A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

WITH REFLECTIONS ON SOME OF ITS SALIENT THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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PREFACE

Studying and interpreting sacred writings has occupied the minds of numerous people down through the centuries. Among other literature in this category, The Holy Bible has been a perennial challenge to scholars who have attempted to sound its depths and clarify its meaning. A vast amount of learning has been expended upon it and this, of course, was natural in view of the fact that the Christian Faith attaches great importance to the interpretation of its contents.

This thesis was a study of one of the documents of the Holy Bible,¹ Paul's Epistle To The Philippians. Such a study was justified because of the enduring interest in the Bible. Continuous research on the part of scholars has brought many new books into being, most of which present new insights and a better understanding of Biblical literature. This study was further justified on the basis that new light may come from both old and new sources to help provide a better comprehension and interpretation of the subject.

In the first chapter the writer has offered a critical introduction to the letter and has given special attention to the historical background of Philippi and some of the general conditions in Graeco-Roman Philippi at the time of Paul. An acquaintance with the general conditions of the day should help the reader to a better understanding of

¹ For the purpose of this study The Holy Bible should be thought of as the collection composed of the sixty-six books commonly accepted by those of the Protestant persuasion since the time of the Reformation.
Paul's letter to the Philippians. In this chapter the critical problems of the letter were treated and other introductory matters were discussed.

In the second chapter the writer has translated the text of Philippians from its original language (Greek) to English. An attempt was made to discover the original meaning and express it clearly and accurately in English. Justification for this translation will be found in the prolegomena to the translation.¹

In the last chapter the writer was occupied with theological considerations in Philippians. In recent years there has been a recrudescence of interest in Biblical theology. As a part of the movement there has been increased interest in the theology of the New Testament.

The renascence of theology in the last thirty years has brought with it a continuous flow of books about the New Testament—introductions, commentaries, lexicons, expositions, monographs on this or that New Testament topic, etc.—all of them reflecting the new theological approach to the documents of our Faith.²

Out of the wealth of available research material, the author has offered reflections on what he has deemed to be some of the salient theological considerations in Philippians. An attempt was made to elucidate and clarify their meanings.

In view of the fact that each section was treated more or less summarily throughout the study, there was no summary chapter.

¹Cf. post, p. 43.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER

This letter of Paul was addressed "to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi . . ." The history of this city had a definite bearing on Paul's relationships to the Christians there. An examination of the historical background of the city yields valuable clues which make possible a better understanding of the letter. No treatment of the letter's contents would be wholly adequate without the study of this historical background.

The city of Philippi is undoubtedly better known to most Christians for its relation to the Apostle Paul than to Philip II of Macedon after whom it was named. Paul helped to make the city memorable as the first foothold of the Gospel in Europe.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPI

Early History

There are records indicating that a settlement existed in an area of southeastern Europe as early as the Seventh Century B. C., probably within the bounds of ancient Thrace, which was overrun by inhabitants from Thasos. This settlement in early times was called Crenides which has been variously translated as Little Springs, Place of Small Fountains, and Little Fountains. It undoubtedly received this early name because of its proximity to an immense marsh fed by water which flowed from numerous springs in the mountains to the north.
The early history of Crenides was marked by a series of tribal conflicts which resulted in the settlement being inhabited by one tribe and then another.

By 359 B.C., Philip II had become a powerful military figure in Macedonia.

In 357 B.C., Philip treacherously seized the Chalsidian city of Amphipolis, the greatest commercial city in that region, and a great fortress which commanded Crenides, a gold-mining settlement in Mount Pangaeus.1

He drove back the Thracians, annexing territory as far as the river Nestus and assumed command of Crenides which he occupied and enlarged, settling large numbers of his own subjects there. He then renamed the settlement, calling it Philippi, "Pertaining to Philip," and began feverishly to develop the gold mines. Philippi, the plural form, was used as there were different sections of the town scattered at the foot of Mount Pangaeus.2

**Philippi's Greek Heritage**

About this time Philip assumed the title of king and set himself to create an army of professional soldiers and imbued them with a strong patriotic spirit.

The early inhabitants of the Macedonian hill country were shepherds and hunters who lived in rude huts. They were clothed in skins of wild

beasts and fought with the crudest weapons. The people of the lowlands were undoubtedly of Greek stock who had been touched to some degree by Greek civilization. At least the military system used in the southern states had influenced them to the extent that they were a military people, good subjects for Philip's colossal military designs. He was so successful at inspiring loyalty, unity, and enthusiasm that he was able to attract even those whom he had subjected from the hill country into his great professional army which was rapidly becoming a national army. Any who were unwilling, however, were compelled to acknowledge him as their overlord.

The natural advantages of Philippi were significant in the development of its history. The rich gold and silver mines in the mountains to the south, possibly worked in very early times by the Phoenicians and later by the Thasians, provided a vast revenue which enabled Philip not only to enlarge the Macedonian army but to introduce a new coinage. The mines which were so energetically worked by Philip are reputed to have produced 1000 talents a year, making Macedon the richest state in Greece.

With this gold Philip developed the fine art of bribery in which he is alleged to have been adept, as revealed by the statement commonly attributed to him, "that no fortress was impregnable to whose walls an ass laden with gold could be driven."¹

The earliest settlement of Philippi was probably confined to a hill.

Later it spread to the nearby fertile plain washed by the Gangites (now Angista), a tributary of the Strymon. Timbers from nearby forests provided material for the building of ships which Philip later used when he seized seaports on the Aegean Sea.

With all of these natural advantages, it is not surprising that Philip, a young man of some twenty-three years, when he became regent of Macedon, was able to mold a mighty phalanx, the most effective military force in the ancient world. Philip extended his power southward until a decisive battle in 338 B.C. at which time he gained control of the whole of Greece except Sparta. He invaded Sparta but did not abolish the kingship in that country.

Philip II accomplished Greek military supremacy and bequeathed to his son Alexander the Great plans, money and troops which laid the foundation for the subsequent conquests of Alexander. It is important to remember that Philip lived in a significant era of Greek culture.

The last years of the Philosopher Plato belonged to this early Macedonian period. Demosthenes, the greatest orator of the ancient world, belonged to this age. It was Demosthenes who said of Philip:

To gain empire and power he had an eye knocked out, his collar bone broken, his arm and leg maimed; he abandoned to fortune any part of his body she cared to take, so that honor and glory might be the portion of the rest.  

We also read of Philip:

He loved the wine-cup, and his drunken orgy upon the night of Chaeronea sullied the brilliance of that crowning triumph. Along-

1Cited by Miller, op. cit., p. 182.
side of his men, who loved him for it, he would endure the keenest of privations, the bitterest of cold and the worst of hazards of the fight...

Deceit was ingrained in his character; and his path to power was strewn with broken promises, hypocritical professions, and acts of the blackest treachery. It is little wonder that his opponents regarded him as the deadliest enemy of all things Greek. But they were wrong. For deeply embedded in the nature of this extraordinary man was a most ardent respect and admiration for the culture of his Hellenic neighbours... And, when Athens at last lay at his feet, he spared her for no other motive that we are able to discern than a genuine reverence for her intellectual greatness.1

Thus it appears that in spite of the ostensible weakness and inhumanities of Philip, his genuine love for Greek learning and culture must have bequeathed more blessings on Philippi than simply a new name. Like the surrounding cities in the new kingdom, Philippi must have been touched by the culture, political life, and learning of the south. When his young son, Alexander, was thirteen, Philip invited the great philosopher Aristotle, a former pupil of Plato, to Pella to instruct the young prince.

Philippi's Roman Heritage

When Philip came to power in Macedonia in 359 B.C., Rome was of little more than local importance. However, by the time Philip had reached the height of his aggressive activity in 338 B.C., Rome had become powerful. By this time she had ended the Latin League by imposing her rule on its other members. This was the beginning of a gradual expansion which never stopped until the empire reached its

largest extent under the Emperor Trajan in A. D. 117. This expansion was particularly spectacular in the last half of the Third through the first half of the First Century B. C.

Roman conquest came to Macedonia in 168 B. C. when the Macedonians suffered crushing defeat in the Battle of Pydna. All of the dominions of Perseus, the last king of Macedon, including Philippi, now fell to the Roman consul, Paulus AEemilius, and the Province of Macedonia was established under the sovereignty of Rome and divided into four districts.1

Philippi at this time, according to the records of the historian Strabo, had declined to the extent that it might be described as "a small settlement." The once productive mines of Mt. Pangaeus now seem to have been exhausted.

The increasing expansion of Roman rule was beginning to demand an alteration of her original political structure. Just as the city-state system of Greece at last proved to be politically bankrupt about the time Philip rose in power to bring a "strong-arm" unity to Greece, so the original city-state system devised for Rome was not well-adapted to efficient imperial administration. As the continued expansion of Roman control brought acute difficulties to the republic, certain "strong-arm" figures began to rise. By 63 B. C. Pompey had finished his task of taking over eastern Mediterranean lands, including Palestine. Pompey

continued to demand attention as a successful leader but was eventually overshadowed by Julius Caesar who gained political ascendancy over the former, his arch rival, to become dictator of Rome. Caesar would undoubtedly have developed the republic into an empire but was killed in 44 B.C. by assassins led by Brutus and Cassius who hoped to restore the republic.

His death led, not to restoration of the republic, but to further intrigues for control of the empire. The republic, for all practical purposes, was already dead. After a time of confusion, in which rival alliances of competing candidates fought for power, Octavian finally crushed his most formidable opponent, Mark Antony, and emerged as virtual emperor.¹

While it is difficult to give an exact date for the actual beginning of the empire, it may be said that the Battle of Philippi in the autumn of 42 B.C. dealt the death blow to the republic, determined the course of Roman history and had great bearing on the Philippi that Paul entered not a century later. Here, in two main engagements, the forces of Octavian and Mark Antony imposed a sanquinary defeat on the combined forces of Brutus and Cassius, but at the cost of the lives of sixteen thousand of their own followers.

This conflict, to a large extent, avenged the death of Caesar and soon after Philippi was made a Roman colony, its name, Colonia Julia Philippensis, indicated the triumph of the cause of Julius Caesar.

Eleven years later, after the victory of Octavian over Antony in the Battle of Actium, 31 B.C., the colony was greatly strengthened largely by partisans of Antony, who had been dispossessed of

their lands in Italy in order that allotments might be made for the supporters of Octavian. This second foundation of Philippi was commemorated by the additional title of "Augusta," the full name being "Colonia Augusta Julia (Victrix) Philippensium." Coins are still in existence which attest this title.

Octavian, having crushed his most formidable opponent, Mark Antony, soon assumed the title of Augustus.

Another circumstance, other than to commemorate the site of victory in battle, which led to Philippi's becoming a colony was the practical necessity of finding a Roman settlement for citizens of Rome which was overpopulated. At one time Augustus had to provide a grain allowance for 200,000 Romans. Early attempts to meet this situation resulted in the colonies which were first founded in Italy and later in more remote parts of the empire.

The Roman colonization of Philippi greatly enhanced the life of the citizens of this city. "Despite her small arrogance the city contained a rich and varied life, and afforded the heralds of the gospel a rich opportunity."² Like other Roman colonies, Philippi was a veritable miniature of Rome. All Roman customs and municipal procedures were kept inviolate to the extent that the dignity of Rome was often imitated with an absurd punctiliousness. The city had a liberal constitution and, as was true of all Roman colonies, had two "duumvirs" (magistrates) who were at the head of its administration and judiciary. These "praetors," a name they arrogated to themselves, were independent even of the

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¹Erdman, op. cit., p. 9.

provincial governors in whose territories they were located. Thus, in matters both civil and military, they enjoyed a great measure of administrative and judicial freedom.

The "praetors," who were replaced annually, appointed to themselves attendants to whom they gave the title of "lictors" (bearers of faces) who preceded them on public occasions. The "lictors" assumed airs that emphasized the dignity of the officers they preceded, airs appropriate to the consuls of imperial Rome.

Inhabitants of the city enjoyed many privileges, the chief of which was assured by a coveted statue known as the *jus Italicum*. This law guaranteed the colonists freedom and the rights of Roman citizenship. They were exempt from tribute and taxation and were allowed to hold land in full ownership under the forms of Roman law. There was a special class of citizens known as freedmen, slaves who had been set free by the emperor or others empowered to do so.

