
Paul's Idea of Conflict between the Spirit and the Flesh (Galatians 5:13-18) in Relation to Plato's Concept of Soul with Reference to Freud's Psychology of the Mind

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Abstract

This work is an analytical comparative study of the innate crisis that takes place in the human person as perceived Paul of Tarsus, Plato, and Sigmund Freud. As a work that is undertaken in biblical perspective in comparison to philosophical and psychological realities, the choice of Galatians 5:13-18 is considered much relevant to the study as the verses basically address the conflict in a carnal believer which is a typical experience of every other person who is yet to encounter the saving grace of Jesus Christ. The basic intention of the study is to see the similarities and dissimilarities in the views of the three authorities in fields of Christian Studies, Philosophy and Psychology which address human behaviour in different perspectives. The study established that though there could be similarities in that they all believe that there is intra personal conflicts in man but the approaches differ as well as the sources.

Key Words: Paul, Plato, Freud, Flesh, Conflict, Spirit

Introduction

Although the Holy Bible was essentially written or inspired to meet the spiritual or religious needs of man, God, from the very onset of inspiration considered the various human needs as He enabled the different authors to write according to the Christian Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21); but the basic influence in sacred or religious writings is societal values and norms as hold scholars. The various religious writers take cue from same (societal values and norms) in context of the affected or relevant religions in question whether among the acclaimed revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism or any other ones (Isichie and Olufowobi, 2005). In this regard, the many prevailing circumstances of the time were put into account as the authors wrote including the sciences, technologies, and philosophies of the day. Among the very early observers of this truth was Philo (20 BC-AD 40) who "found the highest divine authority not in philosophy but in the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch" (Boer, 1976: 11). His greatest dismay occurred when he noticed that the author of Genesis associated the creation of the world with matter which was not in tandem with Greek philosophy. As posits Yamauchi (1981) in respect of the flood story of Genesis as regards the real cause, Moses unlike his contemporary secular authors of the neighbouring nations gave God's correct reasons for the flood as opposed to those of Babylonian and Assyrian

writers who claimed that it was due to human beings' noisy attitudes that God had to stop by means of the flood.

In the same token John in the first chapter of his gospel tried to correct the Greek's view of the *logos* in his introductory verses (cf. John 1:1-18). The same this author intends to put across in this paper as Galatians 5: 13-18 is examined. As Isichie (2008) puts it in his lecture, the philosophies of early Greek thinkers greatly influenced the Gospels and other New Testament writings. On the contrary, Orgu (2007) rather believes that the views of Greek philosophers are so similar to that of the Bible writers that one will hardly know who influenced the other and concludes that such shows the parallel nature of the truth regardless who says it. As the Church and other religious groups are meant to be a spiritual cum moral watch-dog in the society, so were the Scriptural writers. They wrote to teach, correct, reprove, and train the society in godly manners (cf. 2 Timothy 3: 16) though Omoregbe (1993) seemingly discountenances this as he apparently argues that philosophy which has religion as its primary route is also another valid source of moral instructions and guides.

Thus, the parallel nature of the Bible passages to the prevailing circumstances in the society and the consequences or implications, as it ware, on the modern man is the main trust of this paper. The title reveals the possible approach to the work. It certainly will attract the comparative analytical approach as well as that of exegesis to enhance the work.

Conceptual Framework

Several terms call for special attentions in this work, but three of such are of great importance and significance to the study. Among such are **flesh**, **soul** and **spirit**. Others will rather be treated in context as the work progresses.

Flesh: The first thing that comes to mind when one mentions the concept of flesh is the fact that it is the soft tissues of the body consisting primarily of the muscles and fat which cover the bones of people and other animals. Such was the use in 1 Corinthians 15: 39. The term *sarx*, (σαρξ), according to Thayer (2012) is generally negative, referring to making decisions (actions) according to self – i.e. done apart from faith - independent from God's working. Thus, what is "of the flesh (carnal)" is by definition displeasing to the Lord – even things that seem "respectable!" In short, flesh generally relates to unaided human effort, i.e. decisions (actions) that originate from self or are empowered by self. This is carnal("of the flesh") and proceeds out of the (*unchanged*) part of man – i.e. what is *not* transformed by God. As posits Bauer and Danker (1957, 2000: 915) the term speaks of "something with physical limitations here on earth" and particularly an "instrument of various actions or expressions" which in Paul's thought is "dominated by sin to such a degree that whatever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present, and no good thing can live in the σαρξ" (*sarx*, Rom. 7: 18), a view believed to be Greek in nature especially that of Plato and Philo. It is also perceived by the duo (Bauer & Danker, 1957, 2000) that the flesh is the "source of sexual urge" and opposite of divine nature as it is presented by Paul in the text. They, however, never failed to disclose the fact that "the Old Testament lays no stress on a necessary relationship between flesh as a substance, and sin" which of course is a proof that Greek thought was of no

significance in the Old Testament era but was very much real in the New Testament time.

