not tolerate was the imposition of circumcision as a necessary means of salvation: "Circumcision is nothing, neither is uncircumcision, but the keeping of the commandments,"¹ And throughout the whole letter to the Galatians, especially written to combat the Judaistic tendencies, Paul upholds his principle of freedom from the Law.

Another heresy Paul had to contend with was Gnosticism. Though Gnosticism was in its embryonic stages, the frequent references to Gnosticism in the epistles show that Paul was confronted by no small trouble. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a holy day, or a new moon, or a sabbath," Col. 2,16. That the church at Colossae was troubled by Gnosticism is shown by Paul's emphasis on such words as wisdom, understanding,

1) Fouard, op. cit., p. 92. I Cor. 7,19.

knowledge. In Col. 2,8, Paul warns the people, "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world." He further warns his readers about substituting "shadows" for the real things, of being robbed of the prize of faith by adopting a form, of "voluntary humility," of "worshipping angels," and of "intruding into those things which no man hath seen, vainly puffed up by the understanding of his fleshly mind," Col. 2,18.

Another feature of Gnosticism which Paul fought against was the false teaching which laid great stress upon asceticism. Paul warns: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink," and again, "wherefore if ye be dead with Christ...why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances," Col. 2,16.20. Some of the Christians were most likely taking up ascetic practices in the hope that thus they would be able to free themselves from the evil power of angels or demons.

When Gnosticism broke out in Ephesus Paul again in a letter to that church earnestly upholds the superiority of Christ to all heavenly powers. In this letter he again refers to the angels or demons as the "world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places," Eph. 6,12. Paul is evidently hinting at the prevalence of errors similar to those at

Colossae, but does not attack the false doctrine so directly as he does in his letter to the church at Colossae.¹

The entire pastoral letter of I Timothy seems to be concerned with Gnosticism. "Old wives fables," "profane and useless," "the endless genealogies which minister questionings," "the seducing spirits and doctrine of demons," "the hypocrisy of men that speak lies," are to be explained as references to the Gnostic opponents of Paul's doctrine.²

On numerous other occasions Paul witnessed for the faith in such a way as to let his listeners know that he would not compromise Christ's teaching for the sake of an outward union. Early in his missionary travels, while on the island of Cyprus, Paul we may assume, could have joined himself to the sorcerer Bar-jesus, and also profited by the superstition of Sergius Paulus, for one gets the impression that Bar-jesus feared Paul's power and no doubt would have accepted Paul, had he made the slightest overture. Instead Paul rebukes Bar-jesus with the stinging words: "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Acts 13,10. Similarly, Paul could have capitalized on his power to perform miracles. After he had healed the lame man in Lystra the people began to worship him and Barnabas and to sacrifice to them as though they were gods. Instead

1) Lenski Commentary.
2) I Tim. 4,1.2.4.

he permitted himself to be stoned out of the city until he was almost dead. When the damsel possessed with the spirit of divination followed Paul for days saying:

"These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way to salvation," Acts 16,17, Paul cast the spirit out of her and subsequently, for this act, was thrown into prison. But he had not permitted the devil to witness for him.

In all his preaching, he told his opponents of their wrong positions and sought to convince them of the folly of their beliefs, while adhering firmly to his own. We may consider I Cor. 3,10-13, a warning to all who have any unionistic tendencies: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

V. Method in establishing his congregations.

Throughout the book of Acts (13,5, Salamis in Cyprus; 13, 14, Antioch in Pisidia; 14,1, Iconium; 17,2, Thessalonica; 17,10, Berea; 17,17, Athens; 18,4, Corinth; 18,19, Ephesus; 19,8, Ephesus) we read how Paul established congregations through the preaching of the Word. We are told that he went first to the synagogue. By this practice he reached not only the Jews, but also the proselytes and God-fearing Gentiles, who attended the synagogue in large numbers.¹ But why did he go to the synagogue first? Because he there had a point of contact, the Old Testament prophecies, and because the chances of gaining converts among the Jews was slightly greater. Although the great majority of the Jews hardened their hearts against the Gospel, a few were always won to form a nucleus, around which a congregation could be gathered. In the synagogue Paul found the Septuagint which provided a means of approach to the Jews and proselytes.²

This method of approach or contact through the synagogue was not a stereotyped procedure when Paul came to a new city. He was an intensely practical man and could vary his method to fit the demands of a new situation. In Athens, we see him walking through the crowded streets of the market-place, addressing the multitudes of passers-by. He did not for a moment hesitate to make a speech in the

1) Oepke, op. cit., p. 17.
2) Warneck, op. cit., p. 59.

Arcopagus because he thought he might be able to contact and reach the learned philosophers of that city. If Paul were alive today he would employ the telephone, the telegraph, and the radio as means of swift contact and approach to promote the cause of spreading the Gospel.

