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(The) ethics of Paul's Corinthian correspondence..

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Thesis

THE ETHICS OF PAUL'S CORINTHIAN CORRESPONDENCE

by

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Introduction

1. The literary and historical scope of the problem under consideration is set forth in the title. We are to be concerned primarily with the ethical content of Paul's teaching in I and II Corinthians. However, this does not imply that Paul limited such teachings to the Corinthians, or that ethical elements are foreign to his other writings. As a matter of fact, we find much of ethical interest in the letter to the Romans, the letter to the Galatians, and also Colossians and Ephesians. We are deliberately limiting ourselves to the Corinthian letters for two reasons: first, because of the brevity of time and space, and secondly, because the ethical problems dealt with in these letters are sufficiently varied and numerous to furnish us with the necessary data for the discovery of Paul's ethical principles. It is also to be noted that as we are to deal only with the Corinthian correspondence, the problem of authorship is not a factor, as most scholars are agreed
that these letters were written by Paul.* The matter of defining the province of the theme will receive further attention in the discussion of difficulties involved.

The major purpose of this study, then, is to discover and evaluate those ethical principles which Paul enunciated and used in ordering the lives of early converts to Christianity, and to see how they were integral to his religious faith. For Paul religion and morality were one. Was such a synthesis necessary in order to conserve the values of Christian theology? Were Paul's ethical principles inherited or borrowed, or did they, in part, emerge out of the new situations into which the Christian faith plunged him and his followers? What was the purpose and the character of Paul's ethical principles, and how did they compare with the ethical content in the teachings of Jesus and the Old Testament? What values do they have for the ordering of modern thought and conduct? To answer these and other questions of a similar nature is the purpose of this study.

* So Meyer, Zahn, Lightfoot, Robertson, Moffatt, Ramsay, Lowstuter, and others.
2. Certain difficulties present themselves when we attempt to clarify our thinking in regard to this theme. First of all, little has been written with the sole purpose of setting forth Paul's ethics. Enslin, writing in 1930, says that he found but two books in English especially devoted to this subject. These were Alexander's *The Ethics of St. Paul*, and Martin's *St. Paul's Ethical Teaching*. However, there are numerous works which give a chapter or two or slight mention to this particular phase of Paul's contribution to Christian thought. But those who include a consideration of ethics in works that are predominantly religious or theological in character, are likely to minimize their importance.

Another difficulty arises when we consider that Paul's thought, while closely allied with the teachings of Jesus, was also influenced by other sources. To make a complete study of these sources and influences cannot be attempted in this brief treatment, and yet we may not be able to fully understand Paul's ethics apart from such a study. A summary of these influences will be presented in

chapter II.

We must also ask ourselves the question, What sort of criterion are we to use in measuring the worth of Paul's ethical concepts, and in giving them their proper classification? Are we to look at them in the light of modern times or from an historical point of view? If the latter be chosen, which is certainly the only fair basis upon which to evaluate Paul, some attention must be paid to his contemporary history, and to the general moral tone of the time in which he lived. And if Paul's teaching must be interpreted in the light of the various situations which called them forth, what significance, if any, can they have for another age in which the social, economic, and religious structure is radically altered?

Likewise, can we think of Paul's ethics apart from his religion and his theology? Do we not find a certain inter-penetration of the religious, theological, and ethical values, and is it not hard to distinguish just where one leaves off and the other begins? Therefore, a treatment of Paul's ethics would seem to require an analysis of his whole thought. But scores of books have been written
on the teachings of Paul and there are still some things left unsaid. It is necessary, then, to impose upon this study certain arbitrary restrictions. After a general consideration of these contributing factors, we shall confine our study to the ethical content of the Corinthian literature _per se_.

3. While it is no doubt true that we cannot understand Paul's teachings apart from his religious message and his theological conceptions, it is equally true that we cannot fully understand him apart from certain ethical ideals which furnish the framework upon which he hangs much of his religious and theological content. Paul was essentially a mystic; but his religion was not a thing apart from this life. He did not scorn the practical moral problems of his day. Ethical principles were among the bonds by which he bound together the Christian communities; and their violation perhaps constituted his greatest problems.

But, as we have already noted, we cannot divorce Paul's ethics from his religion. While they furnished an outward expression or indication of what Paul considered the Christian way of life, they were not a system of ritualistic or moralistic
activities imposed upon the individual from some exterior source. Rather they were the concomitant results of a religious experience; the expression of a subjective motivation. "The Christian was impelled toward a certain kind of life by virtue of his union with his Lord. If he was really consecrated, separate, set apart to God — to Paul's mind he must inevitably show it; if he was really yoked to Christ he must live in a fitting way."

Therefore, the Christians were to be known by their ethical conduct. Behavior unbecoming a Christian was not only a reflection upon the individual, indicating his lack of understanding, faith, or experience, but it was also a factor of supreme social importance and vital religious significance. Paul's cause rested, in no small degree, upon the success of those ethical principles, which were, in his thinking, so definitely a part of his religion. Because Paul realized this fact he placed much stress upon conduct. We may venture the assertion that he looked upon the ethical conduct of his converts as a pragmatic test of the faith he had received, and which he

2. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, p. 65
sought to impart to others.

4. With the foregoing factors in mind, what procedure shall we use in their further development? As indicated in the table of contents, Chapter I will deal with general definitions of such terms as ethics and religion. Following this discussion we shall look into the various sources which might be expected to have influenced Paul's thinking. These are enumerated in Chapter II. Then the major thesis shall be developed in the third chapter where we shall attempt a thorough analysis of the Corinthian letters from the ethical point of view. Paul's ethical problems shall be interpreted in the general light of his purpose, noting their social, religious, theological, and economic importance. We shall then be in position to give a general summary of the Apostle's ethical principles as set forth in Chapter IV. Following this summary we treat briefly Paul's ethics and Old Testament morality, Paul's ethics and the ethics of Jesus, and the ethics of Paul and the modern world, in Chapters V, VI, and VII respectively.
I. General Definitions

1. What is ethics?

According to the Greek signification of the term ethics is the science of customs and morals. This science, in the opinion of Paulsen, serves a double function. It must first determine the end of life or the highest good, and secondly, it must point a way or name the means of realizing that which has been determined. Such a concept is more definitely personalized by Professor Marlatt when he points out that "that is right, i.e., ethical, which with understanding maintains or promotes the free development of personality, and it becomes more enduringly right when it is made normative for a society of persons, that is, when it is made customary." Everett adds the thought that while ethics is defined as the field of conduct, not all conduct is necessarily ethical. "Only voluntary action, action that is willed, is properly subject to moral judgment." Therefore we conclude that ethics consists of moral codes which are "limited to the purposive, or willed,

3. A System of Ethics, p. 4
4. Class Notes, Social Ethics, Boston University, 1931
5. Moral Values, p. 2
acts of normal and intelligent human beings", and which are the product of human endeavor to realize the highest good.

2. What is Christian ethics?

Christian ethics is defined by Smyth as the "science of living together according to Christianity." This science is not, however, a code based upon a previously given and perfected set of standards, handed down from age to age, and generation to generation. Rather it is a progressive moral development which accompanies the expansion and revelation of Christian truth. Its content, according to the same writer, consists of the "Biblical Doctrine of the Highest Good", which includes Old and New Testament conceptions; especially the Sermon on the Mount, the doctrine of Eternal Life, and Jesus himself as the ideal. It is also to be found in Christian consciousness, with its ideas of righteousness, holiness, justice, and goodness; ideas or ideals which are to be realized in family, church, and state.

The form of Christian ethics is derived from what

6. Moral Values, p. 3
7. Christian Ethics, p. 1
Murray calls parallel systems, although there has not been, in his opinion, any imposition of a particular form. However, Christian ethics does have distinctiveness by virtue of their peculiar spirit, a spirit which cannot be understood apart from the personality of Jesus. "And if there is any place at all for a distinctive science of Christian Ethics, that place can be vindicated only by starting from the ethical ideal embodied in Christ, and working out from that a code of morality for the practical guidance of the Christian life."

3. What is religion?

Webster defines religion as "The outward form by which men indicate recognition of a god or gods to whom obedience and honor are due; the feeling or expression of human love, fear, or awe of some superhuman or overruling power; a system of faith and worship; a manifestation of piety...." Professor E. S. Brightman furnishes us with a more philosophical definition when he says that religion is "Man's faith that God is cooperating with him and he with God, in the creation

9. *A Handbook of Christian Ethics*, p. 4
10. Ibid, p. 7
11. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 816
and conservation of value; and man's life as controlled by that faith." It is, he continues, "a way of life; a re-orientation and re-organization." Many other definitions of religion in general might be cited here, but may we turn to a more specific inquiry as to the nature of the Christian religion.

Alfred E. Garvie says that "we may define Christianity as the ethical, historical, universal, monotheistic, redemptive religion, in which the relation of God and man is mediated by the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is ethical rather than natural, historical rather than spontaneous, and universal rather than national. However, Garvie also reminds us that our present Christianity often diverges from this purely objective formulation, and as a result we have theological speculations, sacramental elements, mystical tendencies, and practical applications, all of which are supplementary to, but do not in themselves constitute a complete view of the Christian religion."

12. Cf. Syllabus, Philosophy of Religion, Boston University, 1931-32, p. 4
14. Ibid, p. 582
Such a view of religion involves, therefore, a definite relationship to God in which ethics becomes a component part. What is the relation of this part to the whole?

4. The relation of ethics and religion.

There has been a great deal of discussion as to whether religion gave rise to morality, or morality to religion. An answer has been attempted in the light of historical evidence. Newman Smyth holds that "Throughout known history the two powers of human life, religion and morality, have been co-existent and co-operative." It is impossible to eliminate one and still maintain the other. However, this view has been questioned by others, especially those who follow the Comtean school of philosophy. Such a follower is found in our very modern Mr. Lippmann, who has come to the conclusion that "Insofar as men have now lost their belief in a heavenly king, they have to find some other ground for their moral choices than the revelation of his will. It follows necessarily that they must find the test of righteousness wholly within human experience......

15. Christian Ethics, p. 15
Such a morality may properly be called humanism, for it is centered not in superhuman but in human nature."

But does Mr. Lippmann and others who hold similar ideas, think that we have divested ourselves of religion, when we discard the "heavenly king" conception? Such a conception is, at best, a limited and narrow one with no particular power to order the morality of modern life and thought. However, the belief that running through all of life and inherent within life itself there is a greater than human purpose which has its ground in a greater than human intelligence, lends a vital force with which to maintain the moral concepts which have grown out of the experience of the race.

In returning to the proposition, as far as historical evidence reveals it, that morality and religion have practically always existed together, let us note, especially in reference to a treatment of Paul's ethics, that in Israel "religious and moral obligation coalesced, and the history of Israel is at once a history of the development of

morals and a progressive revelation of God."

Such historical evidence might be further developed to strengthen the contention that religion and ethics are co-existent, but in as much as ethics and religion are one with Paul, and his religion is the type of Christianity already described by Garvie, we need not enter into any detailed discussion on the relation of ethics per se to religion per se, as profitable as such a study might be for its own sake. This relationship was not a problem for Paul, but an accepted fact. Therefore we shall proceed to an analysis of Paul's particular dealings with situations which demanded his moral and religious judgments and deduce therefrom such conclusions as the facts warrant. Before doing this, however, we must notice the influence of Judaism, Greco-Roman environment, Stoic philosophy, personal experience, and the teachings of Jesus, upon the development of the Apostle's religious and ethical thought.

17. Smyth, Christian Ethics, p. 15
II. Sources which influenced Paul's ethical and religious ideals

1. Judaism

Paul was the child of a Jewish home. Therefore, the first influence which played upon his life grew out of his Jewish heritage. "The Jew in him was the foundation of everything that Paul became." He never completely departed from those early loyalties implanted by the Judaistic instruction of his childhood. In later years, after many contacts and conflicts with the world in which he lived, and surrounded by immediate danger, he could make the spontaneous avowal "I am a Jew, a man of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." (Acts 21:39)

Professor Deissmann reminds us that Paul "retained with pride the name 'Hebrew,' and the even more significant name 'Israelite' (II Cor. xii 22), and 'seed of Abraham' (Rom. xi 1). . . . He speaks of Jews in the wilderness as the 'Fathers' (I Cor. x 1) and 'forefathers' (Rom. iv 1), and to boast of 'father' Abraham and 'father' Isaac (Rom. ix 10) comes natural to him."

19. Paul, p. 97
May we inquire therefore, just what contribution the Hebrew scriptures made to Paul's thinking, and especially to his moral and ethical ideals. Montefiore asks the question, "What were the effects of the Law upon the conceptions of virtue and vice, righteousness and sin?" He goes on to answer this question by dealing with what he calls the "Ethical Refinements of Judaism," and we may reasonably suppose that these ethical ideals of the Jewish religion were not entirely lost upon Paul. They may be classified under the following headings:

(a) Charity

Almsgiving was encouraged, but the giver must bestow his favors in such a manner as will cause the recipient no public embarrassment. The rich and the poor were looked upon as made for each other, but even so, the Jews were very keen on independence, and "had many sensible remarks to make about begging."

(b) Forgiveness

Forgiveness is looked upon as a pre-requisite in the attaining of individual salvation. "The


21. Ibid, p. 76
day of Atonement atones for sins between a man and his God; it does not atone for sins between a man and his neighbor until he has become reconciled with his neighbor." R. Jehuda b. Tema (of the second century) is quoted as saying: 'If you have done your neighbor a small injury, in your eyes let it seem great; has he done you a great injury, in your eyes let it seem small. And forgive those who humiliate you.'

(c) Love

"The connotations of the word 'love' were not unknown in Rabbinic Judaism. From the first century onward there is a passionate love for God, a passionate love for His Law, and a very real love of neighbor." However, the writer admits that Rabbinism lacked that love which seeks the offender that he may be forgiven and brought back into the relation of friendship with his neighbor or fellowship with his God.

(d) Ethics of leadership

The various positions of leadership in

23. Ibid, p. 78
24. Ibid, p. 79
25. Ibid, p. 78, paragraph (c).
the legalistic system must not be used for personal advantage. Montefiore tells the story of R. Torphon, who, having divulged his identity to a teacher in order to save himself from physical harm, cried out, "'Woe is me, for I have used the crown of the Law for my own profit,' for the teaching ran: 'A man must not say, I will study so as to be called a wise man, or an elder, or to have a seat in the college, but he must study for love; the honor will come of itself.'"

Thus it seems that while the emphasis is upon the righteousness of works, there is an underlying consideration of purpose which lifts the whole ethical concept to a higher level. We must note however that his particular view, being presented by a Jewish writer, is necessarily sympathetic, and perhaps a little too idealistic. But granting this we note that these ideals do appear in the teachings of Paul, as we shall see more fully later.

Not only did Judaism give Paul certain ethical principles, but it gave him a mind trained in Rabbinical lore. Findlay says that "He (Paul)

brought with him to the Christian camp the resources of a trained Jewish jurist, a skilled Rabbinical scholar and disputant." The influence of his Jewish teachers is, Deissmann believes, to be seen in what might be termed Paul's "dialectic," and in his method of teaching.

Judaism and the religion of the earlier Hebrews very closely associated morality and religion. The Ten Commandments are an example where God becomes the author and giver of an ethical or moral code. The later prophets speaking in the name of Jehovah, make it clear that social righteousness is of more importance than the rites of purely ceremonial worship. The legalism against which Paul rebelled, and which was characteristic of Judaism during the last several centuries of the pre-Christian era, stressed the moral and ethical side of religion to such an extent as to include elements which really lacked any true moral or religious significance. The minutiae of the Law overshadowed and obscured the broader and more fundamental moral values which the prophets had associated

with the Jehovah worship. The former Paul repudiates while still retaining, as Matheson suggests, the morality and universality of the Abrahamic traditions. The true spirit of Judaism is preserved; its outward form is cast aside. May we pass now to the influence of a

2. Greco-Roman environment

Paul was born and reared a free Roman citizen. His parents and home influences were Jewish; his community environment was essentially Greek. "As from childhood onwards he had been a Jew to the Jews, so also he was a Hellenist of the Hellenists (I Cor. ix 20f), because the tongue and soul of Hellenism had come to him with the air of Tarsus."