In addition to colonies like Philippi which were inhabited to some extent by citizens sent from Italy, other cities possessed citizenship granted by Rome. Thus, Roman citizenship, which was gradually extended to people of Italy and to increasing numbers throughout the empire, was widely held by the time of Paul. The fact that Paul held such a citizenship was a great benefit to him as he moved about in the Roman world.¹ He finally exercised a prerogative of this citizenship by appealing to Caesar.

¹Acts 16:37.
Significance Of The Roman Colonization Of Philippi

The fact that Philippi was made a Roman colony has given rise to some interesting speculations concerning certain notes found in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Brewer, for example, felt that Paul's mention of the "praetorian guard"¹ (1:13)² and "Caesar's household" (4:22) was probably not incidental but deliberate. "The mutual cordiality between Nero's servants and the Philippian Christians may well have been based on common interests that were imperial as well as Christian."³ There is added significance in the fact that neither the "praetorian guard" nor "Caesar's household" is mentioned in any other Pauline letter.

A further hint toward the possibility of the Roman character of the church may be indicated by the prominence of Syntyche and Euodia (4:2ff.) for this is consistent with the freedom enjoyed by women in the free cities of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the church at Philippi had on more than one occasion supplied economic aid to Paul.⁴ Since the churches of Macedonia were generally poor, it may suggest that members of the Philippian church had an economic advantage due to their favored

¹ For the sake of uniformity, all Biblical quotations throughout this thesis (except in Chapter II), unless otherwise designated will be from the Revised Standard Version.

² Throughout this thesis all Biblical references which omit the book title will be to Philippians.


⁴ Ibid.
position as citizens of a Roman colony which members of other churches in Macedonia did not share.

Philippi, more than any other community in which Paul preached, with the exception of Rome, was most uniquely Roman in character. The close relationship which existed between Paul and the members of the Philippian church seems to be distinctly unique. Brewer saw that it may be based on a double bond—"loyalty to Jesus Christ as Lord and a sense of obligation to the Roman state to which Paul and his Philippian friends alike owed their civic liberties and other benefits of a common Roman citizenship."¹

Although Paul made no mention of his Roman citizenship in his letters, his attitude in Romans 13:1-7 reflects his feeling of respect and admiration for the Roman state. Here he saw civic authorities as ordained by God, His servants and ministers.

Brewer found further special, even technical, meaning in two terms which occur in Philippians. The one is politeusthe² (1:27) and the

¹Ibid.

²The translators of the Revised Standard Version rendered the passage in which this Greek word occurred as "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel." This translation seems to be inadequate. Both politeusthe and politeuma (3:20) are cognates of the word polis, which is translated "city" and connotes a community of citizens. The noun politēs is translated "citizen." The verb politeuo is translated "to be a citizen" and politeusthe is an imperative form of this verb. The translators of the American Standard Version in a marginal translation rendered politeusthe as "behave as citizens," which appears to be a more adequate translation than may be found in most modern translations. Cf. Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies In The New Testament*. Vol. III. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 426; and *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, n. d.), p. 334.
other politeuma (3:20), neither of which appeared anywhere else in Paul's writings and in only one place else in the New Testament (Acts 23:1).

Moreover, the terms were not used with great frequency outside the New Testament. Both terms probably had special meaning for the Philippians. Three passages in Philippians are relevant with respect to the Roman character of the Philippian church and the meaning of politeuesthe.

The first is in 1:27 where politeuesthe is used in an injunction. Attention is called to the present imperative form of the verb which commands a stronger rendering than is found in most modern translations. The injunction was issued in connection with the difficulties mentioned in verses 1:27-30. These difficulties, for Brewer, were in all likelihood, rooted in the "pressure from the non-Christian community to join whole-heartedly in the imperial cult"—a pressure all the more severe for Christians who happened to be Roman citizens.

A second passage which implied this pressure is 2:9-11 where special emphasis was placed on "the name which is above every name." This passage may not necessarily have been a Pauline contribution to high Christology. Paul was possibly thinking of the dangers implicit in the Roman loyalties of the Philippian community.

The third relevant passage is 3:20 where Paul stated that "our commonwealth (politeuma) is in heaven." While the Philippians were subjects of a Roman commonwealth which had a temporal economy, Philippian Christians were subjects of a heavenly commonwealth (colony) which

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1 Brewer, op. cit., p. 82.
demanded a higher allegiance.

When viewed in the light of the three passages above, Brewer believed that these technical terms were used deliberately for a special psychological reason. He interpreted Paul's message at this point in the following paraphrase.

Continue to discharge your obligations as citizens and residents of Philippi faithfully and as a Christian should; but do not yield to the patriotic pressure to give Nero that which belongs to Christ alone. Remember that while you are members of a Roman colony, you are also a colony of heaven from which you await the return of your divine Lord and Saviour. So stand firm, never waver in the conflict. You may have to suffer for Christ, but remember that he is your deliverer too.1

General Conditions In Graeco-Roman Philippi

The Political Condition. As a Roman colony the general condition in Philippi may have been much like that of Rome. It is probable that here, however, the Roman love for law and regimentation mingled with the Greek appreciation for freedom, art, and learning.

A conquered state was allowed to retain its own laws and customs, and even sometimes its own rulers, in so far as these were compatible with the rule of Rome.2

For being so cruel in their methods of conquest and rigid in their demands for complete submission, the Romans, generally speaking, were wise and judicious in their administration of these conquered cities. Thus they were able, by a generous disposition, to infuse Roman strength

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1Ibid., p. 83.

into the colonies. The great network of these colonies which stretched across the empire served to foster commercial enterprise and promote economic and military security. Undisputed loyalty to Rome and the emperor, however, was demanded and enforced.

The Religious Condition. The gods of Greece and Rome which for the past several centuries had been on the decline could not meet the religious needs of the first century. By the time of Paul multitudes had abandoned faith in these primitive gods.

For the Roman, the incentive for religion had been largely derived from a patriotism to the empire and hence had little that was vital and personal to lose.

The advance of Greek philosophy and culture had led people to a disillusionment with respect to belief in these deities and the universalizing effects of Roman conquest had broken down all barriers of race and nationality, throwing religions of the Mediterranean world into a frightening whirlpool. The attendant confusion caused the common people to be uncertain of the character and power of their deities and so credulously put their trust in all gods, with little of real devotion to any. Gilbert Murray described this religious destitution as a "failure of nerve" which resulted from the decadence of the old beliefs and traditions and the desperate searching for a new religious hope.¹

Despite the credulity of the age, the general condition seems to have been a crushing sense of spiritual deficiency. A great number of

the disillusioned who had accepted a sort of passive atheism, pessimism, and even abysmal fatalism wandered in darkness, having no religion which they considered to be adequately satisfying to their souls.

In an attempt to fill this void, philosophers turned their thinking from the concerns of the visible world to the concerns of the soul. Stoics and Cynics gave themselves to a sort of religio-philosophical ministry which taught a moral philosophy to the wayfarer. This, to some extent, helped to fill the void. Their preaching and "whetting" of individual appetites for an adequate moral dynamic in many ways paved the way for the Gospel which Paul preached.

People also turned to the Greek and Oriental mystery religions which met to some degree the demand for a vital, personal, and universal religion which they did not find in the religion of the state.

In general the period may be characterized as a period of religious decadence where there was widespread dissatisfaction with the old national religions. There was a widespread demand for a religion which would provide a practical moral and spiritual dynamic for the individual for the age was marked by the rise of individualism.

**The Moral Condition.** The spirit of militarism during this period had its disastrous effect on the moral fibre of Graeco-Roman life. Economic and industrial life was greatly disturbed, bringing extreme poverty with its attendant evils to the masses. Crime, fraud, and graft in public office were common and often taken for granted.

Slavery was one of the blackest marks against this period.
In their conquests the Roman legions took multitudes of prisoners, who were sold into slavery. Strabo reports that on the island of Delos, which had become a center of slave trade, as many as ten thousand slaves were sometimes sold in one day. Kidnapping and enslaving for debt, along with natural reproduction, added to the enormous number of slaves.1

Other terrible blights on the age were the bloody spectacles of the amphitheatre.

On some occasions as high as ten thousand combatants took part in the ghastly performance. So profuse was the flow of blood that the sand in the arena had to be changed several times in the course of a single exhibition. The greater the amount of bloodshed the more popular was the performance.2

Most rites of pagan worship were extremely licentious and sensual. There were few or no sanctions for the moral implications of the marital relationship. The dominating considerations in engagement and marriage were wealth, lineage, and social standing. The general position of women was low but there were some exceptions to the quite generally unparalleled condition of moral decay.

Throughout first century paganism there was noble spirits who were raising the most forcible protest within their power against the abounding immorality. The voice of the sincere moralist was heard in opposition to practically every vice of the day. Philosophers and rulers joined in protest against cruelty to slaves. Seneca denounced the gladiatorial combats of the amphitheatre. Plutarch pleaded for more just and equitable principles governing marriage. Musonius interceded with society on behalf of the child, and eloquently portrayed the charms of a happy home. Ovid inveighed bitterly against the crime of murdering the unborn infant. Tacitus, Epictetus, Seneca, and many others heartily condemned the horrible practice of exposing infants. Vice in every form found bitter antagonists among the better minds of the day.3

Thus it seems that this was an age where there needed to be a moral conduct which was commensurate with the moral ideal, the latter being

present but not attained.

The Philosophical Condition. Great philosophical ideals furnished some resistance to the prevailing evil and vice but Epicureanism, a popular philosophy in Paul's day, sullied these ideals and offered philosophical sanctuary for a depraved social conduct. There is little doubt, however, that the Stoic philosophy and Cynic popular preachings exerted a favorable influence on the thought of men in that time.

The old philosophical schools such as the Academicians, Peripatetics, Epicureans, and Stoics were still in existence, and to these had been added the Skeptics, the Neo-Pythagoreans and others.

Superstitions. The slave girl of Philippi (Acts 16:16) with powers of divination--perhaps ventriloquism--was indicative of the widespread ignorance and superstition of the time. She must have brought her master and mistress a considerable income for they were very disturbed at the loss of her supposed supernatural ability. When her power disappeared, so did the people who came to have their fortunes told. These people are typical of a vast section of the populace who sought out magicians, diviners, and oracles in the hopes of assuring themselves a better existence and possibly find some of the answers to life's inevitable enigmas.

Paul's First Contact With Philippi

The account of Paul's first visit to Philippi may be found in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. The crossing of the Aegean Sea from Troas
probably occurred about A. D. 50. After passing through Neapolis, Paul proceeded to the city of Philippi.

The advantages which Philippi possessed in the time of Paul were not entirely due to its status as a Roman colony. Its geographic position made it one of the most strategic cities in the world. The Via Egnatia, a great Roman military road which led from Byzantium across the Balkan Peninsula to Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic Ocean, linked the provinces of the East with Rome.\(^1\) This road ran directly into Philippi, passing the entire length of the city's forum. Here one may still see marks of chariot and wagon wheels scored to the depth of three or four inches.\(^2\) Westward out of the city it was a good and direct route to Rome. Traveling southeastward it was but nine or ten miles to Cavala, now Neapolis, on the Aegean Sea. From Neapolis one could travel eastward on the great road to the Hellespont.

By Paul's time, Philippi had become a city with a definite cosmopolitan air. Representatives of many races and religions passed along the great Roman thoroughfare leaving evidences of their race, religion, and culture in the wake of their passing. Philippi was a true meeting place of the East and the West.

It appears that in Paul's day residents of Philippi were preponderantly native Macedonians, at least they were numerically the strongest

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section. Roman colonists were, of course, a dominant element and there was a considerable admixture of Orientals.

The Jewish population Paul sought to contact there seems to have been small; not even large enough to support a synagogue. When, on the first Sabbath Day in the city, he and his companions sought out the Jewish congregation, they found only a small group of women by the river. Luke calls the enclosure where they worshipped a "proseuche," a place of prayer. Apparently there was no Jewish synagogue. Brewer thought that this might be indirect evidence of the Roman character of the population.  

It is possible that Jewish meetings may have been forbidden within the city gate. Paul's visit may have been in the very year that there had been an expulsion of all Jews from Rome on account of Messianic riots. If this were true, then Philippi may have followed the practice of her parent city. It is possible that such an expulsion had already taken place in Philippi and when Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates, there undoubtedly would have existed special feelings of contempt for "these Jews."  