In his mission appeal Paul worked for the most part, among the Jews and the Greeks. It is remarkable that he always first went to the synagogue to expound the Scriptures. In spite of their manifest hatred for him and his Gospel he did his best to win the Jews for Christ.¹ How greatly Paul loved the people of his own nationality is shown in the fiery confessions of Romans, chapter nine to chapter eleven. The question, Has God perhaps after all cast aside his people?,² presses upon his mind. He always sought to explain to them what had been a hidden mystery to the Jewish people throughout the ages, that the Abrahamic covenant was a provision of God, dating back to eternity and embracing all nations, not only the Jewish nation.³

Paul's preaching in the synagogue aroused much interest for a while, but the Jews usually finally rejected his message and refused to believe. He then turned to the Gentiles, Acts 13,46. This does not mean that it was in Pisidian Antioch that Paul first preached to the Gentiles, nor does it indicate a permanent change

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- 1) Rom. 11,26.
 - 2) Oppke, pp. cit., p. 18.
 - 3) Taylor, op. cit., p. 35.

in Paul's missionary policy. In Acts 14,1, we are told that Paul preached in the synagogue at Iconium, and later on, in many other synagogues. The break with the Jews, like the one mentioned Acts 15,46, should be considered local, as the abandonment of the attempt to convert the Jewish colony in a certain city. However, the numerous rejections of his message, no doubt, had this effect on Paul that they served to strengthen his conviction that his work lay chiefly among the Gentiles. Not until Christ had become a stumbling-block and not until he was threatened with physical violence, did Paul give up the idea of converting the Jews in any one place.¹

When this happened Paul turned to the converts from heathenism among the Jews, the proselytes. These proselytes appear to have differed in the degree of their attachment to Judaism. Through circumcision, some had qualified themselves for admission to the entire privileges and fellowship of the Jewish ritual and worship. Others were content with showing their respect for the Jewish religion by attending the synagogue and by observing the Sabbath and the prescriptions of the ceremonial law with reference to meat. These Gentile worshippers were commonly spoken of as "devout and god-fearing men," Acts 10,2. McGiffert doubts whether the Jews ever secured a very large number of proselytes in the full sense, that

1) Allen, op. cit., p. 29.

is, of those who accepted circumcision and agreed to the whole Law. But he agrees that a large multitude of god-fearers attended the services of the synagogue. He substantiates this opinion when he says:

"There can be no doubt that Judaism of the dispersion influenced heathendom wherever it went. The great philosophers, poets, and tragedians of earlier days were made to declare their faith in the God of the Jews and their approval of the principles of Judaism... But Judaism appealed not simply to the people at large, it addressed itself also to the philosophers of the age and endeavored to show its own superiority to all the systems of antiquity. It was the claim of many Jewish scholars that Judaism was the supreme philosophy and the Jewish Scriptures the original storehouse of all the truth known to the sages of the world. Jewish monotheism, the ethical ideals, the emphasis upon the doctrine of rewards and punishments beyond the grave, reinforced by their assertion of a divine revelation guaranteeing all their teaching, appealed most widely and most powerfully." 1

Among these Gentile adherents of Judaism Paul saw the most rapid spread of Christianity. They were prepared for Christianity by their acquaintance with the Old Testament which they heard read in the synagogue week after week. When Paul came with his message of fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and the recognition of equal rights of the Gentiles, there can be no doubt that Paul found many converts.

In using the synagogue as a means of approach and contact, Paul did not seek particularly to attract any specific class of people among the Jews or Greeks. He does not show any preference; nor does he deliberately aim at one class. For the most part, his converts came

1) McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 158-9.

from all walks of life. However, the overwhelming majority were men and women from the middle and lower classes. Paul's reference to the deep poverty of the churches of Macedonia lends weight to his conclusion.¹ By his careful note of the conversion of the "chief women" of Thessalonica, and of "women of honorable estate", it seems that St. Luke would suggest that men of rank and importance were few.² It appears from the scenes at the Lord's Supper that some of the poor saints at Corinth occasionally had nothing at all to eat, while the richer members devoured their food with greedy haste.³ And the advice Paul gives to the assemblies of the Galatians to raise the collection for the brethren at Jerusalem in small amounts every Sunday is proof that in the interior of Asia Minor the churches were of the lower classes.⁴ We can say, then, that a great many of Paul's converts were of the lower commercial and working classes: laborers, freed-men, and slaves.

According to I Cor. 1,26, not many great and mighty were won. However, we must not think that Paul's mission was of a purely proletariat character, that he especially sought out the "down and outers." Although not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, were among his converts, Paul did not neglect the people of higher social standing. The warning Paul makes in I Cor. 11,21, is sufficient

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- 1) II Cor. 8,12.
 - 2) Allen, op. cit., p. 34.
 - 3) I Cor. 11,20-22.
 - 4) Deissmann, op. cit., p. 242. I Cor. 16,1.

evidence that also people of fair means were reached.¹
Paul often makes reference to people who had slaves.²
Outstanding members of Jewery,³ and members of the state,³
also were found in his congregations. The way Paul
reproaches the longing of the Greeks for wisdom leads one
to assume that some educated persons were in the circle
of Paul's converts. The zeal and ability displayed by
the converts in contributing to Paul's collection for the
poor of Jerusalem shows that there were among them many
who were blessed with a sufficiency of this world's goods.⁴

Paul mentions the names of certain well-to-do
Christians, who possessed rooms large enough that "home
churches" could assemble there: Aquila and Priscilla at
Ephesus, Nymphas and others at Laodicea, Philemon at
Colossae. Gaius at Corinth offered the hospitality of
his house to the whole church. Along with his fellow
citizen,⁵ Erastus, the city treasurer, he must have
belonged to the upper middle class. Crispus is mentioned
by Paul as one of the few converts whom he had himself
baptized. Paul perhaps performed this sacrament personally
because of Crispus' position of honor, as chief of the
synagogue.⁶ Aquila and Priscilla are referred to more
than once as persons of influence and importance.⁷

It is noteworthy that several women, at least
one of whom was won to Christianity by Paul, appear to

1) I Cor. 1,11; Col.4,1.