Professor Deissmann also tells us that "The world Apostle came out of a classical centre of international intercourse, and his home itself was for him as a child a microcosmos, in which the forces of the great ancient cosmos of the Mediterranean world were all represented."

While Paul grew up in a Greek city it is

30. Deissmann, Paul, p. 41
31. Ibid, p. 34
not thought that he received any formal Greek education. McGiffert points out that Paul's letters betray no evidence that he had any wide knowledge of Greek literature, nor a command of good Greek style. However, regardless of any limitations in his formal education, he could not escape feeling the intellectual tendencies which pervaded the Greek world at the time.

The literature of the Greco-Roman world during the first century of Imperial Rome stands out in contrast with the earlier written records of Jewish Rabbinic wisdom. At Jerusalem, under the direction of Gamaliel, Paul was, according to Hayes, permitted to read the Greek writings. What contribution did they make to his thinking? It is to be noted that the literary picture, from the Greek point of view was a dark one. Among recently discovered papyri (nineteenth century), there are documents referring to "unchastity, bribery, robbery, violence, theft, exposure of children, and unbridled impudence." Is it surprising then that we should find the Apostle using gloomy colors freely in

32. A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, p. 114
33. Paul and His Epistles, p. 24
34. Deissmann, Paul, p. 45 f.
painting pictures of his world, when in Romans and Corinthians he portrayed the depravity of his environment "with the intensity of a preacher of repentance"?

Paul's early environment is summed up by Ramsay when he describes Tarsus as the metropolis of the greatest province of the East, Cilicia; "a free city with a free harbor, mistress of a large and fertile territory, a center of Roman imperial partisanship." Tarsus had been a self-governing Greek city since 170 B.C., and had become one of the important centers of Greek learning. "Strabo speaks of the Tarsian University as even surpassing, in some respects, those of Alexandria."

3. Stoic philosophy

Notwithstanding the fact that formal Greek education is denied Paul by prominent commentators, there has been much discussion as to the extent Stoic philosophy influenced his thinking. This question is of special interest to those who are concerned with his theology. But his ethical ideals

35. Deissmann, Paul, p. 43
37. Ibid, p. 687
have also been compared with those of the Stoics. It is not within the province of our major thesis to treat this matter fully, but sufficient inquiry must be made to enable us to recognize this factor as an element in the total foundation upon which Paul reared his own superstructure.

Bacon is quite sure that Stoicism had a real influence in Paul's thought life. He says, "However Paul may have despised and reacted against it in his youth, the Stoic philosophy was in itself a noble and worthy teaching, and one which, as both tradition and his own writings prove, left an indelible impress on his memory. Whether he would or would not Paul went to Jerusalem more than a Pharisee." He goes on to say that some of the most profound and most characteristic ideas of Paul find their root not mainly in the soil of Judaism, but directly or indirectly in Stoic philosophy.

However, he qualifies his assertions by remarking that "We must not think of Paul as directly dependent on any Stoic writer....we do know that he was profoundly influenced by the book called the

38. The Story of Paul, p. 23
39. Ibid, p. 24
Wisdom of Solomon, which contains some of the most characteristic Stoic ideas in Pharisean garb."

Glover, in contrast, thinks that the Stoic emphasis in Paul has been to greatly stressed. He looks upon Paul's Stoic evidences as reflections of his environment and little more. "If Paul, as we should suppose," he says, "absorbed these ideas from current phrase and the common stock of axiomatic ideas, we deduce not a Stoic school or a Stoic teacher, but a cosmopolitan world in which ideas are no longer private or racial property - a world conscious through the terms it shares of a common experience, and an interest in every man's experience of God."

This discussion is taken up by Percy Gardner in a rewarding chapter on Pauline ethics. He characterizes the ethical teachings of Paul as full of genius and of originality, and yet, as he later states, to no little extent influenced by the Stoics. "It is well known", he says, "that the resemblances between the Pauline ethics and those of Seneca are so notable that a forged series of

40. The Story of St. Paul, p. 47
41. Paul of Tarsus, p. 21
42. The Religious Experience of St. Paul, Chapter 7
letters between the great contemporaries were invented.... Parallel passages exhibiting the likenesses between the Stoic teaching, that of the Sermon on the Mount, and of the Pauline Epistles are set forth in a wellknown dissertation by Bishop Lightfoot (Dissertations on the Apostolic Age, pp. 247-316)."

But it is also to be noted, thinks this writer, that while Paul and the Stoics seem to agree in detail, a broad view of their ethical concepts show wide differences. The Stoics based their ethics on a sense of human dignity and "a determination to live according to the visible order of the universe"; Paul, on the other hand, regarded human nature as corrupt, unworthy, and perverted. He was more concerned with the invisible than with the visible order of the universe.

Thus we may say that the ethics of Stoicism was a contributing factor, but certainly not a determining factor in Paul's moral teaching. The discussion of Stoic influences leads us to a consideration of the more personal factors in the total make-up of

43. The Religious Experience of St. Paul, p. 142
44. Ibid
Paul's thought content. In what way was he influenced by the subjective elements in his total environment?

4. Personal experiences

Before we can fully understand the evaluation which Paul placed upon his personal experiences, we must trace briefly his pre-Christian history. We know little, as Rattenbury suggests, about his early spiritual development. We may be reasonably sure that he was a boy who took the religion of his fathers very seriously. He was well acquainted with the Hebrew scriptures. His sincerity and devotion toward God bordered on fanaticism. This loyalty made him a strict observer of the Law in which, as he later writes, he was found blameless. (Phil. 3:6). Rattenbury thinks that he must have prayed from his youth upwards, and gives some credence to the supposition that even in his pre-Christian days Paul had mystical experiences. "He meditated on the Law of God day and night and loved it. He took over with him into Christianity the spiritual knowledge of the Jews, and never questioned its truth or value." 46

46. Ibid, p. 119
However, we are prone to think, from Paul's own statements, that he did not find the keeping of the Law as pleasant and satisfactory as Professor Rattenbury suggests (Cf. Gal. 4:4,5; 2:16; I Cor. 15:56; Rom. 7:8-9). There are evidences that Paul struggled to obtain from the Law something that it could not give him. He wanted freedom from the conflict of a divided personality but the Law only intensified the consciousness of his imperfections. Then he met the Christ on the Damascus Road, and forever thereafter he ceased to seek peace through the efforts of his own will and wholly trusted another to provide that unifying consciousness which the Law had failed to give. However, this is not to say that all of Paul's struggles were over at the time of his conversion. Why did he seek solitude in Arabia? Many conjectures have been made, but Paul merely says "I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus" (Gal. 1:17). Did the consciousness that he had seen the Divine Presence bring with it new problems, new temptations? We cannot say, but there is little doubt that he needed time to re-organize his thinking as well as to re-adjust his future plans.
Matheson holds the view that with the conversion experience the transition from the old man to the new was not completed. Paul had not yet arrived. And there was a physical deficiency of some sort which bothered him. Paul believed with the Jews of his time that a physical abnormality was the result of a moral deformity. Could he preach to others when his own features accused him?

Not knowing what Paul did, either physically or mentally, while in Arabia, we cannot say whether his stay there was or was not satisfactory. We do know that he came back to Damascus to accept the challenge of the vision. The supposition on the part of some scholars that he might have preached at Damascus before going into Arabia does not materially alter the situation.

The subsequent experience of Paul reminds us of Moses. He had to leave the visionary heights and come down to mingle again with men who knew little or nothing of the world that he had seen. In Antioch he finds life dominated by the untamed passions and their attendant evils. The Jewish rites of

47. Spiritual Development of St. Paul, Chapter IV.
purification, such as circumcision and ceremonial cleansings, are of little value in such an envir-
onment. "Licentiousness, profligacy, immorality, in every form, was rampant." How could he make the Christ real to these people whose ideals were submerged in passion?

And we may ask the question, What was Paul's own reaction to this environment? He was a Jew and was of a vigorous if small physique. To say that the life of the world, even as he saw it in Antioch, had no attraction whatever for him, is to argue against the ground of possibility. Paul himself confesses, in later years, that he had not completely conquered the "caveman within him" (Cf. I Cor. 9:27). And these desires of the flesh seemed all the more repulsive in contrast with the higher and purer life revealed to him through the radiant Christ. Paul knew how to preach and to teach the principles of ethical living, for he had tested them in the laboratory of his own inner life. The moral concepts which he set forth in his letters are not theoretical formulations, but the result of personal experiences, and those experiences persuaded

Paul that no amount of legalistic observance could change an essentially evil state of mind. We may conclude that Paul's personal experiences as he lived among men; his attempts to understand life in the light of his greatest experience, accounted for much or all that he said or did. However, in taking the above view we find ourselves in disagreement with Schweitzer, who maintains that such was not the case. Nevertheless Paul's own words lean so heavily in the direction we have indicated that we have accepted this view as the more valid.

Having noted somewhat the influence of the transcendent Christ upon Paul's teaching and upon his personal life as a Christian apostle, may we turn to a consideration of the importance of the teachings of the historic Jesus, as an element in Paul's thinking.

5. The teachings of Jesus

After his conversion experience Paul tells us "Straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia" (Gal. 1:16-17). It is quite clear that Paul did not
at this time become a catechumen. What previous knowledge he had of Jesus and his teaching is a matter of conjecture. If the psychological theory of his conversion be held as valid, the implication is that he had thought much about the Galilean. In his campaign of persecution he would certainly learn something, if indirectly, of the "Way", but it is hazardous to say that he had any systematic knowledge of the sayings of the Lord. If he possessed such a knowledge we are at a loss to explain why he did not make better use of it, as we shall see that he always gave the words of Jesus preference when they were available and applicable to the situation with which he was dealing.

Then there are those who read Galatians 1:11-16 and see in these words of Paul sufficient justification for the belief that he received all of his teaching directly from Christ. Does not he declare, they say, that "the gospel he preached was neither after the manner of man, nor received from man, but that it had come to him directly and immediately from the revelation of God?" Matheson, 49

49. Matheson, Spiritual Development of St. Paul, p. 104
however, goes on to point out that Paul did not mean by these words that he had received all of the teaching of Jesus by supernatural means. "The message which he professed to have received by an original channel was not the account of Christ's life, but the revelation of Christ's universality."

It is to be noted that, three years later, Paul did go up to Jerusalem to visit the apostles, and that he remained with them fifteen days (Gal. 1:18). "For fifteen days Paul was the guest of Peter, with eager desire and abundant opportunity to become well-informed about the life and teaching of Jesus, - a fact strangely overlooked by those who picture him as wholly ignorant of the real Jesus because he never met Him in His earthly years." However, Professor Hill has no proof of just what Peter and Paul talked about during those fifteen days. There were so many things to discuss that we are rather inclined to think that any systematic study of the teaching of Jesus was not a part of the conference. The more immediate problems of the church would demand much attention.

50. Matheson, Spiritual Development of St. Paul, p. 104
51. Hill, W.B., The Apostolic Age, p. 87
However, a careful reading of the Corinthian letters will acquaint us with the fact that during this period of his ministry, Paul had access to, or at least knowledge of, oral or written material similar to that contained in the Gospels. Cf. I Cor. 7:10; 7:12, and 7:25. As these passages suggest, he held strictly to Jesus' teaching as far as it was available and applicable, and in two instances he indicates that he is giving his own rather than the Lord's exhortation. It is also apparent in I and II Corinthians that Paul drew much more heavily on the Old than the New Testament sources. For a further consideration of his use of the Jewish scriptures see Chapter V.
III. Analysis of Paul's Letters to the Corinthians

Having outlined the sources which it is reasonable to believe played a part in formulating Paul's ethical and religious ideals, we now turn to a detailed study of those teachings which reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the environment and heritage of the Apostle; but a teaching which is more than a reflection of sources; a unique product which exhibits subjective and individualistic elements. However, before introducing the teacher and his message, we must consider the immediate environment into which the teacher came, and out of which many of his problems grew. What sort of a place was Corinth?

1. Corinth

For a vivid, if perhaps overdrawn picture of Corinth as Paul knew it, we are indebted to Professor Hayes. It was a commercial city of first rate importance. Its ports were filled with shipping from all parts of the ancient world. It was the "New" Corinth which Julius Caesar began building in

52. Paul and His Epistles, p. 191 ff.
46 B.C., upon the ruins of an older town destroyed by the Roman General Lucius Mummius in 146 B.C. The new city grew rapidly and was made the capitol of the Roman province of Achaia. Being a commercial and trading center it had a shifting and non-descript population. A number of Jews were attracted there by the prospects of ready and easy wealth.

The nature of the population was largely responsible for the city's profligate reputation. With the possible exception of a few old Roman families who no doubt took pride in the political, commercial, and intellectual importance of Corinth, there were few influences around which to build a more ideal society. Chrysostom is quoted as saying that it was "'The most licentious city of all that are or ever have been.'" Another more modern writer (Shaw) compared Corinth "'to an amalgam of Newmarket, Chicago, and Paris. It had the worst features of each, all mixed together. At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry. In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders,

53. Hayes, Paul and His Epistles, p. 192
sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, betting men, courtesans, slaves, idlers and parasites of every description." The very name "Corinth" carried an evil connotation. To live like a Corinthian was to live a dissolute and shameless life.

The religion of the city was a chief aid to its sensuality. "On the Acrocorinthus stood the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos... In her temple were one thousand women who were professional prostitutes... commerce with these priestesses in the temple was regarded as a religious consecration... the rites of the Syrian Astarte had been imported to Europe and established on these Corinthian heights."

This statement concerning the temple worship is, however, questioned by Robertson. He infers that such might have been the case at an earlier time, but not in Saint Paul's day. "Nevertheless," he says, "even if that pestilent element had been reduced in the new city, there is enough evidence of the immorality of Corinth in Paul's day."

It is also doubtful, thinks Robertson, whether

54. Hayes, Paul and His Epistles, p. 192
55. Ibid, p. 194
56. Robertson, First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, I.C.C. p. xiii
the notorious immorality of Corinth had anything to do with Paul's selecting it as a center of his missionary work. His choice was rather a matter of chance or, as he believed, the leading of the spirit. There is also the hint that he was not well and was forced to remain in Athens. (Cf. I. Thess. 3:1 f.) But whatever the true cause, to this city, bad enough at best, Paul came with the purity of the gospel of Christ.

2. The founding of the Corinthian Church

Paul came to Corinth from Athens (Cf. Acts 18:1), where he had had an unpleasant experience in an attempt to present the Gospel in the terms of a philosophical disquisition.* As a result of this experience his message to the Corinthians took on the form of straightforward simplicity (Cf. I Cor. 3:2). He presented the simple testimony that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:5). He presented the terms of fellowship as belief in Christ and in God. After being forbidden by the Jews to speak in the synagogue, and being strongly opposed by them, he, with a few loyal Jews, turned to the Gentile population with his message. The Jewish controversy

* See note (a) on page 155
had, no doubt, raised certain questions as to ceremonial observances which were the major part of the Law. This called forth Paul's ethical ideas concerning things good and evil, Christian freedom and the unique characteristics of the fellowship. However, that he dealt with these things in an elementary fashion is indicated in I Cor. 3:2, where he says, "I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not able to bear it...."

After remaining in Corinth eighteen months Paul, in company with Priscilla and Aquila sailed for Syria. We are not told who was left in charge of the infant church, but that it continued to function is proved by the Corinthian correspondence. However, after arriving at Ephesus some time later, Paul sent Titus and a companion to Corinth to acquaint the brethren there with the scheme for relieving the poor at Jerusalem. This appeal was well received (Cf. II Cor. 8:10-12; 9:2), but in the year 57
54, while Paul was still in Ephesus, he received news from Corinth which both shocked and grieved him. The members of the church had not given up the licentious practices of their evil environment; they had

allowed factions and discord to develop and had founded a false philosophy upon his teaching.