To say the least one might surmise from the account in Acts that it was not easy to be a Jew in Philippi. The fact that Paul and Silas were Jews seems to have made the charges more serious than they might ordinarily have been. The Romans resented the introduction of "unlawful"

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1 Brewer, op. cit., p. 81.


Jewish customs.

II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE

Although the name of Timothy was joined with Paul's in the salutation of six of the latter's epistles, there is general agreement among scholars that all of these in their entirety were products of the apostle's own mental efforts. With specific reference to Philippians, E. F. Scott observed: "After the opening verse Paul speaks consistently of his own person, and rests his whole appeal on what he himself was experiencing."^2

There is, as shall be seen, ponderous evidence of the letter's authenticity.3 "The genuineness of our epistle is taken for granted by almost all modern scholars."^4 Nevertheless, its claim has been challenged from time to time but never on grounds which have proved to be adequately tenable.

 Probably the most vociferous of those who have either doubted or denied Pauline authorship were scholars and their disciples of the

^1 I and II Thess., II Cor., Phil., Philem., and Col.


Tübingen School\(^1\) in the last half of the nineteenth century who dis-
avowed Pauline authorship on the strength of what many scholars then as
well as now have regarded as rather tenuous grounds. The principal
reasons for disavowal have been as follows: (1) The absence of the
distinctly Pauline polemic which was regarded as a mark of all of the
genuine letters; (2) The presence of certain anachronisms; e.g., the
ante-dating of the office of "bishops and deacons" in 1:1; (3) Supposed
traces of Gnosticism in 2:5-8; (4) Teaching in 3:4-11 which was supposed
to be inconsistent with the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith
found in the genuine letters. With reference to the arguments pro-
pounded by the Tübingen critics J. B. Lightfoot stated:

I cannot think that the mere fact of their having been
brought forward by men of ability and learning is sufficient to
entitle objections of this stamp to a serious refutation.\(^2\)

While scholars of the Tübingen school raised some thought-provoking
questions, their general conclusions are scarcely followed today.

**Internal Evidence**

There is an abundance of internal evidence by which traditional
Pauline authorship may be certified. An impressive array of scholars is
thoroughly convinced that the words could have come from none other than
the apostle Paul.

\(^1\)Cf. notes on Evanston, Schrader, Baur, and Schweigler in J. B.
Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 74.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Lightfoot offered both positive and negative evidence for Pauline authorship.

On the one hand the epistle completely reflects St. Paul's mind and character, even in their finest shades. On the other, it offers no motive which could have led to forgery.¹

M. S. Enslin stated: "So far as style and language are concerned, no letter can make a stronger claim to be from Paul.²

E. F. Scott wrote:

Its teaching is unmistakeably that of Paul. It is everywhere in keeping with all that we know of his life and character. In its language and sentiment and manner of thought it carries the signature of Paul in every verse. . . . It may be confidently affirmed not only that the epistle is by Paul, but that it is one of the most characteristic of all his writings.³

Both Scott and Enslin, among others, regarded the mention of "bishops and deacons" as one of the more serious difficulties for those who defend the genuineness of the letter. Scott has stated the problem and given what appears to be a most reasonable solution to the difficulty.

It is argued that in Paul's time church leaders were referred to only in general terms—"the outstanding men," or "those who rule among you." They were separated into orders and given specific titles only at a later time. The notice in Philippians is indeed peculiar but it may well have been that the names which were in common use a generation later had already been adopted at Philippi. They were natural designations for the chief overseers and their assistants, and we know that Paul took care to appoint such officers in every church he founded. The titles appear suspicious only when we read into them the significance they came to acquire in the later ecclesiastical system.⁴

¹Ibid.
³Scott, op. cit., p. 8. ⁴Ibid.
Enslin held that "bishops and deacons" are to be understood loosely, much in the sense of I Thes. 5:12 (those who are over you) and if this or no other explanation seemed satisfactory, he would rather have viewed them as "an early gloss than by retaining them to throw doubt on the letter as a whole."

External Evidence

The external attestation for Philippians is essentially the same as it is for Romans, I and II Cor., and Galations, the "big four" of Paul's letters which are regarded by virtually all scholars as being unquestionably Pauline.

A number of quotations or allusions to Philippians may be found in several early Christian writers and Lightfoot asserted that there probably would have been more if the letter had "contained more matter which was directly doctrinal or ecclesiastical."  

Early evidence of the letter may be found in the writings of the apostolic fathers. It seems obvious from an examination of an early letter of St. Clement of Rome that he had seen Paul's Philippian letter and was influenced by its thought and language. Likewise Ignatius' letters exhibit evidence of his acquaintance with Philippians.

The earliest definite reference to the letter in second century

1Enslin, op. cit., p. 281.  2Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 75.  3Ibid.

literature occurs in a letter of Ignatius' friend and contemporary, Polycarp, to the Philippians. Polycarp's letter was written immediately after the death of Ignatius which occurred ca. 107-117. In this letter he speaks of Paul "who wrote letters to you, from the study of which you will be able to build yourselves up in the faith given you." Later again he referred to Paul as a writer of letters. Moreover, other passages in Polycarp reflect the expressions of Paul in Philippians.

Some of the expressions in pseudepigraphic Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (a Jewish-Christian work probably dating from early in the second century) were borrowed from the letter.

The Christian Apologists contributed further references. In the first half of the second century e.g., the anonymous writer of the Epistle to Diogenetus, wrote the words "Their dwelling is on earth but their citizenship is in heaven" which is an unmistakeable echo of the statement of Paul in 3:20. Other similarities of words, expressions, and ideas occur in numerous other writings.

Philippians had a place in the two earliest canons, that of the heretic Marcion (ca. A. D. 140), and Muratorian Fragment (ca. A. D. 170). It was likewise included in both of the oldest versions, the Old Latin

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1 The Epistle Of Polycarp To The Philippians.

2 Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 75.

3 The Epistle To Diogenetus, Ch. 5.

4 A comprehensive survey and evaluation of the external evidences may be found in Lightfoot, op. cit., pp. 75-77.
and the Old Syriac.\textsuperscript{1} Origen and Eusebius recognized the letter as the work of Paul and used it as such and at the close of the second century, it was directly quoted and assigned to Paul by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria.\textsuperscript{2}

\section*{III. INTEGRITY OF THE EPISODE}

One of the most challenging single problems which this Epistle presents to modern criticism is the question of its literary unity. When the letter is considered as a single effort, readers are confronted with one of the most illogically developed series of materials to be found in the New Testament. Even a casual reader is aware of the abrupt transitions from one theme to another. The supposition that the letter was a composite of elements from two or more letters is not without some measure of both internal and external support.

If the letter is to be considered as a composite of elements from two or conceivably more letters which have suffered mutilation and subsequent transposition, there remains the precarious task of fixing points where one letter ends and another begins. Considering the variety of opinions on this problem, the undertaking is all the more difficult, if not impossible.

The arguments most frequently employed in challenging the unity of this letter are generally organized around one of two hypothesis: (1)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}\textit{Ibid.}
\item Marvin R. Vincent, \textit{The Epistles To The Philippans And To Philemon} (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), pp. xxvi-xxvii.
\end{itemize}
That there is in Philippians a nucleus of Pauline material with editorial matter from a later period and (2) that there are two notes from different periods in Paul's life. While there are variations of the earlier view, this hypothesis is not widely held today.

Arguments for the second point of view stem from the sudden change in tone and subject at 3:2. The change is so abrupt that virtually all New Testament scholars describe it as "inexplicable." Holtzmann remarks poetically that "the rush of all tides of criticism upon this passage raises the suspicion of a hidden rock." 1

The verses which follow this curious hiatus at 3:2 seem to constitute an anomalous element in the letter. The mood of 3:1 is serene and includes the Pauline "rejoice in the Lord" which is so characteristic of this particular letter. In the next verse (3:2) he breaks into scathing invectives against the Judaizers in a mood which resembles his tone in II Cor. 11:22ff, and with an intensity as great if not greater than we find in Galatians. Riddle and Hutson, who believed that Paul's letters reflect various stages of the apostle's evangelistic activity and would date all of them according to whether they were written before, at the time of, or subsequent to the crisis which occurred during Paul's visit to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1ff), noted that while no other parts of the letter reflect this crisis, 3:2-16 reflects the crisis at its height and heat. 2 Such observations have led a number of scholars to deny the

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1 Cited by Enslin, op. cit., p. 281.

unity of the letter and argue for a partition theory or the existence of an interpolation.

Partition Theory

As it has been noted above, Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians spoke of the "letters" which Philippians had received from the Apostle. Moreover, it seems almost certain that Paul would have written on more than one occasion to a church which was as dear to him as the church in Philippi. The words in 3:1 "to write the same things to you is not irksome to me" may indicate that he had written the words which follow to them before. Certainly some of Paul's letters have disappeared and among them may have been one or more to Philippians which would help to fill in many of the enigmatic hiatuses in the knowledge of this letter. However, many scholars believed that the statement of Polycarp is to be understood as a general statement and we are cautioned against assuming that the reference gives adequate evidence that in Polycarp's day two letters circulated and were later combined to form our canonical epistle.¹

It seems evident from a later reference in Polycarp's letter to "the beginning of his Epistle"² (Paul's Epistle To The Philippians) that Polycarp knew of only one.

Among those who argued for the presence of two distinct letters was Heinricks who has suggested that 3:1--4:19 is a private letter addressed

¹ Enslein, op. cit., 281.
² The Epistle Of Polycarp To The Philippians.
to the leaders, his more intimate friends, of the Philippian Church, and 1:1--2:30, 4:21-23 a public letter to the Church as a whole. There is little to commend this view.¹

B. W. Bacon believed that 3:2ff. represents an earlier letter written in acknowledgement of the gift of money and subsequently was appended to 1:1--3:1, as II Cor. 10:13 has been added to an epistle which it preceded chronologically.² This is substantially the view adopted by Goodspeed who, too, would have divided the letter.³

If a partition theory is to be accepted, it would not be out of keeping with the kind of solution accepted for other New Testament letters. Many, for example, have held that the sixteenth chapter of Romans was not originally a part of the Roman letter but rather was a portion of or a single note to the church at Ephesus⁴ which was incorporated, perhaps by accident into the Roman letter. Likewise it is evident that II Corinthians is a composite of at least two different letters and may contain a portion of a third.


Interpolation Theory

Kirsopp Lake believed that an interpolation exists extending from 3:1b to 4:3. Michael though felt that the first three verses of chapter four attest themselves unmistakably to belong to Philippians proper and so would have ended the interpolation at 3:19. This writer finds reasonable transition from 3:19 where Paul was describing men who were only guided by bodily appetites "with minds set on earthly things," to 3:20 where the Christians in Philippi were reminded that "our commonwealth is in heaven." As Michael admitted, the great weakness of any theory of interpolation in Philippians is discovering where it "manifestly comes to an end." Scott astutely observed that:

One cannot draw any dividing line in the chapter. It is equally difficult to separate the chapter from the rest of the whole epistle, which from beginning to end is pervaded by the same ideas and would be impoverished if any portion were left out.

Other scholars, with Scott, found no reason for positing any theory of partition or interpolation. The feeling was that the letter in its present form yields a satisfactory analysis. 3

C. H. Dodd accepted Philippians as uninterpolated. 4 If the letter is viewed as a unity, it is probable that to loipon of 3:1 should be

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1 Michael, op. cit., p. xi. 2 Scott, op. cit., p. 9.


translated "for the rest," or "as to what remains." In I Thessalonians (where there is much less suspicion of disunity), two entire chapters follow the to loipon in 4:1. To loipon is used in a similar manner in II. Thess. 3:1. The verse 4:4 echoes the note sounded in 3:1 and the intervening outburst may be psychologically explained without recourse to any theory of transposition. It is usually conjectured that the sharp change was occasioned by a disturbing incident at the place from which he was writing or unexpected news of some disappointing occurrence at Philippi. It is further argued that in an informal letter such as this, Paul may very well have turned abruptly from one subject to another. Thus, a well-constructed, logically-developed letter is not necessarily expected.