2) Acts 18,8; I Cor. 1,14.

3) Rom. 16,23.

4) Allen, op. cit., 20.
II Cor. 8 & 9.

5) Rom. 16,23.

6) I Cor. 1,14; Acts 18,8.

7) McGiffert, op. cit. p. 269.
Rom. 16,23; I Cor. 16,19
II Tim. 4,19.

have been economically well-situated: Chloe, in Corinth;¹
Phoebe, at Cenchrae, the port of Corinth;² Lydia, in
Philippi.³ In Thessalonica, not a few prominent women be-
lieved;⁴ the same holds true of Berea.⁵ One of the few
converts in Athens was a woman.⁶ In the 16th chapter of
Romans eight names of women are mentioned. Col. 4,15;
Phil. 4,2; II Tim. 4,21, also mention women as being
among Paul's converts.⁷

Surely, Paul realized his call, in response to
Jesus' command to be His witness "unto all men of what
thou hast seen and heard," Acts 22,15. He appealed to
all men, following the Savior's command to go and teach
all nations,⁸ and to preach the Gospel to every creature
unto the uttermost part of the earth.⁹

The realization of Paul's goal to found congrega-
tions came only after the converts had been gathered. Paul
did not neglect the individual soul when founding a con-
gregation. Like Jesus, Paul had the whole world as his
goal.¹⁰ He aimed to bring as many as possible to the true
faith,¹¹ but in his proclamation of the Word he turns to
the individual. He did not go through the cities of the
Roman provinces with a flourish of trumpets. No, he
sought to win converts by direct personal contact, forming
acquaintances as opportunity offered. His first attention
perhaps was directed to members of his own trade who were

1) I Cor. 1,11.

2) Rom. 16,1.

3) Deissmann, op. cit.,

Acts 16,4

4) Acts 17,4.

5) Acts 17,12.

6) Acts 17,34.

7) Varneck, op. cit., 159.

Col.4,15; Phil. 4,2; II Tim. 4,21.

8) Matt., 28,19.

9) Mark 16,15.

10) Rom. 11,12,15.

11) Rom. 1,5; 16,26.

won, one at a time, to become the nucleus of a new church.¹ This deduction is acknowledged by McGiffert when he says:

"Christianity did not appear in the cities where Paul labored as a great movement, involving religious and political consequences of civic and national proportions, but as a leaven working quietly for the conversion of one household after the other, and binding them all together in the bonds of a common faith and common hope."²

The case of the runaway slave Onesimus, is a typical instance of the apostle's care for the individual soul. This one case teaches us, better than long investigations could do, what the secret of his missionary influence was. He realized the value of one soul to the Lord.

Having gathered a few converts together, Paul was ready to form a congregation or church, founded on the basis of mutual love, in the unity of faith. Paul did not seek to bring about any great social revolution or reform. He worked on the change in the heart. He knew that the Gospel, planted in the heart, changes the individual, and in time, society itself. He knew that the Word would make them to realize that they were one in Christ. Therefore, the congregations of Asia Minor did not need much training to have them understand that they should take up a collection for their poorer brothers in Jerusalem. He did not have to say much about brotherly love.³

In establishing his churches, Paul began with unity.

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- 1) Warneck, op. cit., p. 63.
 - 2) McGiffert, op. cit., p. 255.
 - 3) Warneck, ibid., p. 166.

There was a spiritual unity in the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father of all. The congregation of believers, Jews and Gentiles, constituted the body of Christ, the Church. Paul compares the congregation to a house whose foundation is Christ.¹ Christians are a "body" and Christ is the "head"; or Christ is the "body" and Christians are the members.²

While Paul had in mind, mainly the spiritual unity of the Church, he did not forget the geographical unity. When his churches were established, he distinctly recognized the unity of the Church in the province. He constantly spoke of the Church of Macedonia, of Achaia, of Galatia, of Syria, of Cilicia, and of Asia as unities. (Macedonia, II Cor. 8,1; Achaia, Rom. 15,2-6; Galatia, Gal. 1,2; Syria and Cilicia, Gal. 1,21; Acts 15,23; Asia, I Cor. 16,19; Judea, I Thess. 2,14).

Furthermore, the churches of the four provinces were not independent of the church which sent Paul out as a missionary, the Syrian church. The churches of the four provinces were united to the Syrian church and, in turn, to the church at Jerusalem, which had founded the Syrian church at Antioch. The same bonds which made converts members of Christ, made them members of the Church; and the Church was not the church in their city only. The same bonds which united the churches in the four provinces one

1) I Cor. 3,10; Eph. 2,20.