3. Introduction to problems involved.

At this point we turn to a study of the ethical problems which were peculiar to definite situations in the Corinthian Church, problems which shall be considered in the order of their appearance in the Letters. However, we will follow the opinion of certain critical commentators in dividing the correspondence into four, rather than two communications.* Thus we have:

(a) The first letter consisting of fragments within I and II Corinthians, i.e., I Cor. 6:12-20 and II Cor. 6:14-7:1.
(b) The second letter consisting of the remainder of I Corinthians.
(c) The third letter consisting of II Cor. 10-13:10.
(d) The fourth letter consisting of II Cor. 1-9 and 13:11-14.

Our first problem is found in what we have termed the "first letter."

4. The relationship of body and soul

As we have already intimated, Paul's

* See note (a) on page 155
first letter was prompted by word from Corinth to
the effect that (1) his teaching had been misunder-
stood, (2) two radical factions had arisen within
the church, and (3) a case of the most flagrant im-
morality had been discovered within the fellowship:
"It is actually reported that...one of you hath his
father's wife."

This latter offense is dealt with by the
Apostle by demanding that the offending member be
immediately but not irrevocably excommunicated, but
this command did not settle the matter, as we shall
see in another connection.

The principal problem dealt with in this
first letter, so far as the fragments enlighten us,
is the relation of physical activity to spiritual
well-being. The question grew out of what we have
termed a misunderstanding of Paul's teaching. But as
there is a difference of opinion among scholars as
to this point, we must clarify our position here.

In I Corinthians 6:12 we find these words,
"All things are lawful for me; but not all things are
expedient," and in 6:13, "Meats for the belly and
belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both
it and them." The inference is that Paul is quoting the Corinthians and that the Corinthians had, in turn, quoted Paul. However, are these Paul's words? David Smith calls them "antinomian maxims", but certainly Paul was not an antinomian. Parry, in the Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, says that we need not go further for an explanation for these words than the prevailing Greek thought of the time. But let us note that this is a question which had arisen within the fellowship; a fellowship founded on the teachings of Paul. One group held that what one did physically had nothing to do with him religiously, and an opposite group was so afraid of injuring their religious lives through physical activities that they became ascetics. Would this question have caused a division of opinion within the church, if it had been well understood that it was a product of the heathen world, and therefore foreign to the Gospel which Paul preached? Yes, possibly, for Paul, as we have already stated, did not make all things clear to them, and the older ideas had a way of hanging on and

58. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 238
insinuating themselves into the new environment. But it is also to be noted that Paul uses similar words in another place. Compare I Cor. 10:23 where he says, "All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient." Also for a confirmation of the opinion that these words were originally uttered by Paul see Massie in the Century Bible, I and II Corinthians, and Robertson in The International Critical Commentary, I Corinthians. It is at least possible that the second phrase, meats for the belly etc., was a part of Paul's argument that the ceremonial food laws of the Jews were not religiously or ethically valid. In his controversy with them such a question would arise. Another factor which argues for this opinion is that in his subsequent qualification of these ideas, Paul indicates that he was very familiar with them and their implications. Therefore, with the supposition that these words were Paul's we will turn to his qualification of them as set forth in his first letter.

"Yes," says Paul, quoting the Corinthians, "All things are lawful for me, but" he goes on to qualify, "not all things are expedient"(I Cor. 6:12). Paraphrased this would mean "Everything is allowable
for me, but it is not everything that is profitable."

Massie says that, of course by "all things" Paul means all things not immoral. But we see no reason for restricting his meaning here to those activities of a positive or non-moral character. Paul is championing the moral right of self-hood. "I am a free-willed being," he is saying, "and I can do whatever I choose with my body and anything else that belongs to me." That is what the Corinthians meant, and there is no indication that Paul altered the implication of their quotation. But the Apostle goes on to say, "If I am a Christian I am obligated to differentiate between the values of life and to select those that are in harmony with the faith and profitable to religion." This latter thought is further expanded when Paul continues, "All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Here he throws out the danger signal. He recognizes the possibility of losing one's selfhood through habits initiated by self-willed acts; and how easily that could be done at Corinth. In other words, it is possible for you to do all things, but don't be surprised if some day you should discover

60. The Century Bible, p. 172
that you are no longer master but slave.

"Meats for the belly and the belly for meats; but God shall bring to nought both it and them" (I Cor. 6:13). In these words we have the Corinthian's philosophy that it matters not what you do with your body, for it will perish as surely as the food that is eaten. But this view is not shared by Paul. "Know ye not," he says, "that your bodies are members of Christ?" (v. 13), and as members of Christ they shall share the resurrection of Christ. We misunderstand the Apostle, however, if we think of him as believing the body to be mere flesh and blood. It was more than that to Paul; it was an intelligent instrument in the hands of God; a dwelling place for the spirit of Christ. What conception could lend more dignity or worth to personality and individuality than that? Paul would have the Corinthians reverence their bodies, for such reverence is a powerful antidote for the promptings of lust.

Now, the spirit of Christ, he continues in effect, is foreign to the spirit of harlotry. The two cannot exist together. Therefore, if the spirit
of Christ inhabits the body, and that body is joined in union with that of a harlot, the spirit of Christ is taken away, and the individual is no longer one with God - a soul has been lost for whom Christ paid the price of death.

This conception of the body, that it is the "Temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God" (v. 19), makes its defilement a sin, and heightens our respect for the bodies of others, for are they not also "Members of Christ"? But we must notice in this regard, that Paul is not thinking of the harlot. She was accepted as an evil factor in the Christian's environment, and as such, could hardly be injured by the Christian's conduct toward her. Certainly Paul did not think that her body was also capable of housing the Holy Spirit. To criticize Paul at this point, however, is to condemn ourselves, and all of Christian history. The church of today still says, "If any man loveth not the Lord," i.e., if any man sin according to the flesh, "let him be anathema" (Cf. I Cor. 16:22).

Evidently Paul had talked to the Corinthians
somewhat to this effect, that is, that their bodies were sacred vessels of the Spirit, and certain of them grew very self-conscious and self-righteous. All propensity to evil was a thing of the flesh, and must be rigorously controlled. This led to asceticism and a denial of the legitimate rights of the body, lest the desires of the flesh should violate the indwelling spirit. Such an attitude raised a question which Paul dealt with later in his discourse on marriage.

May we now summarize the ethical principles which were involved in Paul's teaching concerning the relationship of body and soul. We feel that we can do no better in making such a summary of principles than to quote Enslin. Referring to this particular problem, he says:

"The ultimate criterion (of morality) was to be found in Christ, not alone as the example but as the dynamic source of the new life to which the Christian had arisen. Accordingly, it was only in this mystic union with the risen Lord that the Christian found his freedom from sin possible...The vertical bond of union with the Lord resulted in just as real a horizontal unity among the fellow believers. Only in so far as this latter fellowship was in the most perfect harmony and peace could the former be realized, since the group was united to the Lord by as real a tie as was the individual member, was the body of which Christ was the
head, the bride of which he was the husband, the building in which he was the corner stone."

Let us notice, however, that it was easier for Paul to advise the Corinthians than it was for them to obey. There was still the factor of environment to be reckoned with. With this in mind let us consider the

5. Christian and Pagan Relationships

Another fragment of the first letter (II Cor. 6:14 to 7:1), deals with the Christian's environment, especially the intimate environment of the home life and the married state. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," Paul tells them, "for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness" (II Cor. 6:14). In Corinth the Christian faith had exemplified the saying of Jesus, "For I come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:35,36).

It was exceedingly difficult for the "light" not to have fellowship with the "darkness", paradoxical

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61. The Ethics of Paul, p. 133
though it may seem. Sometimes the wife was a Christian and the husband a pagan or vice versa. The necessities of life demanded that they deal with their pagan neighbors. David Smith says that the Corinthian Christians, the ascetic group and the libertine group, each looking at the matter from their particular angle, had misconstrued Paul's statement. However, if they did, and their judgment was based on the passage already quoted, they are not to be condemned as dull, for it certainly lends itself to no other interpretation than absolute separation from the world. Verse 14 "denotes not merely intermarriage but all manner of intimacy with heathen." This admonition greatly pleased the ascetics in their zeal for moral purity, and was equally resented by the liberal faction. The latter denounced the injunction as an impossible requirement. So, we find Paul, in his second letter,* interpreting his position in regard to the matter.

"I wrote unto you," he says, "in my epistle to have no company with fornicators, not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or

62. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 257
63. Ibid, footnote, p. 236
* See note (b) on page 155
with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world; but as it is, I wrote unto not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." (I Cor. 5:9-13). 

Thus, in his exhortation he referred not to society in general but to the fellowship of the church. In other words, he exhorts them not to allow any hypocrites to remain as members of the fellowship. In this connection, we have to deal again with the case of incest mentioned on page 40. As we have noted, Paul had charged the church to rid itself of this offender at once. But his mandate had not been taken seriously. The scandal continued and there was little sense of shame that it did so. They had evidently laughed the matter off and chided the Apostle for being so concerned about trifles. But it was no small matter to Paul. He re-iterates his command, and reminds them that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I.Cor. 5:6). 

We can readily see the wisdom of Paul's course here. Social influences from without could not be avoided, but the social influences within
the group could and should be controlled. So long as the church kept itself free from such evils as characterized society at Corinth, it was in a position to challenge those evils, and to show that the prevalent immoralities were not essential to the ongoing of life, but to condone such practices meant the loss of all moral or ethical prestige. Paul knew from his own experiences the tremendous power of a righteous example. If the church could keep herself inviolate, then the mingling of her members with the pagans might exert a beneficial influence over them, to the glory of their Christ and to the spread of the gospel.

Is not Paul really pleading, then, for loyalty to an institution? Yes, for that institution represents for him the will and the mind of Christ. Its progress connotes co-operation which in turn reflects a healthy condition of the ethical and moral sense of those who compose it. The institution also protects and encourages the individual's spiritual growth.

With this general outline of the social and ethical problems confronting the Corinthian Christians in mind, let us examine more carefully the
particular aspects of the situation.

(a) Fornication

A cursory reading of Enslin's book leaves the impression that Paul must have spent most of his time and energy combating the sexual evils of his day. Certainly he had to face problems associated with the sexual life wherever he went, and perhaps more so at Corinth than at other places, but it is a mistake to place his emphasis there. Paul was not a reformer but a religionist; a missionary imbued with a message which had captured his own mind and heart; and being thus captured he had found freedom.

Paul's teaching concerning fornication, associated with the case of incest already referred to, was called forth because the offender was a member of the Corinthian fellowship. Paul was not, and in the light of the accepted standards of his day, could not be so concerned about the conduct of those without the church. "Them that are without, God judgeth." Weinel says that "what the Apostle has before his eyes is not a world ethically organized, a moral civilization, but a world doomed to
destruction, in which individuals saved by religion kept themselves pure and unspotted."

However, in fairness to Paul's sense of religious universality, we must notice that he exerted every influence to persuade all those without the church to join its ranks, and purify themselves in preparation for the coming reign of Christ. In other words, Paul was not trying to change the moral standards of his day, but he was trying to make possible a place of refuge for those who wished to escape, or for those who wished to be saved from the world. And as we have previously noted, from Paul's religious point of view, fornication and its kindred evils were harmful to human values, as those values are interpreted in terms of God-awareness or God-consciousness; therefore they were unethical and irreligious. But suppose that this place of refuge, the church, became polluted with the infiltering of worldly immoralities? The result would be utter defeat of all that Paul had tried to do. It would mean the tearing down of the only wall that could protect men from the storm of

64. St. Paul, The Man and His Work, p. 331
retribution which must inevitably come to a corrupt civilization. Therefore, when Paul is informed of this and other immoralities within the fellowship, he condemns them in the most bitter terms. There is also the possibility that this particular problem, the fact that a man had had illicit relations with his stepmother, widened the breach between the libertine and the ascetic factions in the church. The ascetic group would have very willingly followed Paul's instructions to "Put away the wicked man from among them," but the "wicked man" had friends within the fellowship who were, to say the least, not impressed by the seriousness of his crime. The implication is that the argument increased until there was a threat to take the matter to the civil authorities for settlement, for evidently the Christians were not strangers to the civil courts. This leads us to a consideration of Paul's attitude toward such litigation.

(b) The Scandal of Litigation

In I Cor. 6:1-4 Paul writes:

"Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge
the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?"

This particular situation presents a number of difficulties for Paul, but before stating them, let us inquire into the legal systems of the day. The criminal and civil courts were maintained by the state, i.e., the Roman government. But the Romans, not being interested in disputes among the Jews (Cf. attitude of Gallio in Acts 18:17), allowed them to establish their own synagogue courts. This move initiated what might be termed our ecclesiastical judiciary; a means of justice which was adopted by the early Christians. One effect of these courts was to keep the minor quarrels and scandals under cover, and thus save the church needless public embarrassment.* The first difficulty that this situation at Corinth presented to Paul, then, was the danger of having the church he had founded and the faith that he had preached, discredited in the eyes of the public. This would limit the possibility of converts being added to the group and would tend to undermine the

* See note (a) on page 155
morale of the more sincere members of the church. Had they not called the heathen unrighteous and unjust, and yet were they not going before them for justice? The Apostle exhorts them to keep their disputes out of the heathen courts.

This attitude of Paul's however does not necessarily mean that he thought the Christians would not get justice in the civil courts, or that he taught his followers to shun all civil authority. To quote Robertson, "'Obey the criminal courts, but do not go out of your way to invoke the civil courts' is a fair, if rough, summary of his teaching."

Paul goes on to remind the Corinthian Christians of their unique position in the realm of moral and religious authority. Were they not to be the judge of angels? Here we have Paul using his ever present religious convictions to empower his ethical ideals. They were linked with Christ, he tells them, and Christ was to judge the world, therefore they were to have a part in that judgment and yet, at

65. I. C. C., I Corinthians, p. 110
this time they confess themselves unable to judge concerning the minor questions of daily life which arise in their midst. "What," says Paul, "cannot there be found among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren" (I Cor. 6:5). Taking into consideration the Corinthian's intellectual pride, this is a bit of choice sarcasm on the Apostle's part.

But the question is not settled by prevailing upon the members of the church to keep their litigations within the organization. The root of the problem lies in something more fundamental than that. They were Christians, why should there be any litigations at all? The fact that they were contentious was a "defect" in their religious lives. "Why not rather take wrong?" "Why not rather be defrauded?" Paul asks (I Cor. 5:7). It is only a losing fight and the winner gets the worst of it. "For the only true victory lies in the suffering of wrong." What Paul is really stressing here is the ethics of brotherly love.

This spirit of contention was, in a large measure, responsible for another problem which arose

66. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 258
about this time, the problem of partisanship.

6. The Evils of Partisanship

As Smith reminds us, "partisan spirit... was rampant in the Church and had rent it into bitter factions..." This rather native trait of the Corinthian people was increased by the arrival in Corinth of Apollos, a Greek Jew from Alexandria, a former disciple of John the Baptist (Acts 18:24-26); a learned and eloquent speaker of pleasing appearance. He exerted a decided influence over the Gentile group in the Church, or we might more accurately say the Hellenistic group, but Parry thinks that there is little indication that he converted many Jews. The popularity of Apollos produced an active loyalty on the part of those who held to Paul, and the various merits of the two men were no doubt argued with considerable heat. Others in the church, especially the more loyal Jews, said that they would support Peter, for his apostleship could not be questioned and he was more sympathetic toward the older Jewish ideas. Then there were those who scorned all human

67. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 244
68. Parry, Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, p. 416
leadership and maintained that they alone followed the Christ. But it is not certain that all the members belonged to one of these four groups. Perhaps there were those who refused to become a party to such a schism.