There is another term that is often used in the New Testament in reference to the human body. It is called the *σώμα*, *sōma*. As in *sarx*, it is also used in reference to “the body as a whole, and is referred to as a ghost or spirit of the dead in Homer, and to a more philosophical idea of an immortal and immaterial essence left over at death since Pindar. *Psychē* (ψυχή) occurs in juxtaposition to *σώμα* as could be seen in Matthew 10: 28” (Vine, 1996: 72). But Plato in particular saw the soul in three parts, namely, the rational; spirited; and the appetitive; seen as instrument of life arising from the Parmenidian two-realm cosmologies. In the Bible, however, such in some contexts, “include life of any kind whether of man living, e.g. Matthew 6:22, or dead, Matthew 27:52; or resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:44 or of beasts, Hebrews 13:11; of grain, 1 Corinthians 15:37-38; of heavenly hosts, 1 Corinthians 15:40” as Vine deduces. The term is used in reference to that which is responsible for animation of any sort. In this sense, reference is made to the soul of a nation. The word is also used for physical nature distinct from *pneuma*, “the spiritual nature,” as in 1 Corinthians 5:3, and from *psuchē*, “the soul,” as in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. *Soma*, ‘body,’ and *pneuma*, ‘spirit’ may be separated but *pneuma* and *psuchē*, ‘soul,’ can only be distinguished. The term, *soma*, is not commonly used in negative sense as is the case with *sarx*.

Soul: In essence, the soul is what distinguishes man from other creatures especially the lower animals. It is the complex of human attributes that manifests as consciousness, thought, feeling and will and is regarded as distinct from the physical body. The soul, in many religious, philosophical and mythological traditions, is the incorporeal with many conceptions, immortal essence of a living thing (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2000). According to the Abrahamic religions in most of their forms, souls—or at least immortal souls—belong only to human beings. For example, the Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas attributed “soul” (*anima*) to all organisms but argued that only human souls are immortal (Eardley & Still, 2010). Other religions (most notably Jainism and Hinduism) teach that all biological organisms have souls, and others teach that even non-biological entities (such as rivers and mountains) possess souls. This latter belief is called animism (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001-07). But Greek philosophers of the ‘Golden Age’ such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle understood the *psyche* (ψυχή) to be crowned with the logical faculty, the exercise of which was the most divine of human actions. At his defense trial, Socrates even summarized his teachings as nothing other than an exhortation for his fellow Athenians to firstly excel in matters of the psyche since all bodily goods are dependent on such excellence.

What then is the soul, or how is it generally perceived? The Greek word is derived from a verb “to cool” and then refers to the vital breath, the animating principle in humans and other animals, as opposed to *σώμα* (*soma*) meaning “body”. It could encompass the *appetites*, which includes all our myriad desires for various pleasures, comforts, physical satisfactions, and bodily ease; the *spirited*, or hot-blooded, part, i.e., the part that gets angry when it perceives (for example) an injustice being done; and the *mind* (*nous*), the conscious awareness, and such Plato

saw as the part that thinks, analyzes, looks ahead, and rationally weighs options (Omeregbe, 2005).