2) Deissmann, op. cit., p. 214.

to another, united the churches everywhere one to another.¹ Through mutual acts of love Paul fostered and encouraged this unity in Christ. By recalling to their minds common difficulties and sufferings, by referring in his letters to the sufferings of the other churches and comparing them with their own, he taught them love to one another and to Christ.²

In spite of the fact that he did not receive much encouragement in his mission from the Jerusalem church, the mother church, he, nevertheless, felt himself tied to the original church. He never speaks disrespectfully of the brothers in Jerusalem. He is concerned that the churches of heathen Christendom may be, and remain, united with the mother church. A good example of his feeling is expressed in I Thessa. 2,14, where he praises the Thessalonians: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus." At Jerusalem, on the occasion of the apostolic visit, Paul related the events of the first missionary journey, "recounting all the great things God had done with them; Acts 15,4.³

To assure his mission success, to meet the exigencies of different situations, Paul often had to accommodate his personality to his work. To attain his goal he had to practice the greatest self-denial. His

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- 1) Allen, op. cit., pp. 164-6.
 - 2) Harnack, op. cit., p. 432.
 - 3) Warneck, op. cit., p. 193.

principal was:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without the law, as without that I might gain them that are without the law. To the weak became I as the weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save more," I Cor. 9,19-22.

The mental and moral characteristics of the people whom Paul dealt with, their habits of life, their religious beliefs and superstitions varied greatly. Methods adapted to one city might prove far from successful in another. Paul's sermons, therefore, were always adapted to his audience. His approach was determined by their background and by the extent of their training. To the Jews in Antioch, he speaks of the fulfillment of the promises given to the fathers; to the Gentiles of Lystra, of the folly of idolatry. In Athens he takes his cue from the altar inscribed "To the Unknown God" and thus attempts to reach the philosophers of that city. Also, his change from a Pharisee to a Christian provided him with an opening to the Jews in Jerusalem.¹

1) Richter, "Sendschreiben," p. 23.

VI. Method in the organization of his churches.

Having founded a congregation, Paul then would provide it with some form of organization and government. Most writers are of the opinion, however, that Paul was not an organizer in the fullest sense of the word.

"Neither did his vocation, nor his temperament seem to fit him for the work of organization; nevertheless, he knew better than anyone else how to found and build up churches. But organization never became for Paul an end in itself or a means to worldly aggrandizement." 1

"He did little in the way of organization." 2

"In the light of Paul's epistles, and especially Galatians, which makes no mention of officers in the Church, it is difficult to suppose that Paul gave a fixed and definite organization, and appointed regular officers." 3

It is true that Paul could not have set up a comprehensive organization in the short time that he spent with most of the congregations. But that he did effect some means of self government cannot be denied. While he may not have laid down hard and fast rules, some general lines of organization were effected.

In Acts 11,27, we hear of prophets who had migrated from the Jerusalem church to Antioch. Acts 13,1, implies that the five men, who are described there as prophets and teachers, occupied a special position in church at Antioch, and that two of their number (Paul and Barnabas) were elected by the Antiochians as apostles at the command of the Holy Spirit, Acts 15,22. Having

1) Harnack, op. cit., p. 78.
2) Warneck, op. cit., p. 186.
3) McGiffert, op. cit., p. 191.

come from the Jerusalem church and being acquainted with their organization it was only natural that Paul should later embody some forms of the synagogue organization into his churches.¹

Therefore, on his first visit to the newly founded congregations at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, we see Paul not only strengthening the disciples, but also, installing elders: "ordained them elders in every church," Acts 14,23. Evidently these elders were selected like the deacons in Jerusalem. There the apostles had acknowledged the right of the congregation to elect its own officials and there is no doubt that these elders were elected by vote of the congregation. Then Paul and Barnabas confirmed this election by prayer and the laying on of hands. So Paul saw to it that the ministry was established and entrusted to capable hands in the young churches. As another example of Paul's concern for organization we cite the farewell charge to the Ephesian elders, Acts 20,18. Paul deals with them as official shepherds of the congregation at Ephesus. Paul instructs these elders as to how they are to think of their office, Acts 20,28, "Take heed...to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to feed the Church of God."²

There is no doubt that Paul did appoint elders.³
The elders appointed were selected because they were men

1) Harnack, op. cit., p. 338.

2) Warneck, op. cit., p. 186.

3) Acts 14,23.

of high moral character, men who understood the condition and requirements of their congregations, men who were respected by the congregations for their moral and social positions. Furthermore, Paul ordained as elders members of the Church to which they belonged. The elders were really of the church to which they ministered and were chosen because of their good report.¹

The office of the elder was the same as that of the bishop.² The elders were the "pastors," Eph. 4,11; "overseers," Acts 20,28; "leaders and rulers," Heb. 9,7; I Thess. 5,12, and had to administer the sacraments,

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Eph. 4,11ff.³ The qualifications of elders were primarily moral. When Paul omits or fails to mention "faith" as a necessary quality for eldership, he is assuming that the person chosen for the Lord's work is of Christ. High intellectual qualifications were not deemed necessary. Their duty was to look after and care for the general well-being of the congregation, and to administer the sacraments. The importance of ordination of elders lay in this, that when a church was equipped with elders, it possessed not merely leaders, but men properly appointed to see to it that the sacraments were properly administered.⁴

Paul was not content with the ordaining of one elder for each church. In each place he ordained several. This insured that all authority should not be concentrated

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- 1) Allen, op. cit., p. 134.
 - 2) Phil. 1,1; I Tim. 3,1; Titus 1,7.
 - 3) I Tim. 3,1-7; Titus 1,7-9.
 - 4) Allen, op. cit., 136.

in the hands of one man. It insured the possibility of frequent administration of the sacraments. Responsibility was divided and many were enlisted in the service of the church.