These disputes disturbed Paul because they had to do with him personally. His attitude toward the situation, as it existed, is interesting. We might expect the average leader to be a little more lenient with those who had befriended him, even at the expense of dissensions, but Paul "has no partiality for those who claim himself, nor any respect for those who claim Christ as their special leader. Indeed he seems to condemn these two classes with special severity. The former exalts Paul too highly, the latter brings Christ too low: but all four are alike wrong." However, the Apollos group, the intellectuals, did not escape Paul's scorn. "Again and again he brands them with the stinging epithet of 'windy braggards' and plies them with the contemptuous interrogation, 'Do you not know?" He sets forth the simplicity of the faith by contrasting the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of God.

69. Robertson, I. C. C., I Corinthians, p. 11  
70. Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 245
(Cf. I Cor. 1:18 to 4:21). And in all of this discussion he accepts Apollos as a fellow servant of Christ (I Cor. 16:12). There is no hint that he resented the intrusion of the Alexandrian into his Corinthian territory. How easy it would have been for him to have denounced this man who had, in no small way, been responsible for the factions in the church at this time. This is not inferring, however, that Apollos had criticized Paul as a person or his methods as a teacher and preacher, but on the other hand, there is no record that he adopted a gospel similar to that of Paul, which might have discouraged the Corinthians in their "hero worship." Paul points them to the unifying Christ who is really worthy of their worship. Himself, Apollos, and Peter were alike his poor ministers. "Is Christ divided?" he inquires of them. "Was Paul crucified for you?" Paul knew how to minimize the individual in order to exalt the ideal. Apollos, it seemed, had not learned that lesson in piety. However, we must not think of Paul here, or elsewhere, as losing his individuality in either social or religious passion. He is capable of defending
the rights of his own selfhood. In the ninth chapter of I Corinthians he defends his apostleship and his right to receive support for his work. In chapter two of the same letter he defends his mode of presenting the gospel. The followers of Apollos had contrasted Paul's crudity of speech, manner, and appearance with their Alexandrian orator, much to his disparagement (Cf. II Cor. 10:7-18). This aroused in him that righteous and legitimate pride of self which he expressed at times almost to the point of egotism. In I Cor. 4:3,4 he has the temerity to say,

"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of any man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself."

To end the quotation at this point would certainly detract from Paul's sense of humility, but he goes on to say, "Yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Therefore, says the Apostle, hold your personal judgment in abeyance until the Lord comes who will be able to judge wisely and accurately. This seeming egotistic attitude is also reflected in the much discussed exhortation, "I beseech you therefore, be
ye imitators of me." (I Cor. 4:16). Here he solicits imitation on the ground that he is their spiritual father. His individualism is not egotism. His attitude is not one of self inflation but self recognition; not self deification but self respect.

However, fornication, litigation and partisanship did not exhaust the problems of the Corinthian congregation. Therefore, may we now turn our attention to the problem of legitimate sexual relationships.

7. Sexual Relations

While Paul was in the midst of his second letter to the Corinthians, three delegates arrived bearing a communication from that Church. It was the long expected answer to Paul's first letter,* and contained a request for advice concerning a number of perplexing questions which had arisen. While this letter from the Corinthians has been lost, we can judge somewhat as to its content by the nature of Paul's answers. It seems that, first of all, they wanted to know about the status of the marriage relation within the fellowship.

* See note (b) on page 155
This question no doubt grew out of the attitude which the ascetics had taken to the whole sex life. According to Paul's words (Cf. I Cor. 7:1), they had accepted the doctrine that "it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Such a belief would naturally be resented by the liberals who were too prone to accept the grossest irregularities as legitimate. Perhaps the ascetics had gone so far as to suggest that those who were already married should dissolve their union in the interest of a purer religious life. The outcome of the argument, apparently, was a decision to ask the Apostle about it.

(a) The Legitimacy of Marriage

Let us make it clear here that Paul is not dealing with abstract ethical principles. All that he shall say to the Corinthians concerning their sexual relationships is based upon the exigencies of an actual situation. That he would have offered the same advice to everyone does not necessarily follow. However, the Corinthian environment so approximated that of the average Christian of Paul's day, that his teaching may be looked upon as almost universally valid, as far as the
individual's relationship with the church was concerned. He writes them to the following effect:

i. Marriage is not impurity but is designed to prevent impurity.

ii. Faithfulness must characterize the marriage relationship. "Sexual union is to be regulated by mutual consideration, and to be suspended only in the interest of the religious life and not permanently." Only faithfulness within the marriage relationship will prevent outside relationships of an objectionable nature. (Cf. I Cor. 7:5).

iii. It is better to marry than to live an incontinent or even dissatisfied life outside of marriage. (Cf. I Cor. 7:9).

iv. It is not possible to set a definite rule concerning marrying or refraining from marriage, for all men are not constituted alike. "Each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner and another after that" (I Cor. 7:7). If possible Paul would have them remain celibate as he himself did, not that marriage was a sin or continence a virtue, but that they might give themselves more wholeheartedly to the things of the Lord. However, if they could not refrain from marriage, or remarriage in the case of widows, they were to marry only within the circle of the faith. (Cf. I Cor. 7:39).

(b) Divorce

"But unto the married," Paul writes, "I give charge, yea, not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband (but should
she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife." (I Cor. 7:10,11).

Here Paul is talking to the Christians only, and he has his authority from the Lord. There is a question as to where Paul got these teachings of Jesus. Parry says, "It can scarcely be decided whether this implies that the Corinthians had a written collection of sayings of the Lord or whether St. Paul refers simply to the oral communications of such sayings in their early instruction. But in any case the reference is to a recognized order of the Lord's, and not to a special revelation."

It is also to be noted that in Matthew 19:9 Jesus allows divorce on the ground of adultery, but this statement of Paul's contains no exceptions whatever, and is therefore in harmony with the reported sayings of Jesus in Mark 10:10-12 and Luke 16:18.

(c) Mixed Marriages

The problem of marriage at Corinth was further complicated by the fact that Christians often found themselves married to unbelievers. The question arose as to whether it would not be better

71. Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, p. 72
for such couples to separate. On this question Paul has no authority from the Lord, but he gives * his own judgment. In his first letter (Cf. page 39) to the Corinthians he had said, "Be not incongruously yoked with strangers to the faith" (II Cor. 6:14), and no doubt it was this statement which had occasioned the controversy. However, Paul now writes them more definitely.

"If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife sanctified in the brother." (Cf. 7:12-14).

But if the unbelieving member of the union should desire separation, there is nothing to prevent him or her from leaving the other. According 72 to David Smith, "The grand principle" that Paul stresses here is 'it is in peace that God has called us.' Therefore let there be no public scandals centering around divorce, or any contentious litigation concerning the rights of one of the other. Christianity had not come to destroy the home, but to transform and beautify it. "Hence it

72. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 263
* See note (b) on page 155
life, is a view which can scarcely be deduced from this passage (I Cor. 7:29) at least." The passage referred to reads, "...henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none." The truer significance of this thought has been previously brought out, but to confirm our belief that marriage, in Paul's estimation, was more than a mere physical necessity, we turn to Ephesians 5:31,32 where he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and the Church."

Restricting ourselves to the Corinthian literature, marriage is, at best, only a second best; a concession to obviate greater evils. Celibacy is certainly desirable if it is an expression of loyalty to an ideal, but is not to be thought of as a virtue in itself. "There is no merit in celibacy or despising earthly joy of any kind in itself; but all honor to those who, recognizing that they are called to a service they could not otherwise

adequately fulfil, refrain from wedded life and other joys."

Virginity is encouraged, divorce is forbidden, and all illegitimate forms of sexual indulgence is denounced. Mixed marriages may be dissolved, but only when the unbeliever takes the initiative. All of these principles are based on the individual's religious welfare, and the edification of Christian life and fellowship, rather than in the interest of the construction of a better moral world order.

Therefore, continuing this individual and institutional interest, let us consider two principles of freedom which grew out of the Corinthian situation.

8. Christian Freedom

In reference to the matters of circumcision and slavery we have Paul taking an attitude which tends to validate and maintain the status quo.

(a) Circumcision

"Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called

80. The Ethics of St. Paul, p. 246
follows that, whatever be a man's condition at his conversion, he should maintain it and live the new life amid the old surroundings."

(d) Virginity

Closely associated with the question of marriage is that of virginity, and much of what we have already said concerning Paul's teaching on marriage, applies here. That is, it is better not to marry if continence can be maintained without marriage. Although it is neither a sin to marry or a virtue not to marry, there is a matter of expediency to be recognized at this time. First of all, there is no longer the necessity to propagate the race, as the final Day of the Lord is near, and because of this fact, complications in human relationships will but add to the distress which is soon to come upon all Christians. Preceding the coming of Christ there would be a period of persecution characterized by misunderstandings, strife, and hatred. Had not Paul himself already experienced some of that suffering which was indicative of the "signs of the times"? The days ahead would demand bravery and

the utmost Christian devotion, and "Paul was quite aware that a man could be braver by himself than when he saw the trouble which his bravery would bring upon his wife and children." During this time of stress family relationships and worldly interests would have to be subordinated if not ignored.

"But this I say," writes Paul in giving his own judgment, "the time is shortened, that henceforth both those who have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use the world, as not using it to the full; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (I Cor. 7:29-31).

Widows may marry again, if they restrict themselves to Christians, but they are admonished to remain unmarried, for he that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, and that is what matters most under the circumstances. In this light, celibacy is not only prudential but a Christian duty. But even now, Paul does not take a dogmatic attitude toward marriage. While suggesting and recommending celibacy or "spiritual marriage," in case a troth has been plighted and cannot be broken, he still

74. Massie, The Century Bible, I & II Corinthians, p. 186
affirms the legitimacy and permanence of the marriage bond.

Just whom does Paul mean when he speaks of virgins? Enslin says that they "are not to be understood (as) unmarried women in general, but a group of men and women who had taken certain vows of chastity and so were really virgins, and who lived together in a sort of spiritual marriage." Granting that there was such a group, however, does not change the essential meaning of Paul's exhortation. What would apply to them would also apply to other unmarried men and women.

(e) Summary of Paul's Ethical Principles Regarding Sex Relations

Before attempting a definite summary of Paul's teaching in regard to sex, let us consider some of the sources which may reasonably have influenced his thinking along this line.

For the first source of Paul's sexual ethics, we must turn to his own experiences. He knew how to advise others in this regard for he had been forced to solve the same problem for himself. "Who can tell what painful inner experiences this saintly

75. The Ethics of Paul, p. 176 f.
man passed through in this direction.'" There are those who have taken this cue and constructed the theory that Paul was a man of even vicious life. They see him as a person who got a certain satisfaction out of dipping into the morbid side of sex. However, such a view is not consistent with the whole of Paul's thought. "That the flesh meant for him very specially, though not exclusively, sexual impulse, it is possible to infer from the prominent place given to sins of impurity in his catalogue of the works of the flesh. On the other hand, it is to be remembered that Paul always claimed to have lived, even in his pre-Christian days, by the holy light of conscience. And it is the purest who feel most keenly the stain of sins like these." In any case Paul knew and appreciated the force of those temptations which are the lot of every man.

Secondly, Paul knew Corinth and its people, and he advocated that course of action which he thought was most likely to succeed in such an

76. Alexander, The Ethics of St. Paul, p. 244
77. Robertson, I.C.C., I Corinthians, p. 131
    Cf. Weinel, St. Paul, pp. 85-93
78. Alexander, The Ethics of St. Paul, p. 244
environment. As we have previously noted, Paul did not, in his Corinthian letters write a treatise on marriage, but he did deal with a situation in which marriage was an important factor, and situations, in ancient Corinth as elsewhere, seldom lend themselves to ideal treatment.

As a Jew Paul would look upon marriage as a duty. Bachelors were not popular in Israel. But these natural influences were, partially at least, sublimated by his religious experience; an experience through which he was able to rise above the merely physical to a spiritual plane of life. As a mystic, however, he does not forget that other men still desired and needed those satisfactions which were a part of the physical life.

Another source of Paul's ideas on marriage, as we have indicated in the previous discussion, was found in what we have supposed to have been the current oral or written traditions or sayings of Jesus. Paul always sets aside his own opinion when he has that of the Lord. That he refers to Jesus but two or three times and to the Old Testament many times, is looked upon by some as a subordination of the
teaching of Jesus. Such a claim could not be substantiated unless we could prove just how much New Testament tradition was available for Paul.

And finally, we have the influence of Paul's eschatological beliefs. Later on, when he is not so sure of the immediate passing of the old order, we find him modifying his views concerning life. II Thess. 3:6-16 is suggestive.

How may we summarize, then, the Apostle's teaching in regard to sex, as it appears in the Corinthian correspondence.

Confessedly, for Paul, marriage is a concession to the flesh. Cf. I Cor. 7:1-7. But even so, it is not essentially evil or contrary to the teaching of Jesus. As set forth in his Corinthian letters, marriage is on a physical plane. Alexander, in referring to Paul's conception of marriage, says, "In general he looks upon wedded life from the sexual point of view, and regards it as essentially a concession to weakness. The conception of marriage as a spiritual union, a fellowship of heart and mind, in which the man and woman mutually contribute to the enrichment and the realization of the higher
in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man abide in the calling wherein he was called." (I Cor. 7:18-20).

In a city such as Corinth, where the majority of Christians were Gentiles, there was a tendency upon the part of some circumcised Jews to hide or remove the marks of their Judaism, a practice which was no doubt condemned by the older and more loyal sons of Israel. What place or significance did circumcision have in the faith that Paul had preached to them? Paul's reply which has been quoted above clarifies this point, but it should also be given a wider interpretation than the question implies. That is, if the convert is a Jew let him remain a Jew, and not endeavor to change his outward mode of life if it is not of a sensuous or sinful nature. Likewise, if the convert is a Gentile, let him not endeavor to become a Jew. In other words, Paul was not trying to manufacture Christians according to a set pattern of external relations. The man who became a Christian was free to express his new faith in that mode of life which was most natural for him. We have
already noted the principle which Paul uses here in connection with mixed marriages. "The difference between circumcision and uncircumcision is a matter of small moment. Those who have it need not be ashamed of it, and those who have it not certainly need not seek it."

Whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, is not the point: "the point is whether you are obedient to God; and that alone has real significance."

And such obedience to God will mean a change of moral character. The transition from a non-Christian to a Christian is an internal rather than an external manifestation.

(b) Slavery

Christianity appealed to the slave classes because it promised a sense of equality. Under the protection and approbation of the church they hoped to obtain freedom and a more valid individuality. To these Paul says, no doubt to their disappointment:

"Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called a bondservant?"

81. Robertson, I. C. C., I Corinthians, p. 146
82. Massie, The Century Bible, I & II Corinthians, p. 182
care not for it: nay, even if thou can't become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God." (I Cor. 7:21-24).

Three times within seven verses (I Cor. 7:17-24), Paul repeats this last sentence. This emphasis seems to stress what appears to us today as an unethical maxim. We say that people should be encouraged to change not only their internal attitudes but also their external environment, if by so doing a better state of life can be obtained. "It is questionable, however, if the apostle here actually desires to set up a general ethical standard with reference to the various vocations of life." The situation which he is trying to meet with this injunction is that wherein the new converts, believing themselves no longer under the obligations imposed by their environment, sought to throw off entirely their old manner of life. In other words, Christian freedom was expanded to include social, economic, and political liberty.

There is also the hint that some Corinthians were joining the church for the express purpose of obtaining such liberty. To encourage this sort of thing would mean a complete outlawing of the whole movement to which Paul had given his life. "If the slaves should refuse to serve their pagan masters, measures would be taken to compel obedience. In all probability they would be executed; the members of the small groups, still all too few, would suffer; and the whole body of believers would be brought into disrepute, if not exterminated."