Enslin expressed an impression of the authenticity of the letter in almost unqualified terms:

All in all, this little letter to his friends whose conversion marked the "beginning of the gospel"—at least in Europe—appears not only fully entitled to be considered genuine and in the form in which it left the hands of the apostle's scribe, but as one of the finest possessions preserved from antiquity.

IV. PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING OF THE EPISTLE

Probably the most difficult critical problem in the study of Philippians is the question of the place and date of writing.

Internal references (1:7,13,14,17; 2:17) and the general mood of the letter clearly show that Paul was in prison. The references to the

1 Vincent, op. cit., p. xxxi.
2 Enslin, op. cit., p. 282.
"praetorian guard" (1:13) and "Caesar's household" (4:22) suggest that it was a Roman imprisonment but the most important question, the place of the imprisonment, is unanswered. Until fairly recent times it was assumed that it could be none other than an imprisonment in Rome mostly because of the references to the "praetorian guard" and "Caesar's household." It has been learned from the evidence of inscriptions and papyri that the terms were not necessarily distinctive of Rome.¹

The government quarter in every important city was known as the praetorium, while "Caesar's servants" was a name attached to all who were employed in administrative work—clerks and police and janitors as well as high officials.²

The book of Acts recorded three Pauline imprisonments; at Philippi (Acts 16:23), at Caesarea (Acts 24:27), and at Rome (Acts 28:30,31). While Acts did not mention an imprisonment at Ephesus, Paul in II Cor. 1:8-10 wrote of a difficulty there which may have included imprisonment. A number of scholars defend the idea that Paul was so imprisoned and that some or all of the prison letters were written from there. References found in early church writings of Pauline imprisonments which were unrecorded in Acts are not generally accepted as possible places from which Paul wrote Philippians.

Of the thirteen New Testament epistles which have been traditionally attributed to Paul, four of these, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, ¹


²Scott, op. cit., p. 5.
and Philemon,¹ are often classed as prison letters because of internal
evidence² which suggests that Paul at the time of writing was a prisoner.
There is no general agreement on where they were written.

Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon have certain likenesses which
place them in a group by themselves. It is probable that they were
written about the same time and from the same place. They apparently
were carried to their destinations by Tychicus who contemplated a trip
to the region of Colossae in company with the slave Onesimus, who was
returning to his master, Philemon, (Eph. 6:21,22; Col. 4:7-9; Philem.
10-22).

The tone and content of Philippians is different from the other
three imprisonment letters. While it is conceivable that they may have
been written during the same imprisonment, it seems natural to think
that some months, possibly years, separated the letters. All four of the
letters are usually considered in any attempt to determine the origin of
any one of them.

Scholars generally defend one of three places as a possible place
of writing; Caesarea, Ephesus, or Rome. Ever since the belief was first

¹The authenticity of all four, though questioned by some, is
assumed here for the sake of confining the discussion to reasonable
limits. The Pastoral Letters, traditionally viewed as part of Paul's
prison correspondence, are excluded from this list because of the
rather universal doubt of their authenticity.

²Eph. 3:1, 4:1, 6:20; Phil. 1:7,13,14,17; 2:17; Col. 4:18; and
Philem. 9.
expressed that the letters could have come from somewhere other than Rome, countless varieties of reconstructions of the facts have appeared. In almost every instance the approach to the problem has been purely historical. Most of these reconstructions have been put forward by advocates of the Ephesian hypothesis. With reference to this hypothesis one writer stated:

It must be some embarrassment to the advocates of that hypothesis, as it certainly is to their critics, that there are hardly two of them who hold it in the same form. Some put all the captivity epistles at Ephesus, some put Philippians there and the rest at Caesarea or Rome, others put Philippians at Rome or Caesarea and the rest at Ephesus. Some assume one imprisonment at Ephesus, others more than one.  

One can see from this statement that the ramifications of the subject extend beyond the pale of this thesis. It will suffice here to point out that a credible defense can be built for any one of the three cities.

The two-year imprisonment at Caesarea was long enough for all of the journeys which are implied in Philippians to have taken place. Here Paul must have had time and opportunity for letter-writing and yet, if some or all of the captivity epistles were not written from here, there is no extant Pauline literature from this period. If Paul wrote no letters during this period, it would be strange in view of his constant concern for the churches and his incapacity at this time to be with them in person. Nevertheless, the Caesarean hypothesis is open to grave question. One argument against Caesarea which seems entirely cogent

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1 Dodd, op. cit., p. 89.  
2 II Cor. 11:28.
was stated by Scott as follows:

... the difficulty of distance, which tells so heavily against Rome, can be urged with equal force against Caesarea. We know, moreover, that in Caesarea he was not in serious danger. He was detained by a corrupt governor in hope of a bribe, and at any moment could free himself, as he finally did, by appealing to the higher court. The Caesarean imprisonment was tedious and irksome, but would not justify the type of martyrdom which prevades the Epistle to the Philippians.¹

Undoubtedly, for most scholars, the place of writing was either Ephesus or Rome. At least the preponderance of writing on this subject seems to have been devoted to the defense of one of these two cities as the place of origin of the Epistle. One of the most recent and complete examinations of the question was given by C. H. Dodd whose conclusions are stated in the following paragraph.

(1) As regards Philippians: the Ephesian hypothesis was shown to have some small balance of advantage over the Roman hypothesis on the score of the presence of Timothy, the great distance between Rome and Philippi, and the fact that we know Paul to have contemplated visiting Philippi from Ephesus, whereas we do not know that he thought of visiting it after his Roman imprisonment. But the bare possibility that the imprisonment of Philippians could be placed at Ephesus shortly before I Corinthians has changed on investigations to a definite improbability, verging on impossibility. The balance therefore tips definitely to the side of Rome. (ii) As regards Colossians and Philemon the Ephesian hypothesis was shown to have some slight balance of advantage over the Roman hypothesis, on the score that Timothy was present, that Onesimus was more likely to have thought of visiting Colossae from Ephesus than from Rome. In this case the bare possibility that these epistles were written during an imprisonment at the time of the riot remains a bare possibility, supported by no evidence, and confronted by the serious difficulty of charging the author of Acts with deliberate misrepresentation. This is enough to destroy the balance of advantage, and we must report something like a dead heat between

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 5.
the two hypotheses. But this being so, we are surely justified in recalling that we know that Paul was imprisoned at Rome, while it has not been made even definitely probable that he was imprisoned at Ephesus, and concluding that the net advantage after all rests, for these epistles also, with the Roman hypothesis, against which no serious arguments were adduced.¹

In view of these conclusions which indicate some of the grounds for defending either Ephesus or Rome, there is no cogent reason for abandoning the traditional belief that Philippians was written from Rome.

Dating the letter seems hopeless in view of the uncertainty of the place of writing. If the place of writing is assigned to Ephesus, the letter must have been written during Paul's stay there ca. A. D. 54-57 and would undoubtedly be dated ca. A. D. 56. If this early date is accepted, it must be admitted that the greater part of extant Pauline literature would have been produced during a period of not more than five years.² It seems impossible that all of Paul's extant letters were written before his imprisonments in Caesarea and Rome and Beare noted in this connection that:

... it would be a strange accident of literary survival if all of the extant letters were written before his final visit to Jerusalem. It would seem reasonable to assume, on the contrary, that when the letters came to be collected some years after his death, the later ones would more probably be accessible than those of his earlier period—not only because less time had elapsed in which they might perish, but also because the increasing greatness of his name among the churches would cause them to set increasing high store upon his letters and to be more careful to preserve them.³

¹Dodd, op. cit., pp. 104-105. ²Ibid., pp. 86, 105, 106.
The conclusions reached by Dodd for the Roman origin of the captivity epistles, which consequently would cause one to assign a late date for the same, were based on a purely historical approach to the subject. He further defended their late dating on the basis of arguments from the thought and language of these epistles.

... the difficulties raised by the striking dissimilarities between epistles ex hypothesi written nearly at the same time cannot be ignored. The data on which the Tubingen School founded their case against the authenticity of the captivity epistles are still facts. No one can deny that the style, vocabulary, and ideas of Colossians and Ephesians, and to a lesser degree Philippians, show remarkable differences from those of I and II Corinthians and Romans.\(^2\)

The Roman hypothesis allows for a lapse of time which would help to account for the peculiarities of the captivity epistles.\(^3\)

If the Caesarean hypothesis is accepted, Philippians should in all probability be dated toward the end of Paul's two year imprisonment there i.e., ca. A. D. 61-62.

If the Roman hypothesis is favored, the letter should be dated toward the end of Paul's two-year imprisonment there ca. A. D. 64.\(^4\)

The order of the epistles within the captivity group, however, is uncertain. Lightfoot devoted considerable study to the matter, and mostly because of the similarities he saw between Philippians and other

\(1\) Q.v. pp. 34, 35. \(2\) Dodd, op. cit., p. 106.

\(3\) Ibid., p. 107.

\(4\) The possible dates for the captivity epistles given above follow the chronology of C. H. Dodd, who believed that Paul did not reach Rome before A. D. 62. Ibid., p. 103. Some chronologies offer earlier dates.
letters ex hypothesi, believed that Philippians should be placed early and the remaining captivity epistles late in the "first Roman captivity."  

Some have seen that Colossians and to a greater degree Ephesians reflects a later stage in Paul's theology and on this basis they too would place the remaining captivity epistles later than Philippians.

The time for certain events implied and stated in Philippians must be allowed; therefore, a date late in the imprisonment is demanded. Dodd concluded as follows: "On the whole it seems probable that Philippians followed rather than preceded the others, but this view is not altogether without difficulties."  

V. OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF WRITING

After the news of Paul's imprisonment reached Philippi, Epaphroditus was sent by the Philippians to assist Paul. While with Paul, Epaphroditus became ill and nearly died. News of his illness reached Philippi and caused concern among the Christians there (2:26). This concern became known to Epaphroditus apparently through some communication which also expressed continued concern for Paul. Paul now wished to return this ambassador of good will to his home in view of the latter's homesickness and possibly his weakened condition. Paul believed that this would be best for Epaphroditus who was homesick, the Philippians who would be happy to see him again, and Paul himself who would be "less

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1Lightfoot, op. cit., pp. 30-46.  
2Dodd, op. cit., p. 108.
anxious" after the anxiety of this serious illness.

The return of Epaphroditus at Paul's behest was probably the immediate occasion and main purpose of this letter. The letter was carried by the returning Epaphroditus and would no doubt ensure him a good reception.

The letter also included a note of thanks to the Philippians for a gift which they had sent by Epaphroditus to Paul (4:10-18). This must have been Paul's first letter to the Philippians since the coming of Epaphroditus or surely the gifts would have been acknowledged earlier. Some, however, believe that an earlier letter from Paul informed the Philippians of the illness of Epaphroditus. The words of thanks must have constituted a part of the occasion and purpose of this letter.

Paul used the occasion to inform the Philippians about his own affairs, to strengthen the faith of the Philippians through exhortations and the example of his own personal faith in Christ and the Gospel, and to comment on certain problems which had arisen in the church.

In chapter one it appears that the problem was a matter of "jealousy and strife" similar to the situation in I Cor. 3:3ff.

The problem of 3:2-16 was clearly the problem which vexed Paul almost everywhere he went, Judeaizers who insisted on maintaining certain Jewish traditions within the framework of the new faith in the face of Paul's insistence on their exclusion. Whether the incident or incidents which prompted this "outburst" occurred at Philippi or at the place

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1 Scott, op. cit., p. 10.
of Paul's imprisonment is a matter of conjecture. The problem in 3:17--4:1 was antinomianism, a flouting of ethical norms which could not, in Paul's thinking be ignored with impunity. In 4:2-3 Paul sought to arbitrate in a personality clash which had occurred between the two women in the church.

While all of these became a part of the purpose of this letter, they were incidental rather than primary and may not in themselves have evoked a letter from Paul at that time.

VI. CHARACTER AND CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

One of the first characteristics to be noted in the letter is its informality. It does not admit the tracing of a logical sequence of thoughts and ideas. The spontaneous character of the letter was noted by one writer who stated:

Paul writes out of a full heart, putting down his ideas as they come to him, and personal notices, outbursts of tenderness and thanksgiving, warnings, profound reflections, are all mingled together.