There is the tendency among many missionaries to take on themselves, besides their necessary pastoral duties, the routine, manifold tasks of administration. The missionary had better not be pastor, teacher, book-keeper, and administrator. Routine tasks that do not require extensive supervision should be delegated to members of the congregation. By sharing the responsibility of the administration of the church the native converts are made to feel that they too have the duty to build the Lord's Kingdom. Paul seems to have laid the entire responsibility of church work and church government upon his native converts. By leaving the local congregation to look after itself, Paul was building churches which could stand up in the face of any emergency.

The office of deacon, as a lesser office, helped¹ to share the administrative duties in the congregation. Like the elder, the deacon must be proved, of good report, and above suspicion. He was to assist the servants of the Word in the government of the church, in

1) Phil. 1,1; I Tim. 3,8-13.

taking care of its charitable endeavors, and otherwise occupying a leading position of service in the congregation. Deaconesses are mentioned in Rom. 16,1, also as serving in minor offices in the church.¹

With the appointment of elders the churches were complete. They were fully equipped. They no longer necessarily depended on Paul. He placed the congregation on the principle of absolute freedom as he did the individual Christian, and yet, from the very beginning, rules of conduct were instituted while he was present with the congregations, and after he had left them, through his letter writing. He had been with the Thessalonians only a short time and had little occasion to institute Christian customs and discipline. Therefore, he writes: "Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by the Word, or our epistle... And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you... We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed," II Thess. 2,15; 3,4.6.14.² He assures the church at Ephesus that all God's ministers were to make a specialty of "perfecting the saints" till all, "come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the

1) Warneck, op. cit., p. 187.

2) Richter, op. cit., "Sendschreiben," p. 72.

Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. 4,11-14. He laid down the general principle, "as the Lord hath distributed to every man, as God hath called each, so let him walk," and added, "so ordain I in all the churches," I Cor. 7,17. He gave certain directions for public worship, and concluded "the rest will \ddagger set in order when I come," I Cor. 9,34. When he considered it necessary he could stop the mouth of an objector with the assertion, "We have no such custom," I Cor. 11,16. When the people resisted his authority he proposed to have a hearing in which every word should be established, "at the mouth of two or three witnesses,"¹ II Cor. 13,1.

The epistles to the Corinthians certainly prove that Paul recognized that as a called minister of the Lord and as an apostle of Christ he had a power upon which he could fall back in case of necessity. Yet he used his authority sparingly. He had to deal with some of the most pressing and difficult problems which a minister of the Gospel must face. The most important problems which came before him were those of personal chastity, litigation, and the eating of things offered to idols.

In I Thess. 4, 1-8, he argues against fornication by first reminding his readers of his personal teaching when he was among them. He reminds them that God's will

1) Taylor, op. cit., p. 8.

is that they increase and grow in sanctification. He suggests that there should be a difference between the conduct of the Christian and that of the Gentile, who knows not God. He warns them that the Lord is the avenger of such misdeeds. He reiterates the truth that the purpose and will of God in calling them from the heathen world was that they should be made holy. Finally, he warns them that rejection of his teaching on this subject is the rejection of the Holy Spirit. In his first epistle to the Corinthians he argues that fornication is a violation of the true use of the body,¹ that it is contrary to the glorious hope of the resurrection, that the body is not the Christians own to use as he pleases, but is the temple of the Holy Spirit.²

At the Jerusalem Council it had been decreed that the Gentile Christians should abstain from things sacrificed to idols. At Corinth some of the Christians not only ate things sacrificed to idols, but attended feasts in heathen temples,³ Paul appeals to them:

"I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils... All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not...Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake... Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the others: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?...Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,"
I Cor. 10,14-31.

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- 1) I Cor. 4,13-19.
 - 2) Allen, op. cit., p. 149.
 - 3) I Cor. 8,10

Allen has an interesting note which might help missionaries with the social problems of their converts:

"By his refusal to prejudge the question of the presence of Christians in idol temples, Paul avoided one great difficulty which constantly besets us in our work. He made it possible for converts to continue to work at their trades as members of a heathen guild or society. It is perfectly clear that the Christians in the four provinces, of whom very many were of the commercial or artisan classes, did not abandon their labor in workshops where heathen rites were performed. Such of them as were slaves could not escape from their attendance at heathen functions and probably most of those who were free men could have done so only at great loss. There was scarcely a trade or business in which a Christian could engage without being mixed up with idolatry in some form or other. St. Paul did not feel it necessary to forbid them from continuing at their trades from fear lest they should be drawn back into the gulf of heathenism." 1