The question is asked, Was not Paul, in taking this attitude, compromising the principles of the Christian religion? The answer must be no, not the Christianity which Paul knew. He was not concerned about social justice on earth, but he was extremely concerned about the justice of the judgment of God, which was soon to measure and evaluate the inner freedom of the individual.

However, Paul says nothing against the improvement of one's physical situation, if it can be brought about by peaceful means. Thus a believing woman may leave her pagan husband if he is

84. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, p. 206
willing that she should, and the slave may cease

to serve if his master is willing to grant him his
freedom, or if he can obtain it through the legal
procedure of selling himself to the deity.

So, "if a man is a Christian," Paul says
in effect, "it matters very little what his out-
ward life is. In every sphere there is ample scope
for Christlike service. The name of Christ is
raised above all external conditions and relation-
ships. For he that is called in the Lord, being a
slave, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that
is called, being free is Christ's slave." ("The
slave was to serve faithfully and to obey his mas-
ter - whether the master was a Christian or not -
remembering that it was God, not a man, who would
recompense and that the day was then at hand."

The next question we find raised in the
Corinthian rescript had to do with another and
quite important element in the Corinthian envir-
onment. What was to be the Christian's attitude
toward the eating of sacrificial meat?

86. Enslin, *The Ethics of Paul*, p. 209
9. "Meat Offered to Idols"

The question as to the use of sacrificial meats was one which confronted the Christian in every heathen city. If he were to eat meat purchased in the market places he would have to lay aside any scruples he might have as to its sacrificial nature. The sacrifices were numerous, and as only a very small portion of the animal, perhaps but a few hairs, were consumed in the sacrifice, the markets were quite well supplied from the temples.

In this situation, as in others at Corinth, there were two factions. There were those who, by virtue of their knowledge, scoffed at the idea that sacrificial meat was different from that which had not been sacrificed, and they prided themselves on the fact that they were not influenced by such foolish superstitions. There were others who were not so sure that the meat had not been changed in some way. The ancestral belief in demons associated with idol worship still lingered in their minds; a belief quite definitely shared by Paul himself (Cf. I Cor. 10:20). Still others were so schooled
against every aspect of idolotry that anything that suggested idol worship was repugnant to them. The conservative group suggested that the church make a ruling that no member should eat meat which had been offered to idols. This move, we may suppose, was looked upon by the liberals as a curtailment of their rightful Christian freedom.

What solution would the Apostle suggest?

Paul answers that the consecration of meats had no real significance as the idol itself was nothing. "The danger did not lie in the meat, nor in the idol, but in causing some Christian, who had not been able to see the insignificance of the consecration, to go contrary to what he felt to be right." How reconcile this statement with the foregoing assertion that the Apostle believed in current ideas of demonology, as referred to in I Cor. 10:20? For Paul the idol was empty of power in itself to harm, but "Behind the emptiness of the idol there is the substance of the demoniac power which uses idolotry as a means of temptation to excess and lust." But as the Christian did not

87. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, p. 245
88. Massie, The Century Bible, I & II Corinthians, p. 208
take any active part in idol worship, it was permissible for him to buy meat at the market without inquiring whether it had been consecrated, and thus being ignorant of its source, it had no power whatever to harm him, and he might partake of it without injury to his conscience. It was also permissible to eat sacrificial meat at a friend's table, if the friend failed to state that it had been consecrated, but if it was known to have been offered to an idol, the Christian would not partake of it for the sake of the "other"; either his host, who might later be converted to the faith, or some weaker brother who happened to be present.

Parry points out that Paul bases his answer to this problem on three principles. The first is the principle of charity. The strong should be considerate of the weaker brother's spiritual health, and be willing to abstain from using their full liberty for his sake. "A conscience, ascertained to be over-scrupulous, must be lovingly considered." However, this does not mean that

89. Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, p. 84
90. Massie, The Century Bible, I & II Corinthians, p. 192
the 'weak' were to be shown such deference that they would become the rulers of the church. In the following chapter, I Cor. 9, Paul builds up his case in this regard by citing how he himself had limited his privileges in order that he might bring no reproach upon the church, and that he might more readily win those for whom Christ died. "Take heed," therefore, "lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to the weak." (I Cor. 8:9). In other words, regardless of your own opinion in the matter, abstain from sacrificial meats, for another person seeing you partake thereof, and having a tender conscience toward such things, may not only lose faith in your Christianity and thus discredit the church, but he may also be tempted to violate his own judgment, and such a violation might easily mean his moral breakdown and reversion to idolotry. "Let no man seek his own but each his neighbor's good" (I Cor. 10:24).

The second principle is that of vigilant self-discipline. Christian freedom does not abrogate reason and judgment. Mental, as well as physical self-discipline is necessary if the goal of the
Christian life is to be attained. "The principle is clear," says Enslin, "All things, while lawful for the Christian, did not tend to edification." Therefore, discrimination is necessary, and discrimination always implies discipline.

The third principle is loyalty. While the eating of sacrificial meats was objectively and rationally harmless, yet certain implications were to be considered. After all, it could not be denied, as Paul points out in I Cor. 10:19 f., that there was a certain meaning to the Gentile feasts. They had communion with demons rather than gods, and the Christian who has anything to do with them will have difficulty in drinking the cup of demons and the cup of the Lord at the same time. That is, the eating of sacrificial meats involves, at least in a remote sense, participation in the heathen rites, and such participation would, of course, be a mark of disloyalty to Christ, the Gospel, and the Church.

The chief principle which we see in Paul's teaching concerning this matter is the proper use of knowledge and incidentally the ethics of brotherly love. There is a subtle implication here which

91. The Ethics of Paul, p. 247
the Apostle recognizes. For the possessor, knowledge may, and often does mean a wholesome sort of freedom, but at the same time it may be a freedom which will be misunderstood or wrongly interpreted by others. Therefore, the outward expression of our intellectual convictions must be so modified as to conform to the highest social good, and at the same time tend to prepare other individuals for the profitable reception of the advanced ideas. Intellectual and moral discipline must be the rule; a rule prompted by love and impowered by the spirit of Christ.

From a situation which existed in the external relationships of the church, may we now pass to an equally difficult problem which was associated with the internal functioning of the fellowship.

10. Abuses of Public Worship

These abuses fall into three or more or less distinct divisions: women's dress, the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, and the practice of spiritual gifts. As the Corinthian's attitude toward these things reflect quite definitely the influence of their Hellenistic environment, may we
first consider the general nature of the Mystery religions and commonly accepted Greek customs concerning the behavior of women.

Massie tells us that "According to the sanctions of immemorial custom, women, as in the East, so also in Greece, were 'rarely seen abroad, and never in any circumstances played any public part.'" There were no women players in the theatres, the female parts being taken by men. To appear with head uncovered, or especially with the hair shorn, was to identify oneself with the wanton women of the time. The respectable woman would acknowledge and accept her peculiar position in society, and conduct herself accordingly.

The Oriental or Mystery religions which were prevalent in Paul's day are characterized by Enslin as follows: "(1) All have some rites of purification, either moral or ceremonial, through which the Mystae pass. (2) All are mysteries of communion with some deity who through them comes into relation to his votaries. (3) All look to the future life and secure of the initiate a happy reception in the

92. The Century Bible, I & II Corinthians, p. 34
world beyond the grave."

Much has been said about the extent to which Christianity is indebted to the mystery cults with no general agreement. In this connection we are not concerned with the theological aspects of the two sects, but rather the ethical bearing of their relationships. The persons who composed the Corinthian Church were, for the most part, those who had been interested in and perhaps influenced by the various elements in the mystery cults and Stoic philosophy. What sort of an ethical or moral background did these cults furnish the early converts to Christianity? Enslin speaks directly to this point. "In short," he says, "the cults were unconcerned with moral standards; they neither accepted nor rejected. If a person were already virtuous the cult would probably not corrupt him; if he were not virtuous, it would not tend to make him so." From our reading as to the nature of the mysteries, we would place the emphasis on the word "probably" in the first clause, and fully admit the implication of the second.

93. The Ethics of Paul, p. 47
94. Ibid, p. 54
* For a refutation of this statement see Willoughby, Pagan Regeneration
This writer goes on to say, "Such were the mysteries at the time of Paul; entirely unconcerned with the question of ethics - salvation came through proper rites, not proper conduct - yet not inciting a disregard for morality nor making obscenity attractive; slowly acquiring...a 'secular morality'..." due mostly to outside influences.

The Mysteries were essentially initiatory rites in which the eating of consecrated food meant the eating of the deity and thus subsequent participation in the divine life. "To the Greek mind the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist were the Christian mysteries."

With these environmental factors in mind, we are prepared to examine the problems in the Corinthian fellowship which were associated with them.

(a) The Dress and Behavior of Women

As we have noticed, women occupied an inferior place in Grecian society, but that they were willing to improve that position, if given an opportunity, is indicated by their

95. The Ethics of Paul, p. 56
behavior in the Church at Corinth. The consciousness of their liberty in Jesus Christ and the belief that men and women were equal in the sight of God, led to an assertion of their rights to have an equal part and an equal say in the church's activities. That some used the whole religious situation as a justification of what had hitherto been considered morally wrong, is a valid conjecture. That others, raised above the mores of society by the lofty ideals of Christianity, were no longer conscious of any wrong in so expressing themselves, may also be defended. There is also the indication that a certain part of the male membership were not adverse to allowing the women greater freedom. But Paul, thoroughly a man of his age, looked upon these demonstrations with disfavor. We are assuming that he is still engaged in answering the Corinthian rescript previously referred to, when he writes:

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of every woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with

her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shorn. For if a woman is not veiled let her also be shorn, but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled. For a man ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man." (I Cor. 11:3-8).

Is this another case where Paul's ethical concepts are determined by the factors in the actual situation? Is the status of women set forth here in Paul's personal opinion, or the status which he feels the situation at Corinth demands? From his acquaintance with the heathen religions he no doubt recognized the danger of a free and equal mingling of the sexes in acts of worship. There was also the danger of corrupting the ideal of Christian freedom by applying it to an unconventional sexual morality. However, Massie confirms our opinion that Paul believed heartily in the subordination of women, and he refers to the passage quoted above and also to I Cor. 14:34 f. which reads:

"Let the women keep silent in the church: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home."
Here we find a marked Judaistic influence in Paul's thinking. The Old Testament Scriptures, especially Genesis in relation to the creation of man and woman, is taken as a standard. Man has his priority and woman her subjection from God. But Paul retains the right to interpret his scriptures. In I Cor. 11:11,12 he says in effect, While women are subordinated there is a limit to her dependence. In the sight of the Lord neither man nor woman has exclusive privileges. "For as, at the first, the woman came into being from the man, so, ever since then, the man has come into being by means of the woman; and like everything else, both are from God."

It is interesting to note, however, while taking the Old Testament as his standard in this regard, Paul sets aside a traditional Jewish custom, i.e., that men should also keep their heads covered while in the church. That men should bare their heads was a distinctive Christian idea and was in recognition of their free access to the throne of grace.

98. Robertson, I.C.C., I Corinthians, p. 227
Paul's great interest centers in the welfare of the Church. He did not think that "the public appearance of women was...of the essence of Christianity; and the gospel which was foolishness to the Greek and a stone of stumbling to the Jew, did not require the fresh obstacles of public scandal."

However, the trend of Paul's teaching concerning the conduct of women in the church, seems to oscillate between disapproval and approval. He would not quench the spirit in a woman's soul, but she must not give voice to that spirit in public, but, if she is determined to speak (Perhaps Paul knew women well enough to know that she would be), she must do so properly veiled. The correct manner of dress seems to have been of more importance than the privilege of speech. Paul held that general custom, religious authority, and even nature herself demanded that the veil be worn. Cf. I Cor. 11:13ff. General custom here, as we have noted on page 85, associated all women who appeared in public with head uncovered, or especially with hair shorn, with 100. Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 284
prostitution. Thus, a Christian woman so appearing would very seriously misrepresent the faith, irrespective of her essential purity.

We conclude therefore, that the ethical principle which Paul makes use of here is that of subordination. This subordination affects everyone except God himself. Christ is subordinate to God, man to Christ, and woman to man. This subordination is not a depreciation. "On the contrary, her honour lies in its due observance."

After dealing with this question Paul advances to another of perhaps greater importance, the abuse of the Lord’s Supper.

(b) Disorder at the Lord’s Table

It is not our purpose here to enter fully into the nature of what we have termed the Lord’s Supper. The probability is that, at this time, the common meal or agape was not distinguished from the memorial supper or Eucharist. However, from Paul we learn that it was not an ordinary supper such as one would eat at home; its fundamental purpose was not to satisfy the appetite (Cf. I Cor.11:34).

100. Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 284
Rather it was a communal commemoration in which was made available fellowship with one another and with God. Ideally it offered perfect opportunity and equality to all worshippers, but it was not so at Corinth. Hence the Apostle's admonition.

The custom was that all should bring what they could afford to contribute to the common meal. The rich brought much, the poor little, and the destitute nothing at all. But had all been equally shared there would have been sufficient supplies for all. However, due to the partisan spirit which we have already found existing in the church, and an added spirit of social exclusiveness, the occasion was turned into a horrible scandal. The rich, refusing to associate with the poor, snobbishly consumed their abundance while the poor partook of their own scanty fare and the destitute looked on unsatisfied. Thus the supper was characterized by gluttony, drunkenness, social classification, and the apparent lack of any understanding of its real significance.

As usual, Paul deals with this problem from the religious point of view. He reminds the Corinthians
of the scene in the Upper Room, the words of Jesus on that occasion and the subsequent death of the Lord. Cf. I Cor. 11:23-33. The partaking of the body and blood of Christ was no trifling matter, and he who partook thereof unworthily "eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself." In fact, he told them, this judgment had already come upon them. "Your loveless and excessive feasting brings weakness and sickliness to many, and death to not a few." (Cf. I Cor. 11:30). There is hardly a clearer instance in Paul's teaching where morality finds its sanction and dynamic in religion. The critical will, no doubt, object to the implication that God sent such punishment upon the people because of this particular sin. But, be that as it may, this argument was a powerful instrument in the hands of Paul at that time.

What, then, were the requirements of a worthy participation in this sacrificial meal? Albert Plummer enumerates them as follows: "Reverence towards God, His Church, and His sacraments; charity towards the brethren; a humble estimate of self, - these are

among the requirements for a worthy reception of 102
the Lord's Supper."

Paul, in harmony with good teaching and preaching, offers some practical suggestions as to how these requirements could be met. First, when they come together let them wait on each other, that is, let all begin the meal at the same time and in an orderly fashion. Secondly, make the meal sacramental rather than instrumental. "If any man is hungry, let him eat at home, that your coming together be not under judgment." (I Cor. 11:34). This would prevent the ostentatious display of the rich and also keep the destitute from depending too largely upon such meals for food. Thus, Christ would be honored and a truer sense of brotherhood made possible. The new religion at Corinth was characterized by still another form of excess which caused Paul considerable trouble. The membership of the church had become enthusiastic about the attainment of certain graces which tended to become marks of individual distinction.

(c) Spiritual Gifts

No one word sums up the temper of the Corinthian congregation better than rivalry. It seems to have been a sort of sport with them, and is quite illustrative of the Greek spirit. "About the veils, there was rivalry between men and women. At the love feasts, there was rivalry between rich and poor. And here we have evidence of rivalries as to the possession of spiritual gifts, and especially as to those which were most demonstrative, and therefore seemed to confer the most distinction."

These spiritual gifts consisted of Apostleship, Prophecy, Teaching, Miracle-working, "Helpings," Administration, and Talking with tongues. Apostleship rested upon a direct commission from the Lord, and was therefore limited. Prophecy was made possible through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and consisted of "the proclamation of a divine message, the telling of a vision, the glowing testimony of a heart moved by the Holy Spirit." Teaching consisted of conserving and transmitting the yet

103. Robertson, I.C.C., I Corinthians, p. 257
105. Ibid, p. 303
unwritten account of Jesus' life and ministry. Miracle-working included gifts of physical healing in the name of Christ and the exorcism of demons. "Helpings" may be construed as ministering to any who might be distressed in soul or body. Administrations had to do with the business management of the Church's affairs and perhaps with the regulation of a Christian judiciary. Talking with tongues consisted of ecstatic utterances, the exact nature of which is still more or less of a mystery. Associated with "talking with tongues" was the companion office of interpretation.