The letter was marked by a note of intimacy. The Christians at Philippi had endeared themselves to Paul and seem to have held a special place in his circle of friends. The letter was highly personal, similar in many respects to the letter to Philemon. It was warm with genuine friendship and was intensely human. Paul yearned for the Philippians "with the affection of Christ Jesus" (1:8) and used such

\[1\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 12.}\]
endearing terms as "my beloved" (2:12) and "my brethren" (3:1). "Paul is writing as one who is sure of his place in the hearts of the readers, and he wishes them to be sure of the place they hold in his."¹

The imperfections in the Philippian church which had come to Paul's notice were handled with extreme gentleness. His exhortations were positive but they were clothed in Christian love. Even the outburst of 3:2ff. did not contain any bitterness toward the Philippians and was most likely due to Paul's solicitude for their general well-being.

The self-revelatory character of the letter was noted by another writer:

St. Paul writes here at his ease; he makes those spontaneous disclosures of the inner self which only the tenderest sympathy can elicit. While II Corinthians displays the agitations which rent the Apostle's heart in the crucial conflict of his ministry, Philippians reveals the spring of his inward peace and strength.²

This inward peace and strength was exhibited in another characteristic of the letter, Paul's use of "joy" and "rejoice" and similar words. The words "Rejoice... again I will say, Rejoice" (4:4) were typical of a tone which prevailed the epistle. Such words as "joy," "rejoice," "thanksgiving," "contentment," and "peace" appeared with great frequency throughout the four chapters of the letter.³

These notes of joyous Christian hope at first seem to constitute

¹Erdman, op. cit., p. 22.


³Erdman, op. cit., p. 22.
an anomaly in view of the fact that Paul wrote in the immediate prospect of death. This supposed anomaly becomes more understandable in the light of another characteristic of the letter, the great desire Paul had to become completely identified with Christ. Verse 1:21 was but one of many verses¹ which expressed this desire which Paul wished the Philippians to have too (3:15).

The letter was further marked by the use of the words "all" and "always" which may be found repeatedly, often in the same verse. As Paul had trusted in Christ in earlier years of his Christian service and found him adequate, so again under perverse conditions he indicated to his readers that Christ was "always" and for "all" circumstances adequate indeed. His testimony was that "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." (4:13).

Another characteristic which cannot go without mention was Paul's preoccupation with the future. Scott noted in this connection that:

Everything he has to say is brought into the light of that "day of Christ" when all the purposes of God will reach fulfillment. He desires the Philippians to be always thinking of it so that they may be ready to meet the Lord when he appears.²

As Paul wrote this epistle, his eyes were open toward the future and especially toward "the day of Christ."³

Erdman believed that the letter was a letter of faith and that it was this fact which gave real character to the epistle for:

¹Cf. 1:23, 3:8,10,14, et al.
²Scott, op. cit., p. 13.
³Cf. 1:6,10; 2:16.
The love is for those who are "in Christ Jesus." The joy is the joy of the Lord. The whole message is from one who found in Christ the sum and substance of his life. To preach the gospel of Christ was Paul's consuming passion and his unfailing occupation. His chief desire for his friends was that they might "be of the same mind in the Lord." To attain to the moral likeness and perfection of Christ was his constant effort. That he could do all things in the power of Christ was his unfailing comfort and his abiding hope. Surely here was one who could say with all sincerity, "To me to live is Christ."  

Outline Of The Contents of Philippians

I. Introduction (1:1-11)
   1. Address and salutation (1:1-2)
   2. Words of thanksgiving and confidence (1:3-8)
   3. Prayer for the Philippians (1:9-11)

II. Reflections on the imprisonment (1:12-26)
   1. The imprisonment has served to advance the Gospel (1:12-14)
   2. Christ has been proclaimed even through factious people (1:15-18)
   3. Confidence in face of life or death (1:19-26)

III. Practical exhortations (1:27 to 2:18)
   1. Remain steadfast in the face of opposition (1:27-30)
   2. Be united, loving, and humble (2:1-4)
   3. Imitate Christ's humility and selflessness (2:5-11)
   4. Continue your obedience (2:12-18)

IV. Commendations of Paul's co-workers (2:19-30)
   1. Timothy, Paul's confidant (2:19-24)
   2. Epaphroditus, messenger and minister to Paul's need (2:25-30)

V. Paul's apologia (3:1-21)
   1. Warning against Judaism (3:1-3)
   2. Paul's Jewish heritage (3:4-6)
   3. Renunciation of privileges to gain Christ (3:7-16)
   4. Warning against immoral persons (3:17-21)

VI. Final admonitions (4:1-9)

VII. Acknowledgement of the gift (4:10-20)

VIII. Final greetings and benediction (4:21-22)

1Erdman, op. cit., p. 23.
CHAPTER II

TRANSLATION OF THE EPISTLE

I. PROLEGOMENA

Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, like all books of the New Testament,\(^1\) was originally written in Koine\(^2\) Greek, the lingua franca used throughout the Eastern Mediterranean World of the first century A. D. It was a non-literary, every-day language used widely in civil administration and commerce.

Among papyri discovered in Egypt dating from this time have been found decrees, business correspondence, contracts, bills, receipts, deeds, and numerous other documents containing literally thousands of examples of this Hellenistic Greek.\(^3\) The papyri discoveries, comparative philology, and linguistic studies have contributed much to the clarification of original word meanings.\(^4\) Hence, it is now possible to give a more accurate rendering of the ancient manuscripts. Nevertheless, the task is fraught with many real problems.

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\(^1\)This writer is cognizant, of course, of the arguments of C. C. Torrey et al., for an Aramaic origin of the Gospels.

\(^2\)Technically, a more accurate designation of the lingua franca would be Hellenistic Greek. Traditionally, however, authors have used the term Koine to designate the Greek of the period.

\(^3\)Cf. the work of Adolf Deissmann in his book Light From The Ancient East, op. cit.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 107.
Among the usual difficulties encountered, there are two ideas which tend to militate against the acceptance and appreciation of new and modern translations: (1) that the widely accepted and time-honored translations of the past are adequate for all future generations; (2) that a work in one language can and ought to be translated into another, word for word, and thus the original meaning would be neither distorted nor destroyed.

With respect to the first idea, J. B. Phillips believed that in order to have any translation, there must be periodic re-translation. Most scholars would agree with his statement that "there is no such thing as translating a book into another language once and for all, for a language is a changing thing."¹

The problem of the second idea was clearly stated by William Wonderly:

Some people have felt that, especially in the major languages, there should be a distinction made between the "words of the original" and the "additions" made by the translator. There is a tendency to believe, and to give the general impression, that it is normal for a translation to convey the actual "words of the original" without loss or addition, and that where any deviation from this goal occurs it is an abnormality concerning which the general reader can and should be informed--thus enabling him to know with confidence what elements in the translation represent the original with complete accuracy and which do not.²

The general conclusion of the article from which this quotation was taken was, in substance, a plea for some degree of liberty in conveying


the ideas of one language to another.

In keeping with this kind of freedom there are no parenthesized words or phrases in this translation to indicate what has been supplied by the translator in lieu of words "that are not in the Greek text." Footnotes, however, have been used to indicate different, usually more literal, renderings.

There has been an attempt to avoid both of two extremes; the one of being exactingly literal to the extent of translating words rather than ideas, and the other of being excessively free with the use of idiom, paraphrase, and word additions. Consequently there has been a departure from the literal, mechanically-exact kind of translation of which the American Standard Version published in 1911 is typical. Without this freedom from a word for word procedure—inssofar as this is possible—the natural order and beauty of many English expressions must be sacrificed or at least stilted to a great degree. In a sense Dr. Moffatt was correct when he asserted that "a real translation is in the main an interpretation." However, the freedom of interpretation must have its disciplines. Subjective opinion must be held to an absolute minimum. The original meaning must be uncovered and elucidated without reading ideas into the text which were not originally there.

The ultimate value of any translation is no doubt dependent upon

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1 The Greek text used in this translation is that of D. Eberhard Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1945).

the ability of the interpreter (translator) to combine his knowledge of
the languages and their structures with historical knowledge and per-
spective. To insure gaining adequate objectivity, an appreciable amount
of notes on the Greek text along with grammars, lexicons, and trans-
lations have been consulted and compared. It was the purpose of this
translation to discover the original meaning of the Greek text and
translate the ideas into accurate and clear English.

II. CHAPTER I

1 Paul and Timothy, slaves¹ of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in
Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and those who
serve; ² 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

3 I thank my God in³ all my remembrance of you, 4 in every prayer I
pray on your behalf always offering my prayer with joy, 5 for your
co-operation in communicating the gospel, ⁴ from the day you first heard
it⁵ until now. 6 I am confident of this very thing, ⁶ that he who began

¹ or servants (douloi). As distinguished from hypēretai and
diakonois, it implies utter dependence on Christ and permanent ownership
by Christ.

² episkopois kai diakonois, or bishops and deacons. Cf. discussion
of these words in Chapter I, pp. 22-23.

³ i.e., on the ground of ⁴ Lit., for your fellowship in the gospel.

⁵ Lit., from the first day.

⁶ i.e., with regard to this very thing. (auto touto), an
accusative of reference to that which was the basis for Paul's joy, viz.,
a settled conviction.
a good work in you will continue to develop it until the Day of Jesus Christ. 7 And I am justified in thinking this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since you all are co-sharers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in my defense and vindication of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection inspired by Christ Jesus. 9 And this I pray, that your love may overflow still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may test the things which differ, in order that you may be pure and blameless for the Day of Christ; 11 being filled with fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has actually resulted in the advancement of the gospel, 13 so that the whole praetorian guard and people in general are well aware that my imprisonment is for Christ; 14 and the majority of the Christian brothers have grown confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment and now are exceedingly bold to speak the word of God without fear.

15 Some, it is true, are actually preaching Christ from jealousy and rivalry but there are also others who do it from good will. 16 The

1or, to approve the things that are excellent (dokimazein ta diapheronta).

2i.e., in making ready for.

3or Imperial Guard, the company of Roman soldiers who guarded the emperor and his palace.

4Lit., all the rest.
latter are motivated by love, knowing that I am providentially placed here for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ insincerely from a motive of contentiousness, supposing that in this way they can add distress to my imprisonment. But what difference does this make? Still, in every way, whether from ulterior motives or genuine motives, Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice.

19 Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out for my general welfare; in accordance with my eager desire and hope, that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with complete courage, now as always, Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death. For in my mind living means Christ and dying means gain.

22 If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful work for me. Yet I cannot decide which I shall choose. I am hard pressed from both sides—for I long to depart and be with Christ which is far, far better; yet for your sakes it is very necessary for me to remain in the flesh. Being certain of this, I know that I shall remain and

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1 While no Greek equivalent for this word was found in the Greek text, it seemed to be implied in the context.

2 or a partisan spirit.

3 Lit., in truth.

4 Lit., salvation.

5 Lit., for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

6 or hemmed in on both sides, i.e., I face a dilemma.

7 Lit., to break up my tent.

8 Greek, double comparative, Lit., more better by far.
continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through me you may have ample reason to glory in Christ Jesus through my being with you again.

27 Only perform your duties as citizens in a manner worthy\(^1\) of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or only hear of you in my absence, I may hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, and with one mind, fighting shoulder to shoulder for the faith in the gospel. 28 Never be frightened in the least bit by your opponents, for such fearlessness will be to them a sure sign of their impending destruction and to you a dependable token, and this from God, of your salvation. 29 For you have been granted the privilege on behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for his sake, \(30\) having the same struggle you once saw in me and which you now hear that I still have.

III. CHAPTER II

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any persuasion of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of one mind, having the same love, the same purpose of heart.\(^2\) 3 Do not act out of selfish interests or personal vanity, but in humility let each regard the others as better than himself. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also

\(^1\) (Politeuesthe) Cf. the discussion of the significance of the Roman colonization of Philippi in Chapter I, pp. 10-13. Cf. 3:20 in this translation.

\(^2\) Lit., being joined in soul.
to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was divine by nature, did not regard equality with God a treasure to be seized\(^1\) for himself, 7 but he voluntarily dispossessed himself of divine prerogatives,\(^2\) taking the nature of a slave, being born in the likeness of man. 8 Having assumed human form, he humbled himself by living a life of such perfect obedience that he willingly died, even upon a cross. 9 Because of this, God has highly exalted him and graciously conferred\(^3\) on him the Name which is above every name, 10 that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my dearly-loved friends, as you have always been obedient, not as in my presence only, but now to a much greater degree in my absence, work out your own salvation with a sense of reverence and awe;\(^5\) 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will\(^6\) and to work for his good pleasure.