In many foreign missions today, especially in India, where the discriminating caste system reigns, the tendency is to separate converts from their former associates. This is, in part, necessitated by the fact that converts are more or less ostracized from their friends and cannot maintain social or business relations with any one else. The missionary, therefore, feels himself obligated to help these converts. The result is that they rely on the mission for support and lose all contact with their former friends. This should not be. Missions grow stagnant if such a policy is pursued. Instead of being a leaven to their heathen neighbors round about them the newly founded in Christ are withdrawn and have

1) Allen, op. cit., p. 156.

no contact with the outside world. This practice is also detrimental for the missionary. Having won a few converts he ministers constantly to Christian communities and fails to maintain a close intercourse with the heathen. While Paul emphasized "be ye separate," and feared the detrimental influence which the pagan compatriots of Christians would exert, he nevertheless, stressed the duty of the latter to lead others to Christ through their example of life. Paul rather stressed a spiritual separation, not a physical separation from the heathen.

Paul's discipline is not one of the law, but arises out of love for souls in Christ. He does not attempt to legislate; he appeals to the Spirit in them. He is extremely careful to distinguish between the command of the Lord and his own judgment. In his epistles he does not tell the churches of any penalty they are to enforce. Rather he accuses the churches of failure to realize their duty and responsibility in matters of discipline.¹

In matters of spiritual stewardship Paul seems to have also given us some valuable lessons. What his precise methods were in getting money to promote the work of the Lord, we do not know. How he was able to establish independent churches we do not know. But we do know that he was very careful in handling the funds which the churches raised for the poor at Jerusalem and

1) Allen, op. cit., p. 158.

Thessalonica. Anxious even to forestall the slightest suspicion of self-seeking, he appointed two witnesses of Titus' management of the collection for the saints at Jerusalem, in Corinth who should answer for its proper conduct before the whole Church.¹

In Col. 2,1, Paul clearly says that his missionary achievements were not all due to his personal work when he says that neither Colossae nor Laodicea had ever beheld his face. At Laodicea, Nymphas gathered the disciples in his house. A wealthy Colossian named Philemon did the same for the people in his community, aided by his wife, Appia. Archippus, a friend of Philemon, had likewise a share in the Gospel ministry. Paul and Barnabas had been in Antioch, in Pisidia, only a short time "and the Word of the Lord was published throughout the whole region," Acts 13,49. In Ephesus, Paul found, upon his arrival, a little band of disciples.² In 19,10, we read: "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, both Jews and Greeks."³

How was Paul able to train or school converts so as to be able to leave them after so short a time? How could he have taught them in five or six months so that they might be able to grow in Christian knowledge and withstand heathenism, and go out and teach others? With his strategic viewpoint to reach as many people as possible

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- 1) II Cor. 8,16-24.
 - 2) Acts 19,1.
 - 3) Hoyer, op. cit., p. 16.

Paul did not linger in one particular place trying to convert whole masses of people. He sought out a few leaders and trained them as the vanguard of the gospel in their city.¹

At the home of Tyrannus, Paul "discoursed every day; and this continued for the space of two years, inso-much that all who dwelt in Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, heard of the word of the Lord," Acts 19,9.10. This is the only record that he stayed for any long period of time to instruct his followers. The point that we wish to bring out is that he discoursed, taught. How he taught we do not know. But we do know what he taught.² In I Corinthi-ans, many chapters deal specifically with the Christian's faith and life. The resurrection is the important teach-ing of I Cor. 15; an exposition on the use of meat offered to idols is found in I Cor. 8-10; and the exposition concerning spiritual gifts, I Cor. 12-14, surely shows what trouble and pains Paul took to have his converts know the truth and understand it. He taught Christ: His Coming, His Reconciliation, His Death, His Resurrection, and His Second Coming in Glory. Paul is deeply concerned to point out that there is no difference between the original church and the churches he established, I Cor. 15,1-3.³

We may assume that Paul used the Old Testament as his textbook. He made free use of the Old Testament

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- 1) Warneck, op. cit., p.60.
 - 2) Gepke, op. cit., p. 19.
 - 3) Richter, "Sendschreiben", p. 70.

for the sake of illustrating or confirming what he had to say.¹ From the Old Testament Paul could prove that the appearance and the entire history of Christ had been predicted hundreds and even thousands of years ago. Paul used the Old Testament to prove that the ceremonial law was inferior to the vicarious atonement of Christ. To refute the Judaizers in Galatia, he points out to the Galatians that the same justification by faith he taught was held to by Abraham: "He believed and his faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness," Gen. 15,6. On this account, Paul argues, the Galatians would be foolish, having begun in the Spirit, to end in the flesh.² It is remarkable that the greatest use of the Old Testament occurs in Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, all congregations composed of Christians won from heathen ranks. Paul was firmly convinced of the authority of Scriptures when he writes: "It is written."³ Need it be said that the foreign missionary must be firmly convinced of the authority of both the Old and New Testament?

Perhaps all we can say of Paul's method of instruction is that it was simple. By teaching the simplest elements in the simplest form, by giving the hearers the means by which they could gain further knowledge, by leaving them to meditate upon a few fundamental truths, Paul laid the foundations of the Church. In Paul's first

1) I Cor. 1,19; 3,20; 9,9; 10,1-13; II Cor. 6,2; 9,7.