It was possible for one person to have more than one of these gifts but hardly all of them; certainly not if the apostleship be included. Apparently, in the opinion of the Corinthians, all gifts were not of the same value. We strongly suspect, as Robertson suggests that the more laborious ones such as teaching, helping, and administration were not so popular as prophecy and speaking with tongues. The church was not very well organized. There were too many candidates for some offices and none at all for others. An understanding was needed to the

106. Robertson, I.C.C., I Corinthians, p. 257
effect that each was necessary to complement the other and to make possible the efficient functioning of the whole, as all members of the body are necessary for its proper functioning. There was no one gift or gifts more important than others. Above all else, Paul says, let there be no discontent. Discontent, as he recognized it, was fatal to church life in his day as it still is in ours. All of these gifts were from God and therefore valuable but there was a more precious gift, the gift of love. Without love all the other gifts are poor indeed (Cf. Virtues in Pauline Ethics, p. 117).

Evidently "speaking with tongues" was the most popular of the gifts and was sought after by a large percentage of the congregation, with the result that utter confusion and chaos characterized their periods of worship. It is interesting to note that this "gift" which was so much in favor at Corinth is always placed last by Paul when enumerating the various graces.

Before we pass to Paul's specific treatment of this problem, may we ask the question, What was the gift of tongues? It was a recurrent phenomenon in
the Apostolic church and has been practiced more or less ever since. Its exterior manifestations were characterized by estatic utterances or prophetic rapture, apparently induced by heightened emotional or spiritual states. Its subjective nature is not clear, but its outward manifestations may be analyzed, and as in the case of Paul, given a social evaluation. Robertson describes the outward aspects of this experience under four heads as follows:

"Firstly, the speaker with tongues speaks to God only; his utterance is not a sermon but a prayer or psalm, or a thanksgiving. Secondly, the utterance is unintelligible to the hearers or even to the speaker. Thirdly, while 'interpretation' is thought of as possible, its absence seems to have been the rule, its presence the exception. Fourthly, the impression which 'tongues' produced upon the visitor, especially on a non-believer, is certainly that of an assembly of madmen..."

We may certainly assume that this phenomenon was an actual experience. Paul was familiar with it and was able to use it (Cf. I Cor. 14:18). "It was

not the experience that was objectionable in his eyes and that created the scandal at Corinth; it was the abuse of it."  The great danger in the situation was the tendency on the part of the Corinthians to value spiritual gifts in proportion to their abnormal features. As this was the most abnormal of the gifts, all were anxious to obtain it and use it, and thus prove to themselves, and, as they thought, to all others, that they had obtained the maximum of spiritual preference. The result was a Bedlam of babble entirely devoid of intelligence or coherence, and like any other intensely emotional experience, the more practical gifts were made to seem, in comparison, dull, meaningless, and prosaic. Such a feeling would paralyze the usefulness of the church, and greatly hinder the development of stable and trustworthy moral character. It would also tend to limit the fellowship to those who were capable of having such an experience. That is, it threatened to become the criterion of true fellowship with Christ.

This latter thought is strengthened when we

consider that estatic states were common in the heathen religions and were regarded as proof of divine possession. Professor Hayes quotes Plato as saying:

"God has given the art of divination to the foolishness of man. For no man, when in his senses, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word either his intelligence is enthralled by sleep or he is demented by some distemper or possession." 109

He also quotes Socrates to this point, who identifies "poets with the diviners and prophets, and declares that their inspiration is attained in the same way."

"The poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state he is unable to utter his oracles....God takes away the mind of poets and uses them as His ministers, as He also uses diviners and holy prophets, in order that they who hear them may know that they speak not of themselves who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God is the speaker, and that through them He is conversing with us." 110

But what is Paul's attitude toward all this? That is our important consideration now. In I Cor. 12:1-3 he contrasts this phenomenon of heathen...
ecstasy with the true effect of the Holy Spirit.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led. Wherefore, I make known unto you, that no man speaketh in the spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

Thus it was evident that in the midst of this confusion which reflected heathen practices, that the name of Jesus was actually cursed. This proved that they knew nothing of the true spiritual gifts which were to be had through communion with God, for God could not inspire such an attitude toward the Christ.

Realizing these environmental factors, Paul is confronted with the task of showing the Corinthians a "more excellent way" and this "most excellent way" applies not only to the gift of tongues, but to all spiritual gifts. He presents the following argument:

i. Spiritual gifts are real and legitimate, and have their place in the religious life. Cf. I Cor. 14:1.

ii. Spiritual gifts are not subject to classification. God is the author of them all. I Cor. 12:6 ff. One gift is no less worthy or commendable than another. All are
necessary to complete a true aspect of the nature of Christ.

iii. A spirit of love is necessary for the true understanding or profitable use of any of the gifts. Love would eliminate the tendency to make an "unbrotherly comparison of gifts." III Cf. I Cor. 13.

iv. Concerning speaking with tongues:

(a) "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church...and the greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." I Cor. 14:2-5. (Is this a refutation of Paul's position in point ii? Perhaps so, for the sake of expediency, but basically no, for Paul recognizes the value of "tongues" if rightly used, i.e., for private devotions.)

(b) It is better to speak five words with understanding that others may be instructed than ten thousand words in a tongue. Cf. I Cor. 14:19. "Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret" (I Cor. 14:13).

(c) Grow up. Put away childish things. Learn to discriminate between what is demonstrative and what is substantial. Cf. I Cor. 14:20.

(d) If any man speaketh in a tongue,
let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret, but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." I Cor. 14:27-28. As there were few if any interpreters, adherence to this ruling would virtually mean the abolition of the practice.

(e) Speaking with tongues has a doubtless evangelical value. Coherent statements are necessary for convictions. Tongues may arouse curiosity but not a sense of repentence. (Cf. I Cor. 14:23-25).

The ethical principles involved in the whole discussion of spiritual gifts include the following:

i. Let there be harmony in the church. Jealousy, anger, hatred and kindred vices quickly disrupt the unity and peace of any type of communal life.

ii. In practicing individual rights never lose sight of the rights of the group. Those individual rights of highest value are those which, in their expression, make a contribution to others through the social medium of their environment.

iii. "Let everything be done decently and in order." Any confusion which creates inefficiency is unethical.
iv. Let everything be done to edification. This is probably the point that Paul stressed most. That the church might be honored and the Christ glorified was his dominant ambition.

v. Love is the criterion by which conduct within the church must be measured, and this love has its source in the spirit and person of Christ. "The strong were taught to help the weak, and the weak were encouraged to believe that their service was indispensible for the whole. Rich and poor, high and low, alike were incited to mutual sympathy and support, and called upon to realize that, whatever their outward differences might be, as spiritual beings they were equal before God."112

vi. Our attitude toward God determines our attitude toward our fellowmen.

vii. Let the Christian be known not for his ability to speak with tongues, but by his various expressions of brotherly love.

We have now discussed the principal situations in the Corinthian Church which presented well defined ethical problems. There yet remains in completing the analysis of the Corinthian letters, several items of more general significance, such as morality and immortality, the ethics of gifts

and wages, the ethics of rehabilitation, and positive virtues. To these we will give as much consideration as the material in the letters seem to warrant, not forgetting that some of Paul's other writings furnish supplementary lines of thought.

11. Morality and Immortality

From our study of the various problems which troubled the Corinthian church, we have seen, in a general way, the influence of the Christian's religious beliefs upon his ethical and moral principles, but the whole matter is brought sharply to a head in I Cor. 15:32-34, where Paul says:

"If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to move you to shame."

The religious hope that life continues beyond death is one of the greatest moral safeguards. To think of the present life as having immortal significance is to place upon it a far higher evaluation than we otherwise would, and such an evaluation leads to the construction of appropriate moral
and ethical ideals. These words of Paul, "let us eat and drink etc.", are borrowed from Isaiah who put them into the mouths of the fatalistic Jerusalemites of his day, and are expressive of the Epicurean spirit of all ages. "They represent the natural reaction in men who have lost a hope of surpassing grandeur, lifting their lives to new levels: with its loss they fall back upon the old life in the flesh, to make the most of it."

Smith thinks that Paul had a purpose in quoting this Epicurean maxim. "Too many of the Corinthians were actually practicing it."

They were still under the influence of certain pagan philosophies (Cf. p. 44 f.). For the Christian to consort with those who held such beliefs was to have his own hopes, his own morality corrupted. So, we have not only the individual but also the social aspects of what morality tends to become when divorced from religion, and in this case, from a religion which offered Christ as suffering death for all men and achieving for them an immortality which could make the moral struggles of

113. Parry, Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, p. 176
this life rational. "For S. Paul the whole higher 115
life depends upon union with Christ", and St.
Paul's Christ is a resurrected Christ.

"...if Christ has not been raised your faith
is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they
also that are fallen asleep in Christ have
perished. If we have only hoped in Christ
in this life, we are of all men most
pitiable." (I Cor. 15:17-19).

This relationship between morality and im-
mortality raises the question whether Paul's eth-
ics were an end in themselves or a means to an
end. Did he challenge the Corinthians to moral
endeavor because he recognized the intrinsic value
of morality, or because "the unrighteous shall not
inherit the Kingdom of God"? (I Cor. 6:9). Cer-
tainly we cannot interpret Paul as teaching, "if
you will be good now, foregoing all the pleasures
of the flesh, you will, in the final day, find a
place in the Kingdom." No, for Paul the Kingdom
was also of immediate value. Morality and the
spirit of Christ were of the same essence. The
Apostle reflects the saying of Jesus, "...the king-
dom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21), when he
says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and

115. Parry, Cambridge Bible, I Corinthians, p. 176
that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16). Therefore, if membership in the Kingdom and all that that implies was a desirable thing, so also was morality, even in this life, for morality thus conceived, became a part of, and the beginning of, immortality. Cf. II Cor. 4:16-18.

12. The Ethics of Gifts and Wages

Paul's gospel was not free of economic considerations. There is no proof in his letters that, from an economic standpoint, "salvation is free." In fact, the Apostle was a good "money getter", a fact which may be inferred from his general handling of the Jerusalem fund. The "poor fund" at Jerusalem had been exhausted and the deacons there were no longer able to cope with the prevalent poverty. They made an appeal to the Gentile churches for aid, and Paul accepted the obligation and earnestly solicited its fulfilment. It is also interesting to note that Paul goes about this task in a businesslike way. In his second letter (according to our classification) he writes the Corinthians as follows:

"Now concerning the collection for the saints,
as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem, and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me" (I Cor. 16:1-4).

In other letters, i.e., Romans and Galatians, Paul refers to the collection "under seven different Greek words, meaning 'collection,' 'grace,' 'bounty,' 'blessing,' 'service,' 'ministry.'" Thus the mechanical term "collection" is broadened to include the religious and spiritual significance of the offering, as well as its ethical significance. The sharing of one's possessions was a part of the economy of the Kingdom. However, it is extremely interesting, especially from our modern viewpoint, that the Corinthians evidently could not see the connection between money and ministry in the spiritual sense. One was of the world and the other was not, and therefore the first should not be appealed to to support the second. David Smith suggests that some of the brethren at Corinth even accused Paul of dishonesty, and that under the pretext of charity,


* Italics mine.
he was seeking his own enrichment. In any event, the first appeal did not go into effective operation. In his fourth letter, II Cor. 8:1-15, Paul makes another appeal on the ground that, as they had started out well, he had represented them to the Macedonians as being liberal and willing to help in this cause. Therefore, they must respond in order to save both him and themselves from embarrassment when certain Macedonian Christians who were accompanying him to Achaia, discovered that they had given little or nothing.

The question has been asked whether Paul had an ulterior motive in his zeal to take a large offering up to the apostles at Jerusalem. Once a persecutor of the Christians, and subsequently a missionary to the Gentiles, he had never gained the complete confidence or cooperation of the other apostles that he desired. Would not this offering help to make things right? In speaking of this matter, Smith says, "there was a peculiar incentive in the present instance. The Gentile collection for the Jewish poor was not merely a worthy charity; it was a statesmanlike enterprise. It was
an effective irenicon tending to the reconciliation of Christendom by demonstrating to the Jewish Christians that Gentile Christianity was a practical reality."

In analyzing Paul's motive here we must remember that he did not initiate the "enterprise." It was suggested by the "Pillars" at Jerusalem as a requirement for the Gentile Christians (Cf. Gal. 2:10). But Paul, ever resourceful, had a way of utilizing requirements in the furthering of his interests. First, the fact of sharing would have a good moral effect upon the individual. Paul also holds out the possibility that cheerful giving will be rewarded by increased income. Those who thus gave would have sufficient for themselves and also a surplus for charitable purposes (Cf. II Cor. 9:6-15). Therefore, the whole matter had the approval of God. Secondly, if the money was well expended it would make friends for the cause. In this instance, there was, as Smith has said, the possibility of bringing the Jewish and Gentile churches into a closer relationship and the fostering of a feeling of unity and fellowfeeling between

117. The Life and Letters of St. Paul, p. 370
them. Paul is not thinking here of himself except in so far as his work, having been fully recognized by the Jews, would be less difficult and more certain of ultimate success. Naturally, he wanted to prove to those in authority at Jerusalem that his churches were going concerns, that they deserved recognition and that they stood ready to cooperate in the one great task of making Jesus known to all men.

If Paul used money, in this particular, to obtain ends other than the primary purpose of the gifts, it was a legitimate expansion of its utility and not an illegal appropriation.

Another economic factor with which Paul had to do, and one that related to him personally, was the matter of compensation for his work. He was both commended and denounced for serving without pay. His apostleship was questioned on the ground that he would not accept a salary. Apostles had a right to be maintained by the churches. If he were really an apostle, then, why did he refuse such remuneration? Paul recognized the fact that religious teachers and preachers had a right to legitimate
compensation. Speaking of this matter, he says:

"What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same. For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the oxen that treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea for our sake it was written..." I Cor. 9:7-10.

But waiving this right, Paul gave his reasons for not accepting such maintenance. He would be free from anything that would, in any way, tend toward personal pride or obligation. (Cf. I Cor. 9:15 ff., especially verse 18). He also knew that had he accepted his due in this regard, that he would have been accused by certain of the Corinthians, of preaching for money only, as he evidently was accused in connection with the Jerusalem collection (Cf. p. 110).

That Paul did accept wages from other churches is brought out in II Cor. 11:8,9, where later he tells the Corinthians:

"I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you, and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man, for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of
my want; and in everything I kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so I keep myself."

However, the Apostle, as he afterwards thought the matter over, was not so sure that he had been good to the Corinthians by excusing them from their financial obligations.

"For what is there wherein ye were made inferior to the rest of the churches, except it be that I myself, was not a burden to you? forgive me this wrong." II Cor. 12:13.

In this particular, as in all of Paul's ministry, the principle held to is that of adapting moral and ethical principles to meet, as intelligently and religiously as possible, the needs of the situation, that by all means the church and Christ might be respected and souls saved for whom Christ died.

13. The Ethics of Rehabilitation (forgiveness)

"But if any man hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many, so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you to confirm your love toward him." (II Cor. 2:5-8).

- This topic carries us back to the case of
incest referred to in the first and second letters* (Cf. pp. 40, 49, 53). Paul's command at that time was that the offender should be immediately excommunicated. However, only after a second request was the man finally excluded from the fellowship. A period of time had elapsed now, and the condemned man had grown penitent and wished to be reinstated. What must they do? The liberal group would welcome his return but the ascetic faction, probably doubting the man's sincerity and wishing not to revive the memory of that unsavory situation, hesitated to receive him again into the fellowship of the church. But after considerable debate the decision was to accept him. "It had been a disputed judgment, and in approving it, he (Paul) at the same time deftly rebukes both the extreme parties." (Cf. II Cor. 2:9-11).