14 Do everything that you have to do without complaining or useless debating, 15 so that you may be blameless and innocent,\(^7\) children of God.

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\(^1\)(harpagmon) Lit., eagerly snatched.

\(^2\)Lit., emptied himself (ekenösen).

\(^3\)or bestowed or gave.

\(^4\)i.e., carry out to its ultimate goal or conclusion.

\(^5\)R. S. V., with fear and trembling. i.e., to express his will.

\(^6\)Lit., unmixed.
without blemish\textsuperscript{1} in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as light-givers in the world,\textsuperscript{2} holding forth the word of life, so that I may be proud of you on the Day of Christ and be thus assured\textsuperscript{3} that I did not run or labor for nothing. \textsuperscript{17} Even if my life is to be poured out as the libation\textsuperscript{4} upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. \textsuperscript{18} You should likewise be glad and rejoice with me.

\textsuperscript{19} I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you in the near future so that I may be heartened by the knowledge of your activities and circumstances. \textsuperscript{20} I have no one\textsuperscript{5} like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. \textsuperscript{21} All the others seek to foster their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. \textsuperscript{22} But you know how Timothy has proved his worth, how he has served with me in spreading\textsuperscript{6} the gospel, as a son with his father. \textsuperscript{23} I hope therefore to send him when I have seen the events of my immediate future.\textsuperscript{7} \textsuperscript{24} And I am confident in the Lord that I myself shall soon be able to come as well.

\textsuperscript{25} I have considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,
my brother, my fellow-worker, and my fellow-soldier, and your messenger
and attendant to my need, 26 for he has been homesick for you all, and
has been distressed
because you heard he was sick. 27 Truly he was
sick, so sick he almost died, but God had mercy on him, and not only on
him, but on me too, that I might be spared one sorrow upon another. 28
Therefore, I send him the more speedily, so that you may rejoice at
seeing him again, and thus my own anxiety may be lightened. 29 Receive
him therefore in the Lord with great joy, and hold men like him in honor,
30 because it was for the sake of Christ's work that he came so close to
death—running the risk of losing his life as he did—that he might
make up to me every service that you would have given should you have
had the opportunity.

IV. CHAPTER III

1 As to what remains, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write
the same things to you is not irksome to me, and is in the interest of
your safety.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil-workers, beware of those
who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the true circumcision who worship
through the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and put no trust

1Lit., full of heaviness.
2R. S. V. - risking his life to complete your service to me.
3Lit., the mutilation. 4 Implied from the context.
in outward ceremonies, although I myself would have good reason for trusting in these also. If any other man thinks he has reason to trust outward ceremonies, I can show him that I have even more reason. 5 I was circumcised on the eighth day after birth. I was of the stock of Israel and was a member of the tribe of Benjamin; I was a Hebrew born of Hebrews, with reference to the Law, a Pharisee, with regard to zeal, a persecutor of the church, with reference to legal righteousness, no one could point an accusing finger at me. 7 But whatever advantages I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed I count everything as loss, because of the supreme value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have lost everything and consider it all as mere refuse in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, which is based on conformity to the law, but that which proceeds from faith in Christ, the righteousness from God which rests on faith; 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 in the hope that somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already secured this knowledge or am already perfect, but I press forward endeavoring to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have laid hold of it yet; but this one thing I do, forgetting what lies

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1Lit., in the flesh. 2or blameless. 3R. S. V. - based on law. 4R. S. V. - is through.
behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 with my eyes fixed on the goal, I press on for the prize of God's high call in Christ Jesus. 15 So let all of our number who are mature maintain this attitude; God will make it clear to any of you who have a different point of view. 16 Moreover, we must live up to what we have already attained.

17 Join in following my example, brothers, and mark those whose lives reflect the pattern of living you have in us. 18 For many—as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears—live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their God is the stomach, their glory is in their shame, and their minds are absorbed by earthly things. 20 But we are citizens of the commonwealth in heaven, and from it we eagerly await our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will refashion the body of our lowliness to be like his glorious body, by the same power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

V. CHAPTER IV

1 So, my dearly-loved brothers, whom I long to see, my joy and crown, this is how you are to stand firm in the Lord, my dearly-loved ones.

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.

1 or God will reveal it.

2 i.e., they seek to satisfy only bodily appetites.

3 And I beg of you also, my true comrade, assist these women who shared with me the struggle in spreading the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Have no worry over anything, but by prayer and entreaty together with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is loveable, whatever is of good repute, if there is any virtue or anything worthy of praise, let your minds feed on these things. 9 And put to practical use whatever you have learned and received and heard and seen in me; and the God of peace will be with you.

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for my welfare. Truly you were always concerned but had no opportunity to demonstrate it. 11 Not that I speak out

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1 (συμμάχος) may have been the proper name of an individual. The vocative singular is used.

2 Lit., who strove together with me in the gospel.

3 R. S. V. - think about these things.

4 (ταύτα πρασσεῖ) practice these things.

5 Implied from context.
of want for I have learned to be self-reliant regardless of the circumstances. 12 My experience has taught me the secret of how to cope with all circumstances whether it be having plenty to eat or going hungry, living in prosperity or suffering privations; 13 I have strength for anything through him who empowers me.

14 Nevertheless, you acted magnanimously by sharing in my misfortune. 15 But you Philippians yourselves know as well as I do that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone; 16 For even in Thessalonica, you sent money on more than one occasion for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the interest which accumulates as credit to your account. 18 Your account with me is fully paid and even overpaid. I am fully supplied now that I have received through Epaphroditus the gifts which you sent, a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 But my God will supply your every need from his wealth in glory through Christ Jesus. 20 And to our God and Father be glory for ever and ever.

21 Remember me to every true Christian. 22 The brothers here with me send their best wishes. All of the Christians here wish to be remembered to you and especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

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1 Lit., I have been initiated. 2 Lit., you did well.

3 Lit., the fruit. 4 Lit., that increases to your account.

5 Or riches.
CHAPTER III

REFLECTIONS ON SOME OF THE SALIENT THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Philippians was not primarily a theological document. Nevertheless, it does yield to theological analysis. The statements in Philippians which may be considered to have theological content were incidental rather than studied but are not, on that account, unimportant.

This chapter, which was devoted to reflections on some of the salient theological considerations in Philippians, is basically concerned with what this writer has deemed to be the considerations which appear to be most significant. In some instances they may be seen in relation to elements of Paul's theology as they are expressed in other Pauline documents. Such a procedure seems justified in view of the fact that Philippians stands in a body of literature which includes other letters by the same author. Thus it may be helpful, at certain points, to note similarities, dissimilarities, and places, if any, where Philippians makes a distinctive contribution to Pauline theology in general.

Nature Of Pauline Theology

While the term "theology" has come to connote an organized system of thinking about the fundamentals of religion, it is used here in a much looser sense. All of the extant literature from Paul's pen was in the form of letters. These letters were called forth by specific needs, none
of which evoked a logical and systematically developed treatise on all aspects of Paul's thinking. With reference to this point, Moe noted:

It has been said that Paul is a theologian but not a systematist. . . . And that is right in so far as one means that he does not develop a doctrinal system in his letters, but rather presents his thoughts fragmentarily and in such form as the various occasions demand.  

Probably the single term which can be best used to describe Paul's theology is the term gospel. This point was set forth by Hunter who saw that:

The Gospel of Christ, as Paul understood it, is the Good News of salvation which God has provided for sinners through Christ's Incarnation, Death, Resurrection and living power, and now offers to all who will believe. What we call his theology is that Gospel as explicated in his letters. It is not something we can separate from his Gospel: it is his Gospel as his mind grasped it.

The Greek term for gospel (εὐαγγελίον) was frequently used in his letters, being found some sixty-eight times in the ten letters most generally accepted as authentic and four times in the Pastorals. Nine of the sixty-eight uses of the term are in Philippians.

From the uses of the word gospel (good news) in Philippians, one might conclude that this gospel was actually the heart of a great cause in which the followers of Christ could participate (1:5, 2:22, and 4:3). It was viewed as the good news which could be confirmed (1:7) and defended (1:16). It was looked upon by Paul as worthy of good conduct

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3In 1:5, 1:7, 1:12, 1:16; two times in 1:27, 2:22, 4:3, and 4:15.
on the part of those who embraced it (1:27) and as an object of the
Christian's faith (1:27). In 4:15 Paul mentioned "the beginning of the
gospel" by which, according to the context, he was referring to his
early evangelistic activity of proclaiming the good news following his
first visit to Philippi.

Question of Sources

A host of questions come to the surface at any attempt to interpret
Pauline theology. One of the most debated of the many moot questions
was this: What influence or influences contributed most to Paul's
thought as it was expressed in his letters?

When the culture or cultures which surrounded Paul are discussed,
options are diversified. The subject has proved to be a battleground
for exegetes and critics. One statement of the problem was provided
by W. D. Davies.

It has long been a matter of controversy among New Testament
scholars how best we should interpret the theology of Paul. On
the one hand it has been claimed by scholars such as Holtzmann,
Morgan, Bousset and Reitzenstein that he had been deeply influenced
by the syncretistic religious movements of his period, and that he
is best understood in the light of his Hellenistic environment.
On the other hand Paul has been interpreted by Schweitzer in
exclusively Jewish terms.¹

Obviously Paul was influenced to some extent by elements of both Greek
and Hebrew thought and culture. Any adequate discussion of Paul's
indebtedness to both Judaism and Hellenism would occupy more space than

¹ W. D. Davies, Paul And Rabbinic Judaism (London: S. P. C. K.,
may be here permitted. However, ultimate interpretation of Pauline theology is so dependent on this subject that it cannot be entirely ignored.

Bultmann described primitive Christianity as "a syncretistic phenomenon,"¹ i.e., a synthesis of Hebrew and Greek elements. A glimpse of this view held by Bultmann is here set forth:

In the Hellenistic churches terms derived from the mysteries had to be used to describe the redemptive significance of Jesus. He is the Lord worshipped in the cultus. The initiated participate in his death and resurrection through the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.²

According to Bultmann, Paul quite freely interpreted his "Gospel" in terms of Greek-Oriental religion and mythology, particularly Gnosticism.³

Bousset believed that the thought of the Graeco-Roman world made heavy inroads on early Christian thinking, especially with regard to early views of the Lord (Kurios). Kurios was Paul's most characteristic title for Jesus. (The frequency of its use in Philippians will be noted later in this thesis.) The title must have been used widely in the Hellenistic churches. Bousset held that the Hellenistic Christians used the Old Testament references to the "Lord" only after they had derived their central conception elsewhere.⁴

Thus it has been argued that Paul's message and theology were


²Ibid., p. 196.

³Ibid., pp. 196-197.

different from that of the primitive church; that his theological ideas were accretions to the original message derived largely from Greek sources.

Most scholars allow for the assimilation of some Greek thought by Paul and see that his message was often expressed in Greek accoutrements. In this connection Hunter noted that:

He read his scriptures in a Greek translation—the Septuagint. He wrote his letters in Koine Greek. He spent most of his thirty years as a missionary in lands where Greek civilization met him at every turn. Twice or thrice he quotes the Greek poets; he is fond of metaphors from the Greek games; here and there he employs a Stoic word or phrase; and occasionally he uses, though often with different meaning, terms current among the devotees of the Greek Mystery religions. But the idea that he was a zealous student of the Greek letters, or was deeply influenced by Stoic philosophy, is not to be taken seriously, and the theory that his theology was radically infected by the Mysteries has completely lost caste in the world of scholarship.¹

The words of Paul in 3:5-6 may be indicative of how deeply Paul had been rooted in his earlier faith. It is similar in some respects to other passages² which referred to Paul's Hebrew heritage. Regardless of whether or not it is true in fact, in this epistle Paul appears to have emphatically identified himself with Pharisaic Judaism. W. D. Davies believed that a close relation did exist between Paul and Rabbinic Judaism and in his work on the subject attempted to show that many elements in Paul's life and thought which some have attributed to Hellenistic sources might well have emanated from Pharisaic Judaism.³

¹Hunter, op. cit., pp. 88-89.
²Cf. Acts 22:3; II Cor. 11:22; Gal. 1:13,14; Romans 9:3,4.
³Davies, op. cit., pp. 1-17, 324.
In comparing Paul's debts to Hellenism and Judaism, Hunter further declared:

If we may not deny Paul's debt to Hellenism, we must not over-rate it. It was superficial, not fundamental. The idiom of his thought is Hebrew; his great keywords ("righteousness," "faith," etc.) have their roots deep in the Old Testament; his dialectic is often rabbinical; and his conceptions of God and man and time and eternity are far more to Jewish than to Greek sources.