2) Gal. 3,2-7.

3) Richter, "Sendschreiben," p. 70.

epistle to the Thessalonians we have, what we might consider, an example of Paul's teaching method. His teaching contains the following elements: There is one living and true God, 1,9; the wrath of God is ready to be revealed against the heathen for their impurity, 4,6; and against the Jews for their rejection of Christ and their opposition to the Gospel, 2,15.16; the judgment will come suddenly and unexpectedly, 5,2.3; Jesus, the Son of God, 1,10, given over to death, 5,10, raised from the dead, 4,14, is the Savior from the wrath of God, 1,10; all people can enter the Kingdom of Christ, 2,12; Christ will return from heaven and all who believe will be saved, 4,15-17; until He come again, however, believers must lead a sanctified life, 4,1-8; through the work of the Holy Spirit they shall be able to live as Christians, 4,8; 5,19.

For the modern missionary to translate Christian concepts as faith, sin, regeneration, etc., into language which the heathen could understand (though the deeper significance has to be revealed by the working of the Spirit in their hearts through the Word), constitutes a great teaching problem. It is difficult to express Christian meanings in heathen language. Paul avoided this difficulty by not attempting to formulate definitions. He does not say what sin is, but describes its terrible powers and consequences which prevent any union with God. He speaks

to people who have experienced these things, and therefore does not need to make a definition. He explains the concept in its multiple manifestations in life, not by a rule-like definition. He unfolds faith in its working parts, points to its life, shows how it is born, nourished, cared for, and protected. Faith is the conviction that Christ is the Savior.¹ Faith is the entrance to the state of reconciliation.² And sometimes it is an expression for the whole new relationship to God.³

We have tried to discover what teaching Paul gave to his converts. With regard to the sacraments, there is no mention of a long preparatory instruction period. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are basic institutions which need a deeper exposition. When Paul wrote, he assumed that his addressees were familiar with the form of administration of these sacraments and with the essential doctrines implied in them. Both sacraments were taken over as they were practised in the original church at Jerusalem. In Col. 2,11, Paul draws a parallel between Old Testament circumcision and baptism, stating that baptism is the fulfillment of that which circumcision prefigured, namely, the setting aside of the sinful life of the flesh. The institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper described in Corinthians is spoken of in almost the same words as

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- 1) Gal. 2,20; 3,26.
 - 2) Rom. 3,26;5,1.
 - 3) Warneck, op. cit., p. 252.
I Cor. 5,7; Gal. 5,5.

those used in the Gospels.

Earliest accounts show that baptism was the method of introduction into membership and to Christian discipleship.² As far as we know from Acts, baptism followed soon after the confession of faith and declaration of discipleship.³ Paul says in Rom. 10,9, that confession by mouth is necessary.⁴ Apparently then, very little knowledge of Christians truths was required as an indispensable condition for acceptance into Christian membership. Paul baptized the jailor at Philippi, for instance, the very night that Paul and Silas were freed of their close confinement. Paul's teaching requirements for baptism were repentance and faith. Specific references to Paul's teaching on baptism tell the heathen: "You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus," from the dark sins mentioned in verses nine and ten of I Cor. 10; that they were once slaves to sin, but now are cleansed of their sin through baptism;⁵ that through baptism the believer is united with Christ, so much so, that his old Adam dies and he lives a new man in Christ;⁶ that through baptism sin is made dead.⁷ Therefore, baptism is a baptism in Christ's death. This union with Christ, Paul calls "putting on Christ."⁸ In baptism all are united by one Spirit into a communion of believers,⁹

1) Richter, op. cit., "Sendschreiben," p. 73.

2) Matt. 28,19; Mark 16,16; John 3,5; Eph. 4,15.

3) Acts 2,41; 8,36ff; 10,48; 16,15; 18,8.

4) LaTourrette, op. cit., p. 118.

5) Titus 3,5. 6) Rom. 6,3; Col. 2,13; 3,1.

7) Rom. 6,3,11. 8) Rom. 13,14; Gal. 3,27.

9) Warneck, op. cit., p. 151-2; Eph. 4,5.

because they have one Lord, one Faith, and one baptism.¹

Paul, however, did not baptize many people himself. He left it almost entirely to others, so that he was unable even to remember whether he had himself baptized any one besides Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus.² This was in line with his practice not to organize churches, but to preach the Gospel that he might be the means to save many.