This man had caused sorrow, both to Paul and to the Church, and deserved the punishment which was inflicted upon him, but there is a limit to the value of such punishment. Extended beyond a certain point it produces bitterness rather than repentence, and paves the way for the individual's further

* See note (b) on page 155
degradation. Paul taught that love and forgiveness must always meet the supplications of the penitent individual, and through their cleansing and life-giving ministrations, restore him to his former position. Forgiveness, then, must have a place in the Christian's category of values, and be thought of as an instrument for the strengthening of character and the enhancing of the moral life. It benefits not only the man forgiven, but also those who forgive. It reflects the spirit of Jesus, as that spirit seeks to annul and defeat the forces of evil. Forgiveness should be prompted by the individual's own sense of humility and unworthiness, for who can say he has no need of being forgiven.

14. Positive Virtues in Paul's (Corinthian) Ethics

By positive virtues we mean positive attitudes toward life, and especially life as seen from the religious viewpoint. Paul terms these virtues the "fruits of the spirit." In Galatians he says, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self control..." (5:22, 23). All of these virtues are implied in what Enslin has called Paul's
great "Hymn of Love." (I Cor. 13). Love brings joy and peace, and requires longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self control. Love is the primal ethical concept upon which all other virtues (gifts) must rest. Its value is above any other trait or quality of personality. Robertson has sketched the measures of this "Hymn of Love" so well that we venture to quote him at some length.

"For love is patient and kind; Love knows no hatred or envy. It is never a braggart in mien, or swells with self-adulation; It never offends good feeling, or insists on all it has claim to; It never blazes with rage, and it stores up no resentment.

It delights not over the wrong that men do, But responds with delight to true dealing. Unfailingly tolerant, unfailingly trustful, Unfailingly hopeful, unfailingly strong.

The time will never come for Love to die. There will be a time when our prophesyings will be useless; There will be a time when these Tongues will cease; There will be a time when our knowledge will be useless. For our knowledge is but fragments, And our prophesyings but of fragments. But when absolute completeness shall have come, Then that which is of fragments will have no use."

Do we not have here, then, the basis of all

118. I. C. C., I Corinthians, p. 287
of Paul's ethics? However, he would have us remember that the virtues of Love are not native to our human soil, but spring from the depths of the spiritual life, and he who gives meaning and reality to the spiritual life is the immanent Christ.

The staccato-like phrases of I Cor. 16:13, while not contradictory to the attitudes which this Love implies, stand out in contrast to the more gentle measures of the "Hymn of Love."

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

But the Apostle continues, feeling perhaps that the militant note had been too strongly stressed, "Let all that ye do be done in love."
IV. Summary of Paul's Ethical Teaching as Contained in the Corinthian Letters

Out of a background of Jewish and Greek thought, and out of an immediate religious experience of peculiar power and certainty, together with current Christian teaching and the individualistic elements of his own personality, there was formulated in Paul's mind definite attitudes toward, if not detailed specifications of, the ethical and moral life which the Christian faith of his day seemed to demand. The school of experience had taught him much concerning the ethical phases of harmonious living. After much searching he found the solution of morality in religion and likewise the practical expression of religion in morality. Morality was no longer a thing of the intellect and the will, but a matter of vision and idealism, which was at once empowered and sanctioned by a dynamic religious faith. Religion, therefore, in Paul's thought, was tested by its applicability to life, and life was measured in terms of its responsiveness to the facts of religion. In a general sense this expresses Paul's ethical ultimate, but it does not reveal his more specific ethical principles.
Specifically, these principles which Paul used in dealing with his Corinthian problems may be stated as follows:

1. The functioning of the physical life is not to be divorced from its psychic and spiritual concomitants. The various aspects of life are not separate entities but inseparable parts of a whole, and what tends to limit or harm the part must necessarily affect the whole. One aspect of life should not be developed at the expense of another, for each has its proper function to perform.

2. This wholeness of life, however, while having individualistic elements, is essentially social. "No man liveth unto himself." Personal attitudes must be tempered, and if necessary, modified to conform to the highest good of other individuals and of the group. This applies to the whole range of human relationships, but does not, of course, in seeking the highest good, include compromises with evil for the sake of expediency.

3. That is right and ethical which tends to produce harmony, goodwill, orderliness, and peace. What may produce these qualities in one situation
may not do so in another. Therefore, the minutiae of one's moral ideals cannot be arbitrarily determined apart from a knowledge and understanding of the situation involved. The Christian's duty is to face the facts of his environment and then make the best possible adjustment to them in the light of his religious ideals.

4. Morality is not a natural order. The moral law and the natural law always conflict. Hence, morality must be achieved by training, discipline, and experience. In the case of certain biological needs, such as are represented by the sexual life, the moral law may be adjusted to allow a legitimate outlet for natural expressions which otherwise might precipitate greater evils and totally destroy the moral sense. But where this adjustment is not necessary it should not be made.

5. Morality is not a matter of race, color, or creed. It is not a matter of external compliance to customs or codes, but it is a matter of the inner life as that life relates itself to other lives and to God. The environmental factor is not stressed as a negative influence or hindrance. The person who is truly Christian can find in any life situation
an opportunity to maintain and express the faith that is in him.

6. Authority and subordination are moral principles which must be taken for granted for God himself instituted and maintains them. Everyone, with the exception of God, must submit to authority in some form and thus recognize his respective position of subordination in the plan of creation. The recognition of such subordination does not degrade life, but rather honors it as the individual seeks to do the will of God. However, while the theory of subordination is thus a God-given factor in human life, it is nevertheless true that in a higher spiritual sense, all are equal in His sight.

7. Material possessions do not have the power to impart moral strength or authority. Neither does the absence of possessions endow one with ethical preferment. One's attitude toward the use of possessions and the attitude of the possessor toward the nonpossessor is what is morally significant.

8. Mental possessions, i.e., wisdom, does not have the power to create moral character.
Intellectual pride may easily blind one to the finer virtues of humility, consideration of others, kindness, reverence, and love, and also to the precarious condition of one's own moral standing.

9. Emotional or spiritual possessions, i.e., spiritual gifts, are not to be made matters of pride and jealousy. Rather they are to be accepted with humility. They are profitable only when they are accepted as responsibilities; talents to be used in the interest of the spiritual benefit of others. They also give the individual a certain spiritual vigor which is valuable if properly utilized, but injurious if abused.

10. The rationality of the moral order depends on the truth or falsity of immortality. "If Christ be not risen, then our worship is vain."

For Paul religion and morality coalesced. Therefore, anything that discredited religion would also discredit morality. A belief in immortality is a powerful incentive to moral living.

11. "The laborer is worthy of his meat."

Paul accepted the economic standards of his day.
However, sometimes it is necessary for the Christian, especially if he be preacher or teacher, to forego all consideration of remuneration in order to be loyal to the best interests of the church and the gospel. Generally, the acceptance of wages for spiritual services rendered is ethical and desirable, both from the standpoint of giver and recipient.

12. Above all things else, love must characterize the moral life. That which is done in the spirit of love, as Paul conceived the term love in its higher social and spiritual sense, could hardly be unethical or immoral. Love is that diffusing spirit which is a unique product of the religious life, and which binds together man and man and man and God in a happy, joyous relationship. It is the one essential qualification of the Christian life.

All of these principles of the moral life were enunciated by Paul while he was under the impression that the world, as he knew it, was soon to pass away. To think of him as founding a church or an ecclesiastical system which was to survive the
centuries, is to miss the significance of his Corinthian teaching. A statement has been made to the effect that while Paul taught as an apocalypticist, he did not act as one. But even so, for our purpose, his words are more important than his actions. The question may also be raised as to whether some sort of an interim organization was not necessary. But however we may answer this and similar questions the fact remains that Paul's teaching has had a tremendous influence upon the subsequent centuries of Christian history.

119. Professor Lowstuter, Class Lecture, Boston University School of Theology, March 29, 1932
Thus far, we have been particularly interested in the specific moral elements in Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, and we have come to certain conclusions as to their characteristics. It remains for us now to locate this body of ethical teaching in the broader sweep of moral thought, and to seek more definite answers to questions raised at the outset of this study. To this end we will consider the relation between Paul’s ethics and Old Testament morality; Paul’s ethics and the ethics of Jesus, and the significance of the Apostle’s ethical teaching in our present day life. Each of these topics contain sufficient material for a separate thesis, so our treatment of them will necessarily be very limited, but, we hope, sufficiently suggestive to render this study more intelligible and complete.

V. Paul’s Ethics and Old Testament Morality

We have already suggested that Paul drew heavily from Old Testament sources. It will be the purpose of this chapter to note specific references which Paul makes to the Jewish Scriptures in his Corinthian letters, and to determine from such
references, if possible, what extent the Apostle was indebted to the 'fathers' for the ethical standards which he applied to the social, religious, and economic problems at Corinth. We have been able to discover in I and II Corinthians seventy-one instances where the writer refers, either directly or indirectly to the Old Testament record. The more significant of these are listed below along with their Old Testament parallels. In most instances Paul acknowledges his source by such words as "In the law it is written," "It is written," etc. However, in some cases the reference to the Jewish scriptures is just inferred, without any specific reference. Thus we have the following parallels:

I Cor. 1:19 is to be compared with Is. 29:14
I Cor. 1:31 " Jer. 9:23,24
I Cor. 2:9 " Is. 64:4
I Cor. 2:16 " Is. 40:13
I Cor. 3:19,20 " Job 5:13 Ps. 94:11
I Cor. 4:21 " 2 Sam. 7:14
I Cor. 5:13 " Dt. 22:24
I Cor. 6:16,17 " Gen. 2:24
I Cor. 9:9 " Dt. 25:4
I Cor. 9:14 is to be compared with Dt. 18:1-5

I Cor. 10:6-13 " Ex. 32:6; Num. 25:1-9; Num. 21:5,6; Num. 16:41-50; 2 Sam. 24:16,17

I Cor. 10:20 " Dt. 32:17
I Cor. 10:22 " Dt. 32:31
I Cor. 10:26 " Ps. 24:1
I Cor. 11:7-9 " Gen. 1:26,27; Gen. 2:23; Gen. 2:18
I Cor. 14:21 " Is. 28:11,12
I Cor. 15:32 " Is. 22:13
II Cor. 10:18 " Jer. 9:23,24
II Cor. 6:11 " Ps. 51:15; Ps. 119:32
II Cor. 9:7 " Prov. 22:8

A study of the above comparisons will show that Paul resorted to the Old Testament scriptures for his authority on such ethical and moral principles as the spiritual significance of physical acts (Cf. Gen. 2:24); the doctrine of separation (Is. 52:11; Dt. 22:23); the futility of wisdom (Job 5:13; Is. 29:14; Jer. 9:23,24); the laborer's right to be maintained by his labor (Dt. 25:4); the religious leader's right to support (Dt. 18:1-5); the dire results of fornication in the history of Israel (Ex. 32:6;
Num. 25:1-9; Num. 21:5, 6; Num. 16:41-50; 2 Sam. 24:16, 17); the doctrine of demonology (Dt. 32:17; Dt. 32:21); the behavior of men and women in the church (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:23; 2:18); the use of strange tongues (Is. 28:11, 12); the Epicurean doctrine of eat and drink for tomorrow we die (Is. 22:13); and the matter of the Christian’s economic support of the gospel (Prov. 22:8, 9).

Thus it is much easier to point out the likenesses between Paul’s ethics and those of the Old Testament, than it is to determine the difference between them. Both find the sanction of morality in religion. "There are, roughly speaking, two and only two questions for the Jewish moralists. (1) What conduct does God command? (2) What conduct does God forbid?"

For Paul there is one, i.e., What conduct is in harmony with the spirit of Christ? The Jews emphasized racial separation which included religious elements; Paul’s only separation was one from the world of evil and unrighteousness. In the Old Testament "honesty and truth were enjoined; falsehood, deceit, and the shedding of blood were abhorrent. (The writer no doubt refers here to the

later legalistic and prophetic literature of the Old Testament, and not to such books as Judges, Esther, and Chronicles.) Slavery was recognized and accepted, but even here kindness was enjoined." A great deal of the minutiae of the Jewish law is not stressed by Paul, because the virtues they seek to foster have been personified in the person of Christ. In other words, Paul does not say to the Corinthians be honest and truthful; rather he exhorts them to be worthy of the spirit which dwells within them, a spirit best expressed in the words, "Let everything be done in love." That the Jewish God was preeminently a God of justice has been stated by Paul (I Cor. 10:6:13), and that justice is not abrogated in the Corinthian teaching. However, Paul's God was not an unreasonable deity. He would not tempt his people beyond their powers of endurance (Cf. I Cor. 10:13). Another characteristic of Jewish life was the emphasis laid on family life. Marriage was ordained by God. Parents were held in greatest reverence. Sexual purity was a fundamental requirement. Adultery was forbidden.

121. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, p. 7 f.
in the decalogue, while incest and other sexual perversions were directly forbidden by Lev. 18:24. The influence of this source upon Paul's teaching is obvious, but it was no doubt modified by the conviction that the end of the age was near.

While Paul borrowed from the Old Testament scriptures he was not a slave to them. His use of them was largely a matter of expediency and in the interest of his converts. If citing the law would add weight to his words he would cite the law, but personally he lived above the Jewish codes. He had been brought to Christ and therefore had no further need of a tutor. His morality had become, as we have noted, personified in Christ; a morality prompted, empowered, and directed by the spirit of love.
VI. Paul's Ethics and the Ethics of Jesus

As Jesus occupied a position which was between the Old Testament conception of religion and the Pauline conception of Christianity, we may expect his ethical teaching to be more practical in its nature than that of Paul. Jesus' great task as a moral teacher was to reinterpret and re-evaluate the law, by going beyond it. The codes which Judaism had been content to accept as ultimate Jesus looked upon as expressing a stage of moral development. The law of the jungle had been "A life for an eye." The early Hebrews had improved upon that by demanding only an equal retribution, "An eye for an eye." Then comes the Master's words, "But I say unto you, resist not evil." And then in Paul we have a very vivid reflection if not an amplification of Jesus' thought, "Love suffereth long and is kind."

Scott says concerning Jesus; "His ethic and his religion are everywhere so intimately bound together than they cannot be separated." In this sense the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul

122. The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, p. xii
correspond, and also in another sense, which this writer points out, they are agreed; "Jesus was something else than a lawgiver or reformer. He came with a message from God, and his ethic has no meaning apart from his religion." Paul also was more than a reformer. He came with a religious message and his ethic had no meaning apart from the Christ.

Jesus, like Paul, drew upon the Old Testament sources, and also, as no doubt Paul did, upon the teachings of later Judaism. But again, like the Apostle, he was not a slave to tradition. Scott recognizes this fact when he says, "Yet it cannot for a moment be admitted that he (Jesus) merely revised and purified the Jewish teaching. The morality of the Rabbis became in his hands a new morality, and this was never so clearly recognized as by men like Paul, who had come to Christianity fresh from the influence of the synagogue."

What was it that appeared original in the ethics of Jesus? Scott says that it was, (1) the imposition of a unity upon the moral law which it
had not possessed before. "The ethic of Jesus is an organic whole." (2) "Morality for Jesus springs out of a new relation to God." He sought to inspire his followers with an absolute trust in a just, good, and father-like God. (3) A new emphasis is laid upon the value of the individual. "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (Mt. 18:14). (4) "The moral quality of an act is made to consist in the thought or intention that lies behind it." (5) The ethics of Jesus is positive in its demands. Compare the Golden Rule. (6) "Morality is purified of all extraneous and accidental elements." The moral law was, at last, divested of the cloak of ceremonialism which had, while serving as a protector, obscured and limited its true meaning. (7) By his own character Jesus gave reality to his moral ideals. "He was no abstract thinker who formulated an ethical theory... Moral precepts have meaning only when we see them in action, as the attributes of a living personality."