In some instances, Paul avowed himself to be the recipient of divine revelation. In other instances he expressly testified that he was simply communicating that which he received.

Actually it appears that much of the message which Paul attributed to revelation was drawn from Christian predecessors. At least this source is not to be minimized. Aside from that which Paul specifically admitted as received "much else in his letters is the common apostolic Christianity which existed before Paul wrote a single letter." From his statement in II Cor. 15:11 it appears that Paul himself felt that there was no important difference in the apostle's message and his own.

Very obviously, the "words of the Lord" to which he alluded came to him through those who were Christians before him. "His kerygma (or 'preached

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2Filson, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

3Cf. I Cor. 2:7,10; I Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12ff.; Gal. 2:2; Eph. 1:9, Col. 1:26.


message') was the common apostolic Gospel.\textsuperscript{1}

II. CHRISTOLOGY

The study of the Christology of Paul in Philippians may very properly begin with the well-known Christological statement.

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.\textsuperscript{2}

This poetic passage is one of the most important in the New Testament. The fact that it is incorporated in virtually every discussion of Christology and the numerous references to it attest to its importance. One writer asserted that it is "cardinal for all Pauline Theology,"\textsuperscript{3} and for that matter it may be added, for the theology of the New Testament.

The almost casual way in which this passage was introduced may indicate that the Christians were thoroughly familiar with the idea.\textsuperscript{4}

Paul's words here certainly do not appear to be didactic and would not lead one to believe that he was heralding a new doctrine. It is evident that he was not attempting to fashion a Christological doctrine

nor was it written as an *apologia* in defense of any doctrine or dogma. His motive here was practical rather than theological.\(^1\) The statement was introduced as the perfect example of humility and service to engender and perpetuate the same spirit in the lives of the Philippian Christians. Thus it has been preserved, not as a systematically developed doctrine of Christ drawn by Paul for a specific purpose, but as a sort of photograph of a "doctrine" of Christ already in existence. Indeed, it was rather commonly recognized that Paul may have been or was here quoting a traditional Christological hymn.\(^2\) Whether the disputed passage came from the mind of Paul, as it may have,\(^3\) or whether he simply quoted a hymn which was known in primitive Christian circles was of no real consequence as far as Paul's "Christology" was concerned. In either instance it was no idle use of poetry. He used it because it expressed for him a truth.\(^4\) While it was used in a horatory fashion, Paul was referring to a hard core of historical fact. He saw this act of Jesus as the concrete expression in history of a divine act of self-giving which had eternal significance.\(^5\)

With reference to this passage Stevens believed that what Paul took for granted was quite as certainly fundamental in his doctrine as


what he tried to prove.¹

References To Christ (The Lord)

"The Lord," "the name which is above every name,"² was Paul's most frequent designation of Christ. For him this term expressed the very essence of faith in Christ.

Paul's references to Christ in Philippians differed. The terms Lord and Christ appear to be used interchangeably. Often they were used in the same expression. Paul used the single term Christ eighteen times, once each in 1:10, 1:13, 1:15, 1:17, 1:18, 1:20, 1:21, 1:23, 1:27, 1:29; 2:1, 2:16, 2:30; 3:7, 3:8, 3:9, 3:18, and 4:13 in the King James Version (translated "him" in the Revised Standard Version). The single term Jesus was used only once (2:10). The phrase Christ Jesus was used eleven times, twice in 1:1, and once each in 1:8, 1:26; 2:5; 3:3, 3:12, 3:14; 4:7, 4:19, and 4:21. The phrase Jesus Christ was used four times, once each in 1:6, 1:11, 1:19, and 2:21. The following phrases were used once each: Christ Jesus my Lord (3:8), The Lord Jesus (2:19), and Jesus Christ is Lord (2:11). The phrase The Lord Jesus Christ was used three times, once each in 1:2, 3:20, and 4:23. The single term Lord was used nine times, once each in 1:14; 2:24, 2:29; 3:1; 4:1, 4:2, 4:4, and 4:5.

The only use of the term Saviour was in 3:20. This term occurred only one other place in Paul's writings (Eph. 5:23). There were only

²2:9,11.
twenty-four instances of the use of the word in the New Testament.

The phrase "that Jesus Christ is Lord" in 2:11 seems significant in the light of the use of the term "Lord" in other parts of the New Testament. The Greek term for Lord (Kurios) had as its primary meaning, the master of a slave.\(^1\) It was used in the New Testament, however, in a variety of ways. It was used as an imperial title, a term of polite address,\(^2\) and as the chief designation of the gods of the mystery religions and similar cults.\(^3\) Its varied use in the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, would lead one to believe that the earliest expressions of the term by the disciples did not necessarily connote deity but were simply used as a title of respect for their rabbis.\(^4\)

Burrows noted that after the resurrection the situation was quite different. "In Acts 2:36 Lord and Christ are put side by side as Messianic titles."\(^5\) However, the recognition of Jesus as Messiah and Lord must have had antecedents in pre-resurrection thinking concerning Jesus.\(^6\) His life was so unique that those nearest him were convinced that he was the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, God's specially chosen and anointed one.\(^7\) The New Testament presents a picture of God as the Creator and Redeemer in terms which derive "consistently and naturally from the career of Jesus."\(^8\)

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\(^1\) Cf. Matt. 10:24ff.; 18:25; 24:45.
\(^2\) Cf. John 20:15; Acts 16:30; Acts 27:25. \(^3\) Cf. I Cor. 8:5.
\(^4\) Burrows, op. cit., p. 104. \(^5\) Ibid. \(^6\) Ibid., p. 93.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 92. \(^8\) Filson, op. cit., p. 36.
This unified view of the divine action of creation and redemption through Christ grows out of the career and work of Christ and the realization of the Apostolic Church that in Christ God had dealt uniquely with them for their good (II Cor. 5:19). 

Burrows saw that "Old Testament usage had given the words meaning Lord strong associations of deity, in spite of their common use in lesser meanings."^2

The recognition of Jesus as Lord came very early. The Christian attestation to this belief, the simple assertion that "Jesus is Lord," was Christendom's earliest creed^3 which Jesus recognized as the foundation of the church^4 and which became the theme of apostolic preaching.^5

In contradiction to the belief held by Bousset,^6 Paul indirectly indicates that the term Lord was used by Aramaic-speaking Christians in the earliest days of the church in his use of the Aramaic term Maranatha (I Cor. 16:22). This term, translated "Our Lord, Come" was used in its Aramaic form as an earnest prayer for the coming of the Lord.

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1 Ibid.

^2 Two Hebrew words with similar meanings to the Greek Kurios ('adon and ba'al) along with the ancient proper name of the Hebrew God (Yahweh) were translated Kurios in the LXX. Cf. Burrows, op. cit., p. 104.

^3 Stevens, op. cit., p. 389.


^6 Cf. ante. p. 60.
His Greek word *Kyrios*, therefore, was a translation and equivalent of the Aramaic word *Mar*, which was so widely used of Christ and so meaningful to him that in a moment of deepest prayer it came to fervent expression.¹

Thus it may be seen that the fundamental Christian confession of faith, "Jesus is Lord"² was very early. While the term Lord was sometimes used in its lesser meanings, it is noteworthy that its use as a divine title for Jesus may be seen in virtually every New Testament book.³

**The Pre-existence Of Christ**

In the passage of 2:5-11 Paul apparently assumed the pre-existence of Christ. It cannot be precisely determined at what point of time and under what circumstances Jesus came to be thought of as having been eternally pre-existent. Evidence is lacking in the Palestinian church and there is no evidence that Jesus ever thought of himself as being pre-existent, "unless it is implied by the fact that he identified himself with the apocalyptic Son of Man."⁴

For Paul he was pre-existent, the last man, in contrast to Adam, the first man. He was born, to be sure, but one who originally had existed in the form of God, but had not grasped at Equality with God, but had humbled himself and had gone willingly to his death.⁵

Burrows believed that this passage "can hardly mean anything other than a voluntary descent from heaven to earth" and declared that Paul "uses

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¹ Filson, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
³ Though the title was lacking in John, the omission was not serious in view of John 20:28, which represented the faith of the Johannine circle. Cf. footnote 69; Filson, *loc. cit.*
many expressions that point to the pre-existence of Christ as a heavenly being."¹ Like the passage in Philippians, it assumed that the readers were familiar with the idea and the statement was used to inspire a spirit of unselfishness in the lives of the Corinthians. Deissmann saw a similarity in the two passages and after quoting II Cor. 2:9 stated that "the eternity of Christ in the past--in doctrinaire terms the pre-existence of Christ--is therefore absolutely beyond question to the Apostle."²

The idea that Paul believed that Jesus shared in creatorial activity and was pre-existent may be seen in two other passages.

... yet there is one God, the Father, from whom we are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.³

He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.⁴

The Corinthian verse above seems to indicate that Christ shared in creatorial activity. In the Colossians passage Christ's pre-existence was implied in the phrase "He is before all things."

The verse 2:7 has been made the basis of a distinctive kind of Christology, emphasized in the nineteenth century, known as the Kenotic

²Deissmann, Paul: A Study In Social And Religious History, op. cit., p. 194.
³I Cor. 8:6. ⁴Col. 1:15-18.
Theory because of the use of *ekenosen* in that verse.¹

**Christ-mysticism**

The phrase "in Christ" or some cognate expression such as "in Christ Jesus," "in the Lord Jesus," or "in the Lord," occurred in Philippians some seventeen times, in 1:1, 1:14, 1:26; 2:5, 2:19, 2:29; 3:1, 3:3, 3:9, 3:14; 4:1, 4:2, 4:4, 4:7, 4:10, 4:19, and 4:21.

The frequent usage of such expressions may indicate a certain type of mysticism which might have been in Paul. However, a full mystical meaning may not have been present in each instance. One might conclude though from the above references that Paul was to some degree mystical. From other references in Philippians it seems obvious that one of Paul's dominant desires was to be in union with Christ. In 1:21 Paul stated

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In 1:22 his statement was "My desire is to depart and be with Christ." In 3:8,9a Paul stated:

> Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him . . .

and in 3:10 "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death." In 4:13 Paul's statement was "I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

Paul's preoccupation with the idea of oneness with Christ has caused some to see in him mystical kinds of experiences which were typical of

devotees of the mystery cults. Burrows saw in this connection that:

Paul's exalted, spiritual Christ was still the real person who had very recently lived in Galilee. This fact constitutes also a basic difference between Paul's faith and the mystery cults, whose deities were mythical beings supposed to have lived in the remote past, not real persons remembered by many people still living, as Jesus was in Paul's day.¹

Hunter saw that Pauline "mysticism" resulted from Paul's belief not only "in communion with Christ" but also "in the community of Christ." He interprets Paul's "mysticism" as a social experience. "It is to have discovered true community--in Christ."² (The truth of this statement should become more evident in the discussion of the Church which will appear later in this thesis.)

III. ESCHATOLOGY

It has been noted earlier that the Gospel which Paul preached was basically the good news of salvation. It is further noted that Paul looked on this salvation as being fulfilled in (1) a past event, (2) a present experience, and (3) a future hope.³

In this section the discussion will be centered on the last of the above three views, the future hope, which was in essence the substance of Paul's eschatology.

As Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was in the immediate prospect of death. This was possibly his last letter to his Christian

¹Burrows, op. cit., p. 245.
²Hunter, Interpreting Paul's Gospel, op. cit., p. 38.
friends in Philippi and so his mind was occupied with those elements in the Christian message which spoke of this hope.