Paul's churches were independent churches from the start. By selecting workers from among the congregations he founded, he was able to leave them in a short time to administer their own affairs. Generally speaking, it remains true that Christianity in the hands of our missions is still a foreign religion. Modern missions have found it difficult to set up indigenous churches. Everywhere missions look to the mother church for support and help. The natives always speak of the "mission" as something which is not their own. The mission represents a foreign power, and the natives who work under it are considered servants of a foreign government. In this regard Allen makes a severe criticism of Episcopalian mission, and we might well apply it to our mission conduct:

"We have approached the "poor heathen" as superior beings, moved by charity to impart of our wealth to destitute and perishing souls. We have approached them...as indispensable. We have preached the Gospel from the point of view of the wealthy man who casts his seed into the earth knowing that his own life and the lives of all connected with him depend upon the crop which will result from his labor...In this

1) I Cor. 12,13.
2) I Cor. 1,14.

spirit we have taught them, baptized them, shepherded them...We have done everything for them except acknowledge any equality. In our attitude of condescension we have done everything for them, but little with them. We have asked nothing from them but obedience. We have educated our converts to put us in place of Christ. We believe that it is the Holy Spirit of Christ which inspires and guides us; we cannot believe that the same Spirit will guide and inspire them. Any independent action seems to have been discouraged." 1

This is certainly a sharp indictment of Christian missions and perhaps not unfounded. We have seen that in organizing his churches Paul, through instruction, trained native workers who were responsible for the administration of the sacraments and for the growth of the Church.

1) Allen, op. cit., pp. 185-7.

VII. Method in his writing.

Paul, however, did not consider his work finished when a congregation was established or organized. Whether he stayed at a place for a longer or shorter period of time the baptized souls remained close to him and he felt concerned to give them a deeper understanding of that which Christ had commanded him to teach. To this end he wrote thirteen letters, in Koine, the common hellenic language, that all might understand.¹ His letters show the deep sense of responsibility for the souls entrusted to his care.

He sees danger lying ahead, understands the different situations they are in, knows they are surrounded by false teachers. Often, therefore, Paul wrote to admonish, sometimes to advise, other times to warn, and many times to encourage to remain true to the faith. Thus a true fellowship and oneness of Spirit was, and remained, established among the visible churches of Christendom. All letters were written for some particular occasion or for some peculiar need on the part of those addressed, and not written merely for the sake of reiterating doctrine which was already known to his addressees.² To the Thessalonians he writes: "We command you brethren in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly

1) Richter, "Missionslehre," p. 13.

2) Deissmann, op. cit., p. 12.

and not after the tradition which they received of us,"
II Thess. 3,6.

To encourage his readers to lead sanctified Christian lives he shows them the inconsistency of partaking in heathen practices now that they had learned the truth and had become as new men. The constant threat of Judaism and the fear of infiltration on the part of Gnosticism also provoked, as we have seen in a previous chapter, much discussion in his letters.

In all his writings Paul has the promotion of missions in mind. We do not properly understand Paul's letters unless we regard them as missionary letters.

In Galatia, "the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily," Acts 16,5. From Thessalonica "the Word of the Lord sounded out,"

I Thess. 1,8, in Macedonia and Achaia. From Ephesus the Gospel spread throughout all the neighboring countryside so that many churches soon were founded, the members of which Paul never saw. With regard to missions, he tells Timothy that God "will have all men to be saved¹ and come to the knowledge of the truth," I Tim. 2,4.

Throughout his writings a consciousness for missions is displayed by the language he employs. Paul considers himself a "slave" who works in the service of his master and would therefore impress upon the minds

1) Warneck, op. cit., p. 226.

of his companions that they are likewise not masters of themselves, but servants of God. He is, because of grace given to him, a "minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable," Rom. 15,15. He is a "herald and apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles," I Tim. 2,7.¹ He can say, "we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," II Cor. 5,20. Thus even in his writings he was conscious of his call and sought to convince his readers that they too were missionary agencies to further the spread of the Gospel.

So complete are Paul's writings that LaTourette says:

"Even if we did not have the four Gospels, we could gain from the letters of Paul, written within a generation after Jesus, a fairly full picture of the main purport of the teaching of Jesus." 2

1) Deissmann, op. cit., p. 232.
2) LaTourette, op. cit., p. 47.

VIII. Conclusion.

From the beginning to the end of his Christian ministry Paul was controlled by a fixed and definite purpose. After a few years spent in Damascus, and then in Tarsus and Antioch, he started out upon the great missionary campaigns which continued almost without interruption for twelve years, and resulted in the evangelization of the four great provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. That he should have accomplished as much as he did in so short a time is ample testimony and witness of method in the Lord's work. But we must remember that Paul would not have had a method had not the Lord blessed him so that he saw how he could best employ his God-given talents. For it is the Lord who finally gave success to Paul's work. "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed," Acts 11,21. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia.

The modern missionary must remember that no matter how tried and true a method may seem to be, it is of no value if it is not prayerfully used and prayerfully blessed. It is the Lord who by the preaching of the Word conquers hearts and works the faith that saves. Christ has in His hands the effect and success of all mission work. It is He who builds the Church, not Paul, or we.

The Gospel given to Paul was adaptable to the

1) Acts 16,14.

peculiarities of his age, and is likewise applicable to the circumstances of our age. The Word is adequate to meet the spiritual needs of all nations today, as in Paul's day, of properly taught and applied.

There is remarkable correspondence between the conditions of Paul's missions and the missions today in the Orient. Not a few years after Paul had planted the seed in the Mediterranean world, the Roman persecutions began to try the young churches. The infant churches of our Synod in China, founded only thirty years ago, are being overrun by a heathen power most hostile to Christianity. The acid test is being put to the young sprouts nourished under favorable conditions of other days. If Christianity in China and other foreign fields has been truly founded according to Paul's methods, it will stand to become The Light in the Orient.

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