To what extent are these principles

125. The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, pp. 17-21
reflected in the teaching of Paul? Let us examine them in order. (1) The ethic of Paul, like that of Jesus, was an organic whole. This fact is set forth in what we have called the spiritual significance of physical acts. Certainly for Paul the moral life was determined by the inward attitude of the individual rather than his intellectual compliance to custom. (2) If the morality of Jesus sprang out of a new relation to God, the morality of Paul sprang out of a new relation to Jesus; the relationship of the human individual to the transcendent Christ. Paul sought to inspire his followers by presenting the belief that they might share with Christ the divine life. (3) In reference to this point we will hardly be fair to Paul if we say that he minimized the value of the individual in the interest of the collect or the church. While he was willing to sacrifice one individual for the sake of the best welfare of the group, he exhibits in all of his writings a profound love for individual men and women. Assuredly he exalted the value of individual personality when he taught that the spirit of God was immanent in human life.
(4) Jesus made the moral quality of an act to consist of the intention that lies behind it. In contrast to this Paul stressed the consequences of moral acts, or perhaps more accurately, immoral acts. That is, a person may have the very best of intentions when he permits himself to become ecstasically incoherent, but Paul was prone to look upon such "speaking with tongues" as unprofitable and therefore unethicaL. (5) As in Jesus so in Paul the positive note is strong. The Apostle, for the most part, told the Corinthians what to do and not what to refrain from doing. (6) Certainly no one more than Paul removed the cloak of ceremonialism, or in a broader sense externalism, from religion. (7) Paul, as truly as Jesus, practiced what he preached. His manner of life confirmed his sermons, with the possible exception we referred to on page 125 f. where the suggestion is made that while preaching the end of the age, he was preparing for the ongoing of an earthly church. However, that point has no direct bearing upon his morality as such.

In what Burkitt has termed the "doubly attested sayings," i.e., those sayings which include
what we most surely know of the teaching of Jesus, we have a variety of ethical principles set forth. Among these we have the familiar teaching concerning doing good on the Sabbath, Mk. 3:4; with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you etc., Mk. 4:24; "for to him that hath shall be given and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath", Mk. 4:25. Also the parable of the mustard seed, Mk. 4:30-32; the proper attitude toward those who refuse hospitality to the disciples, Mk. 6:10-11; the principle of denial or the cost of fellowship, Mk. 8:34; the gravity of the offence which causes others to stumble, Mk. 9:42-48; the importance of "salt", Mk. 9:50; divorce condemned, Mk. 10:11-12; subordination and exaltation, Mk. 10:42-45; the outward piety of the scribes discredited, Mk. 12:38-39; and the doctrine of accountability, Mk. 13:34-35.

These are sufficient to show the general trend of Jesus' ethical teaching, and in comparing them with those of Paul two parallels are to be noted, the teaching concerning divorce (for a possible qualification see p. 64), and the grave

responsibility one incurs when he causes another to err. On the whole, Jesus' teaching is more detailed and covers a wider range of interests, and does not so greatly reflect the apocalyptic emphasis we find in Paul. "It cannot be granted," says Scott, "that Jesus intended to teach nothing more than an 'interim ethic.'" On the other hand, it seems to be quite apparent that that was Paul's purpose. Certainly his teaching concerning marriage is to be interpreted from that point of view, and also his tendency to maintain the status quo in social relationships, although the latter has been accounted for by some in making it a matter of political expediency.

This particular point suggests a contrast between the teaching of Paul and that of Jesus. Jesus emphasized the possibility that in order to save his soul the individual would have to make radical changes in his economic and social relationships. "They must be ready to part not only with earthly goods but with their dearest friendships or with eye or hand, if in this way only they could

127. The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, p. 45
save their true life." This writer's use of the word "only" seems to imply that such action would not be necessary in other than exceptional cases, but the whole tenor of Jesus' ministry points toward the desirability of such action. The economic and social environment of the Palestinian peoples, living for the most part a rural life, would make such action possible without too much confusion. But Paul is talking to an urban population which was closely connected with social and political forces, when he advised them "to remain in the state wherein they were called." Aside from the influence of the apocalyptic hope, Paul's teaching in this respect was, as we have intimated, determined by the fact that drastic revolutionary ideas would endanger the life of the church. We feel then that this difference between Jesus and Paul is not so much one of ideals as it is of seeking the highest good under circumstances consistent with existence.

There is a note of authority in Jesus' teaching which we also find in Paul, although varying somewhat as to character. Jesus has his

128. Scott, The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, p. 53
authority direct from the Father, Paul has his from the Christ. Both were equally sure that they were doing the will of God; both had a sense of divine mission. Both were willing to suffer and, if need be, die for the faith they espoused.

Many other comparisons could be made between the ethical concepts of Jesus and those of Paul, if that were the primary purpose of this thesis, but our interest here is to place Paul's teachings in their proper perspective in relation to the moral trends inaugurated by Judaism and enhanced by Christianity. From our study of the Corinthian letters it is apparent that there is no single line of succession. That is, we do not have the orderly arrangement where Jesus borrowed from Judaism, and adding his own particular contribution, passed his more adequate conception of morality on to Paul, who, in turn, threw over it the distinctive glow of his spiritual and mystical fervor. As we have noted (Chapter V) Paul went direct to the Old Testament sources for considerable of his authority, and we have no indication that he interpreted the Old scriptures as Jesus did. Why he did not draw
more heavily upon the teaching of Jesus, if he was so familiar with it as some think, is a problem we are not able to solve. We have taken the position that he had no systematic knowledge of Jesus' teaching at his command, but he did have a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, and naturally enough he drew upon that source with which he was most familiar, and therefore of which he was most certain. He no doubt prized the words of Jesus which he had and used them, but their bulk was negligible compared with the many years of Rabbinical training. Not even a Paul could assimilate all the teaching of Jesus during a fifteen day visit with an apostle at Jerusalem.

However, what was independently conceived intellectually was quite marvelously coordinated by a common spirit; that universal language which makes men think the thoughts of God.

Here again let us repeat that Paul's ultimate authority was not in any exterior code of ethics, be it based on Old or New Testament teaching, but it was to be found in that distinctive religious consciousness which grew out of the reception of the
spirit of Christ. However, there is no reason for doubting that much of the Old as well as the New Testament morality was in harmony with this spiritualized ideal, and therefore legitimate for Paul's use.
VII. The Ethics of Paul and the Modern World

In dealing with this final phase of our study we cannot limit ourselves to any particular letters of Paul, but must consider his ethical content as a whole. In doing this we are not diverging too far from our study of the Corinthian correspondence, for, as we have discovered, it represents a fair cross section of the Apostle's complete ethical teaching.

In this day when theology and mysticism have been partly if not completely obscured by the rising tide of the social gospel, the part of Paul's teaching which is being emphasized is his ethics. Peabody catches the spirit of the modern mind when he says, "When one turns from the complexity of Paul's theology and the mysticism of his religion and approaches his ethical teaching, it is as if one were emerging from a tangled and bewildering forest into a sunny clearing on a well-marked road." Many who have given up theologies and philosophies are still faced with the practical problems of life, and they welcome the more explicit admonition of the great religious leaders.

129. The Apostle Paul and the Modern World, p. 228
when they speak in terms of personal attitudes and conduct. "Be at peace among yourselves;" "Keep a check upon loafers;" "Never lose your temper;" "Aim at what is kind to one another and to all the world;" "There is no law against love, joy, peace, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self control;" "Remember that which is true, pure, attractive, honorable and of good report and let love permeate all your relationships;" "Do not let evil get the better of you, but get the better of evil with good."

"Here at last," thinks Peabody, "it would seem is teaching to which the modern world may still listen, as to timely truth." /Even so Paul did not write with the intention of laying down ethical principles for a twentieth century civilization. "One must therefore approach the ethics of Paul, not as though it were a system of moral philosophy valid for all times, but as the adaptation of his ideals to the definite conditions of civilization in the Roman world." To accept Paul as a present day authority on matters concerning affairs of state,

130. The Apostle Paul and the Modern World, p. 229
131. Ibid, p. 231
the regulation of marriage, or the social status of women, would be to brand oneself as impractical or even absurd. Setting aside that portion of Paul's teaching which was peculiar to his time and the situations then involved, we still have "certain principles of conduct whose validity has no such limit of time and place; and through his 'interim ethics' emerge ideals as indestructible as was that visionary hope of a reign of God which inspired Jesus himself." What are these permanent principles in Christian ethics? What is to characterize the moral conduct of the present day follower of Jesus?

Peabody, who deals with the modern aspects of Paul's teaching quite fully, is of the opinion that the first characteristic of the Christian in Paul's day or in ours, was a sense of moral liberty. However, the Apostle's warning concerning this liberty is still apropos. He said, in effect, see to it that you keep this liberty moral. "..Only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another." (Gal. 5:13). Having done this through discipline and restraint there

comes a sense of moral authority from within which lifts life to a new level.

Another characteristic which seems to have been inaugurated by Paul, and which is still valid for us, is what Peabody has called the "autonomy of conscience." In other words, the Christian has a right to moral convictions which he may not violate without compromising his own better judgment. Throughout the Christian centuries there have been those who have abused this principle; this idea that one and God make a majority. They have stressed ethical individualism at the expense of social morality, and have apparently overlooked the fact that Paul warned the Christians of his own day against the abuse of what otherwise could be a valuable instrument for the regulation of personal morality. In I Cor. 8:13 he says, "Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble I will eat no flesh forevermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble." The inference is that he had a clear conscience concerning the eating of such meats, but refrained from doing so for the sake of others whose consciences were opposed. Therefore, the modern Christian conscience must be educated to allow such modifications of
freedom as are necessary for the good of the
group or the majority. Tragedies have been en-
acted in the name of Christian conscience because
the followers of Paul's teaching have refused to
be coherent in their religious thinking.

Again let us notice that Paul puts a dyna-
ic into religious living which seems to be de-
manded today. "Instead of passive renunciation of
the world there is active domination of the world.
Instead of resignation there is resolution. Instead
of ascetic restraint there is athletic discipline."
For Paul, life in Christ meant mastery, and surren-
der to Christ and to his ideals meant victory. The
Apostle has often been compared with the calm, serene
Jesus, and not always to Jesus' advantage. These are
days that demand action and we thrill at the mili-
tant note in Paul's teaching, but indoing so we
overlook the fact that from the standpoint of modern
socialism he was a reactionary. Perhaps what we
need today is more of that quiet strength which is
traditionally associated with the personality of the
Master. From this point of view the modern world
needs both Jesus and Paul, and above all less talk

about and more practice of the principles of both.

Another factor in Paul's moral life and teaching which is being stressed in modern religious circles is that of growth. Paul's spiritual life was not perfected that day when he was led captive by the risen Christ. In writing to the Philippians concerning his own spiritual life, he says, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12). "'Love, joy, and peace,' with Paul as with Jesus are not outright endowments of perfection, but a final 'harvest of the Spirit,' for which one must wait, as one waits for the ripening grain."' The Christian life with Paul, as with Jesus, is a moral evolution; 'the animate, not the spiritual, comes first, and only then the spiritual.' Liberty and power grow until character reaps its ripened harvest."

Still another aspect of the Apostle's teaching which the modern world is just beginning to appreciate, is that of human solidarity. "The primary

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135. Ibid.
condition of a reestablished prosperity and peace among the dissensions and distrusts of the world today is in a renewed and universal acceptance of the social ethics of Paul. There are many members but one body."

Thus there is not only need for individual unity, but for social unity. Dare we conclude from the Apostle's analogy that all of the various differences of race, color, and creed are essential parts of a complete whole, and that there is a means of fitting them together? The question is at least suggestive.

In closing this brief discussion on Paul and the modern world, may we not ask another question? If the ethics of Paul were integral with his religious faith, can we today practice his ethics and discard his religion? As we have already stated Paul's ethics were meaningless apart from the Christ who inspired them. Paul was not a humanist, and those who hold to humanism today are not practicing the ethics of St. Paul. If with his ethics we take his Christ we have both the principles and their authority, and a vastly greater understanding of the Apostle himself.

Conclusion

As we have already given a summary of the ethical principles enunciated and used by Paul in his ministry to the Corinthian church, there remains for us, in this concluding chapter, to present a brief summary of the entire thesis.

We have found that ethics has to do with outcomes and morals in relation to the whole of human society, and that Christian ethics has to do with those customs and morals which are peculiar to those who embrace the Christian religion. Likewise, religion consists of the attitudes and acts of the individual and the group toward a supreme being, which in the case of Christianity, takes certain forms in accordance with the historical, ethical, and theological facts or theories centering around the person of Jesus Christ. These two elements, ethics and religion, are invariably so closely associated as to seem integral parts of the same whole, each being apparently necessary for the complete expression of the other.

Saul of Tarsus inherited an environment in which ethics and religion had a prominent place. His
native capacity for mystical experiences responded to this environment and the result was a personality of peculiar religious intensity, and he became a zealous exponent of Judaism. Educated in Rabbinical lore he perhaps contemplated a position of leadership in the religious life of his people. While basically a Jew in his religious thinking, he was not uninfluenced by the world of Greek thought which "he breathed in with the air of Tarsus."

Meanwhile Jesus of Nazareth was preaching and teaching or preparing himself for his future ministry in Galilee. After the Master's death Saul is brought into contact with the followers of Jesus and he sees in them enemies of the Jewish faith. For a time he assumes the role of persecutor, and then the one great event in his life happened. He came face to face with the transcendent Christ and heard his voice inquiring, "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Thereupon the rich ethical content of his Jewish mind became infused and invigorated by a new and overpowering element; a vital sense of religious certainty and commission. In this experience he lost little and gained much. Now added to his years of religious
training and discipline was the dynamic which gave a strange new meaning to the whole of his morality and a sense of moral freedom he had never before known. There follows years of adjustment culminating in an heroic ministry; a ministry which reached throughout the Greek speaking world, finding one of its centers in the profligate city of Corinth. Here he attempts to segregate and purify those who would prepare themselves for the new order which he preached and anticipated - the return of Jesus and the end of the age. The religious life, loyalty to Christ and the spiritual fellowship are the only things really worth while, and all extraneous interests must be subordinated to them. Christ is present in the world, his spirit is made manifest in human lives, men have been emancipated from the slavery of sin, religion has lost its austerity and has flowered with such graces as beauty, love, hope, and goodness; human relationships now have an almost divine significance, and immortality is a reasonable expectation. For Paul morality stands at the gateway of religion and religion in turn reaches out into and strengthens morality.
Paul borrowed from Judaism, Hellenism, Christianity, and the unique facts of his own experience those materials which he wove into his own moral structure, and yet the product was something more than the sum of these sources. Intending his instruction for a limited group in a "limited world" his teaching is essentially provincial, Nevertheless, true to all teaching which finds its source in inspired intelligence, Paul's voice is still heard in a world which did not end because he taught people how to live in harmony with the life forces which are within them, and in so teaching gave hope where there was indifference or sullen despair; beauty where there was ugliness; love where there was hate; brotherhood where there was dissension; purpose where there was no purpose; and rationality where there had been confusion and fear. The modern world is a better world because Paul, among other acts in a phenomenal ministry wrote "unto the church of God which is at Corinth."
Note (a)

In several instances we have accepted a statement or conclusion of a debatable character because the points in question have no particular bearing upon the real purpose of our theme—which is to set forth Paul's ethics. To have presented even the major views held in regard to these particular matters would have placed too much emphasis upon secondary matter, at the expense of destroying the correct proportions which we have tried to maintain.

Note (b)

In all cases where the letters of Paul are mentioned in this thesis, apart from specific references, we have in mind not the canonical books, but the reconstruction of them as set forth on page 39.
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