The apocalyptic elements which marked Paul's earliest letters were absent from Philippians. Scott noted with reference to this point that:

He no longer expects that Christ will return almost immediately on the clouds of heaven and that he will himself be caught up, while still living, "to meet the Lord in the air" (1. Thess. 4:17). He is reconciled to death, and hopes only "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (1:23). Yet his mind is occupied as never before, with the vision of a great day in the future.¹

The loss of the apocalyptic element which insisted on the very early return of Christ was explained by Dodd as a development in the eschatological scheme which Paul had inherited from apocalyptic Judaism. This apocalyptic eschatology which Paul inherited was marked by a radical devaluation of the present world-order in all its aspects.

The apocalyptists are never more eloquent than when they are describing the entire worthlessness of "This Age" and of the world and human life under its conditions. The only hope of good lies in the speedy passing away of the whole empirical order.²

In Paul's latest letters of which Philippians is probably an example, there was much less emphasis on the radical devaluation of "This Age," probably in accommodation to the fact that Christ had not appeared as expected earlier. Dodd saw that Paul "outgrew" some of the apocalyptic eschatology which molded the Weltanschauung with which he began even though some of the psychological attitudes which "properly belonged to his earlier Weltanschauung long survived."³

¹ Scott, op. cit., p. 13.
³ Ibid., pp. 126-127.
He still made personal claims on life for power, satisfaction, and vindication. He still resented humiliation, suffering, and defeat. But in the inward crisis represented by II Corinthians, he seems finally to have come to terms with life. It is no accident that from this time also we find in his epistles a revised eschatology combined with a generous recognition of the natural goodness of men and of human institutions, a willingness to claim all sides of human life as potentially Christian, and a larger hope for mankind and the whole universe.\(^1\)

While Paul, in Philippians, no longer stressed the imminence of the parousia (coming of Christ), he still believed that Jesus would come and thus bring about a consummation of all things. The death and resurrection of Jesus had inaugurated the New Age, the age of the Spirit, which would end only in the parousia.

\[\ldots\] Paul's gospel, like that of the whole New Testament, was set in a framework of both realized and futurist eschatology. D-Day was but the prelude to V-Day—the Day of Christ, the Parousia, the day of final victory of God in Christ. For Paul's hope was nothing if not cosmic in its scope.\(^2\)

The first reference to the future hope in Philippians was found in 1:6, "And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Here salvation was expressed as "realized," being "realized" as the process continues, but not fully "realized" or brought to completion.

Salvation is to Paul both a present and a future fact. At justification there commences a new life which continues to grow and strengthen under the power of the Spirit, but in this life the blessed realization of salvation is but begun. With the experience of God's redeeming mercy there always mingles a large amount of

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 127-128.

hope. The full fruition of redemption will be enjoyed only in the immediate presence of Christ.\textsuperscript{1}

The second reference to the future hope was in the same paragraph as the first. In 1:9-10 Paul wrote "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." Here as in 1:6 the message was that all present activity was to be tempered by the fact of the parousia.

The third reference to the future hope was in 2:16. In this passage the Philippians were exhorted to "do all things without grumbling or questioning ... holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain." Again, good Christian conduct in this life was important in view of the coming day of the Lord. While Paul did not mention in Philippians a judgment at the time of death or the parousia for Christians, it seemed to be implied in the above references.\textsuperscript{2}

The fourth reference to the future hope in Philippians was found in 3:20,21. Here Christians were reminded that they were really citizens of a colony in heaven. In this earthly life they were "strangers and exiles"\textsuperscript{3} for their permanent home was "in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him


\textsuperscript{2}Cf. I Cor. 1:7,8; II Cor. 1:14. \textsuperscript{3}Hebrews 11:13.
even to subject all things to himself." This passage was apparently a reference to the day of Christ.

In 3:11 Paul wrote of attaining "the resurrection from the dead." While some have spiritualized this passage, it seems clear from the teaching in I Cor. 15:23 that Paul was here actually thinking of the resurrection to be experienced by those who belong to Christ at his coming (parousia).

Many of Paul's doctrines and teachings were basically eschatological. However, there was no single, clear-cut statement in Philippians or anywhere else in Paul's letters that set forth all of the elements of his eschatology. Schweitzer revealed the problem in a long series of questions which he felt must be answered before Pauline eschatology could be really understood or explained. Schweitzer asked:

Are there two resurrections or one; one judgment or two: Who are to rise again at the parousia? Does a judgment take place then? On whom is it held? What are its standards and its subject? Where-in do reward and punishment consist? What happens to the men of the surviving generation who are not destined to the Messianic kingdom? What is the relation between judgment and election? What is the fate of believers who are elect and baptized but who have fallen from grace by unworthy conduct? Can they lose their final blessed-ness, or are they only excluded from the Messianic kingdom? Does Paul recognise a general resurrection? If so, when does it take place? Is it accompanied by a judgment, or do only the elect rise again? When does the judgment take place at which the elect judge the angels?¹

Obviously, many of these questions are not easily resolved and no one can speak with authority or finality with reference to the scheme of

Paul's eschatology. Davies, however, believed that Schweitzer overestimated the difficulties of Paul's eschatology. With reference to the subject Davies wrote:

It contains no reference to a Messianic Kingdom such as is contemplated in Baruch, 4 Ezra, and Revelation and can be briefly summarized as the early expectation of the Parousia when there would be a final judgement, a general resurrection of the righteous dead (and possibly all of the dead), the transformation of the righteous living and ensuing upon all this the final consummation, the perfected Kingdom of God when God would be all in all.¹

There is nothing in this statement which is out of harmony with the thought and feeling expressed in Philippians. Indeed, Philippians, through its specific references to the parousia and its preoccupation with the future hope, contributes to the total picture of Paul's eschatology.

IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

God

The passage 3:7-9a was indicative of Paul's great devotion to Christ. It has been noted earlier² that such expressions as "in Christ," or "in the Lord" occurred in Philippians with great frequency. Paul continually sought for spiritual union and identification with Christ.

Oneness with Christ is the means of gaining moral power, but it is not only that; it is itself the supreme content of Christian salvation, the Christian's highest good so far as the present life is concerned. To die and be with Christ would be better still, but in this world to live is Christ.³

¹Davies, op. cit., p. 297. ²Cf. ante, p. 70. ³Burrows, op. cit., p. 245.
Similar observations have caused some students of Paul to believe that God, in Paul's scheme, was relegated to a place of unimportance. This, however, was probably not the case.

... Paul's Gospel is Christo centric. All centres in him. This does not mean, however, that for Paul Christ has usurped the place of God. Rather, it is God who confronts men in Christ, the same God who once acted in creation...

A careful study of Philippians will reveal that God was important to Paul. Paul used the term for God (Theos) twenty-three times in Philippians. In 1:2 Paul recognized God as the "Father" of Christians. The references to God in 2:11 and 4:20 were similar. In 1:3 and 4:19 Paul referred to God as "my God" which seemed to imply a relationship which was personal, perhaps intimate. In 1:28 Paul indicated that salvation was from God. In 2:6 there were two references to God both of which seemed to recognize God as supreme and in 2:9 and 2:11, the thought was similar. In 2:13 Paul reminded the Philippians that "God is at work in you." In 2:15 the Christians were thought of as "children of God. In 2:27 Paul referred to one incident of God's mercy. In 3:3 he spoke of "the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit" and in 3:9 "the righteousness of God that depends on faith." In 3:14 Paul spoke of the "upward call of God." In 3:15 Paul saw God as a Revealer. In 4:6 the Philippian Christians were exhorted to "let your requests be made known to God." In 4:7 Paul referred to the "peace of God." In 4:9 Paul referred to God as "the God of peace." In 4:9

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Paul referred to God as "the God of peace." In 4:18 Paul indicated that the Philippians had engaged in an activity which would be pleasing to God. There was nothing in the letter which indicated that God was either unimportant or secondary in Paul's thought.

The Holy Spirit

There was little in Philippians concerning Paul's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The mention of the Spirit occurred in Philippians in only two places; in 1:19 (the Spirit of Jesus Christ) and 2:1 (participation in the Spirit). These references in themselves were rather indefinite. Burrows helped to clarify their meaning.

Paul speaks interchangeably of the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Jesus, and the Spirit, having Christ in you, and having the Spirit. While this recalls the Stoic conception of rarefied substance, Paul's idea is closer to the Hebrew and early Christian conception of the active power of God, now identified with the influence and activity of Jesus. He even explicitly identifies Lord and Spirit. [II Cor. 3:17] For Paul the possession of the Spirit is both the means of overcoming the power of sin in the flesh and an "earnest" of complete redemption hereafter. [II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; cf. Eph. 1:14] The uses of the word Spirit in Philippians were in keeping with the above statement. Nowhere in Philippians was the Spirit personified as He was by Paul in I Cor. 12:11.

Atonement And Salvation

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1 Translators of the R. S. V. noted that some ancient authorities read "worship by the Spirit of God" in 3:3 rather than "worship God in spirit" as it was rendered in the R. S. V.

2 Burrows, op. cit., p. 77.
While Paul did not write much in Philippians on this subject, his general thought was in keeping with Romans 4:25 where he linked justification with Christ's death and resurrection. Burrows believed that "Paul's conception of atonement is not expressed in the category of sacrifice." References to sacrifice in such passages as I Cor. 5:7, Romans 15:16, and Phil. 2:17 were probably little more than passing metaphors.

Paul's conception does involve Christ's vicarious suffering on behalf of sinners. He frequently says that Christ died "for us" or "for me." Probably for him as for the rest of the apostolic church the background of this was Isa., Ch. 53. The cross was at the heart of Paul's preaching. In 2:8 Paul mentioned "death on a cross" in connection with Christ's obedience to God. In 3:18 the cross was referred to, no doubt, as a symbol of the power which was made available through Christ's death.

Paul used the word salvation in Philippians with different meanings. His use of the noun σωτηρία in 1:19 was in the sense of his personal welfare. The usage in 1:28 was similar. Here the salvation was of God rather than by "the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" but it seemed from the context that it involved something of the element of personal well-being and safety though it may well have included the idea of spiritual salvation. In 2:12 the word seemed to denote only the individual spiritual well-being.

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1 Ibid., p. 223.  
2 Ibid., p. 224.  
3 Cf. I Cor. 1:23ff.; 2:2.  
4 Cf. I Cor. 1:17,18,23.
The Church

A superficial examination of Philippians might lead one to believe that the document was bereft of any doctrine of the church. It was true that Paul's most characteristic idea in this connection, i.e., the church as the body of Christ, was absent. Nevertheless, there were some references which reflected Paul's belief in the church. Paul used the term ἐκκλησία (church) in Philippians, as in his other letters, both of the church as a whole and in reference to local churches. In other places Paul referred to the church at large as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), "God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9), and a "temple of God." Again the church was represented as "God's field" (1 Cor. 3:9) where Christians labor for God. In Ephesians 5:22-23 the church was thought of as the bride of Christ.

Another way of viewing the nature of the church was set forth in Philippians in terms which must have had peculiar significance for the Christians at Philippi. In 3:20 Paul used the phrase "our commonwealth is in heaven" which may have been a distinctive description of the Christian community.

The unity idea which was present in most of Paul's appellations for the church was present here. "Both the unity of the church and

1Rom. 12:4ff.; I Cor. 12:12; Col. 1:18; Cf. Eph. 1:23; 4:12.
2Cf. 3:6 and I Cor. 12:28; 4:15; and I Cor. 1:2.
4Cf. ante, pp. 10-13.
its purity were very important for him. This unity and nature of the
church was further expressed through Paul's use of \textit{koinonia} (fellowship, sharing, community). This noun and its cognates occurred in Philippians six times and were used both in the idea of participating and for the idea of sharing with others, even making contributions. "For Paul salvation was primarily an individual experience, but all Christians share this experience, which therefore makes them a community." The use of \textit{koinonia} in 1:5 connoted the fellowship-partnership idea and in 1:7 the fellow-sharer idea. In 2:1 the idea was participation. In 3:10 the idea was sharing-participating in Christ's suffering. The uses of the word in 4:14,15 were related to the idea of sharing money.

The whole letter was pervaded by the idea of the essential unity and community of the Christians who through Christ were associated in one great fellowship, the church.

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1: 1:5; 1:7; 2:1; 3:10; 4:14; and 4:15.

2 Burrows, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 149.
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B. ARTICLES