Spirit: The Latin word “spirit” basically speaks of wind, air or breath. The Latin term *spirare* “to breathe,” from which it is derived, is also the source of the English aspire, conspire, expire, inspire, perspire, respire, and transpire which contextually refers to the enabling force, the engine room or compelling force a thing. Biblically, especially in New Testament usage according to Bauer (1957), πνεύμα (*pnueuma*) suggests numerous things as presented by various writers each resonating the prevailing trend of thoughts. In the first instance, it speaks of **air in movement, blowing and breathing** as in Philo and Josephus etc, and particularly in Hebrews 1: 7 where it is stated that “God makes his angels winds” πνεύματα as well as **the breathing out of air, blowing** (1 Thess. 2: 8). The term also signifies that which **animates or gives life to the body** (Luk 8: 55; Acts 7: 59). The word is used in reference to **a part of human personality** and it denotes **the immaterial part** of him, as in 2 Corinthians 7: 1 and Colossians 2: 5 and could also mean “the whole personality, in its outer and inner aspects” (cf. 1 Cor. 5:3-5; 7:34) – the inner life of human is divided into ψυχή καί πνεύμα (*psuchē and pneuma*; soul and spirit) in which sense is believed that “a divine spirit was actually in the soul.” In this connection, the spirit is seen as the source and seat of insight, feeling, and will, generally as the representative part of human inner life. It is important to note here that there is a great similarity between the **soul and the spirit**. Vine (1996, 832-3) tries to resolve this in the following narrative with Hebrew 4:12 in view.

The language of Hebrews 4:12 suggests the extreme difficulty of distinguishing between the soul and the spirit, alike in their nature and in their activities. Generally speaking the spirit is the higher, the soul the lower element. The spirit may be recognised as the life principle bestowed on man by God, the soul as the resulting life constituted in the individual, the body being the material organism animated by soul and spirit... Apparently, then, the relationship may be thus summed up. *Sōma*, body, and *pneuma*, spirit may be separated, *pneuma*, and *psuchē*, can only be distinguished.

Other aspects of the spirit which essentially refer to “an independent incorporeal being in contrast to a being that can be perceived by the physical senses” that basically speaks of “Good and Evil Spirits” where much is said about God and His angels, and the devil and his demons is not the thrust of this paper and so, one may not bother to delve into that aspect of the spirit because such is considered obvious especially in context of the work.

Plato’s Soul: a Religious Perspective

Before Plato came to the scene of philosophy, the issue of soul had already become a central theme in philosophical discourses and debates though his immediate influence was Socrates (Russell, 1946). From comparatively humble Homeric beginnings, the word ‘soul’ underwent quite remarkable semantic expansion in sixth and fifth century usage. Although in the Homeric poems, only human beings are said to have (and to lose) souls but, Homer never envisaged shades or images of non-human creatures in the underworld. These two facts taken together suggest that in whatever precise way the soul is conceived of as associated with life, it is in any

case thought to be connected not with life in general, or life in all its forms, but rather, more specifically, with the life of a human being (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2014). Nevertheless, the questions about the soul that are formulated and discussed in the writings of Plato and Aristotle to some extent arose from, and need to be interpreted against the background of, these sixth and fifth century developments among which was Thales of Miletus, who was credited with successfully predicting a solar eclipse occurring in 585, reportedly, in his hylozoism, attributed soul to magnets, on the grounds that magnets are capable of moving iron. The main influence to Platonic thought with respect to his conception of the nature of soul albeit, was the orphic-Pythagorean though from which he learnt that “the soul is something divine in man” to which he added his own original element of the soul that it is made up three parts, namely, the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts. While the rational part is the highest of the three, indestructible and immortal which should control the whole man, the spirited part corresponds to man’s higher emotions whereas the appetitive part corresponds to man’s lower emotions or desires (Omogrebe and Olufowobi, 2005). Plato’s tripartite nature of the soul is often likened to the Freudian theory of the mind where the mind is made up of three components, namely the **id**, the **ego** and the **super-ego**. The similarity and dissimilarity in both will be duly attended to in a subsequent segment below. It is also believed that the Parmenides’ philosophy “On Nature” which consists of two parts, namely “Way of truth” and “Way of opinion,” the “mistrust of senses and reliance on reason played a very important role later in the philosophy of Plato” (Unah, 2001:87). But to the religious mind which actually inspired this study, Boer (1976) renders it thus:

Plato united in one philosophy the concern of the earlier thinkers to understand the world as a whole and the concern of Socrates to understand man. With Parmenides who saw changes as illusion of senses, he believed that the real world was not as the world could be seen and felt - the mountains, trees, sky, rivers, fields, men. The real world was the unseen world, the world of ideas. By “ideas” Plato did not mean thoughts or opinions or what we refer to as “ideas.” He meant spiritual realities that exist in an unseen world. In that world are the “ideas” of material things.... These ideas exist in the unseen world in order of their service to one another.... But there is another world, the world of matter. In its original state matter is without form or shape. It is a disordered, unharmonious, formless mass, a chaos. However, we never see matter in that shapeless, formless way.... It is the union of the perfect ideas with disordered matter that we see and experience in the world around us. Matter is the source of all evil – of pain, disappointment, imperfection, sorrow, and death. The whole world of nature and man comes out the strange union of ideas and matter. This is the world of change that had impressed Heraclitus so deeply. All that is in the world is a poor copy of eternal, true, unchanging ideas coming to expression through their union with matter. Whatever is beautiful, moral, fitting, and purposeful in

these copies comes from ideas. Whatever is evil, painful, and destructive in these copies is derived from matter. Both worlds are equally eternal; neither can gain a victory over the other. Man is a union of spirit and matter....

Although the early Greek philosophers were essentially religious, though, that of Parmenides and Pythagoras was more obvious than others' as hold most philosophical scholars, but Boer, in the citation above makes this more glaring. Moreover, Plato's ability to integrate the philosophies of the early Greek philosophers and that of his immediate predecessor, Socrates, in one philosophy with special emphasis on the nature of the soul and the impact and influence on the early Christianity and its writers which Boer resonates in the above citation is the main concern of this paper. Peculiar to Boer's perspective of Plato's soul is his ability to summarize all he (Plato) said about soul in two main perceptions – the “world of ideas” which is positive in all regards and the “world of matters” which is negative as both are eternally equal in strength and also in conflict with each other. Does Paul's *sarx* which often has negative undertones have connections or correlations with Platonic spirited and appetitive parts of the soul? Or, are they in any regard similar or dissimilar in essences? These questions will better be attended to in the next segment and capped up in the segment that will subsequently follow. However, Boer's thesis above brings a reality to the fore, that is, the notion of Platonic dualism which was a major issue to early Christianity and its literature (cf. Acts 17:32) which plausibly seems to be Paul's theme in Galatians 5:13-18 as imply some scholars.

Paul and the Inner Conflict in Man (Gal. 5:13-18): an Analysis

This passage expresses Paul's challenge with some of the converts in the Churches he planted in Galatia. His teaching of “freedom in Christ” was being embraced by some in the manner that such were beginning to indulge in self-centred excesses that result into morally questionable behaviours leading to strife and conflict and disunity among the brethren. In order to bring such under control, Paul here decided to bring all to the knowledge of **life under the control of the Holy Spirit**. The believers would have no doubt started imbibing **sensualism** an extreme left of Gnosticism which was an essential stuff of Epicureanism hence Paul apparently rebuked such.

V13. Paul in this verse resumes the freedom theme he had earlier introduced in verse one which he suddenly suspended in order to address what he felt was necessary in vv. 2-12 during which he cleared the ground for what he now discusses as he insisted that dependence on Mosaic Law makes nonsense the finished work of Christ on the Cross. Such he called an act of falling from grace (cf. v4). As he resumed from the aside of vv 2-12, he emphasizes here that the freedom that comes as a result of faith in Christ must never be expressed by means of the “sinful nature” – the flesh, *sarx*. Flesh, here, means all ‘unrenewed’ desires and propensities of the mind – that is, whatsoever thing that is not under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. Commenting on this verse in connection with 2 Corinthians 3:17, Stamps *et al* (2003) assert that the liberty which comes from Christ is, first and foremost, a liberation from condemnation and slavery of sin (Rom 6:6, 14; 8:2; Col 3:9-10) and the whole dominion of Satan (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13); and that such

begins with one's union with Christ (Acts 4:12; Eph. 1:7). Thus, Paul's argument here was that the purpose of the freedom was not self-indulgence or self-promotion, which results in strife with others (vv. 14-15). The purpose of the freedom, Biblically speaking, therefore, was the capacity to obey God and do His will by being empowered by God's Spirit to serve one's neighbour in love because "the Gospel proclaims liberty from ceremonial law: binds you still faster under the moral law. To be freed from the ceremonial law is the Gospel liberty; to pretend freedom from the moral law is Antinomianism (Clarke's Biblesoft, 2006).

V14. Paul's statement that that the "whole law is summed up in one command 'love your neighbour as yourself'" quickly raises some questions in one's mind as one thinks along the line that he has at one time or the other spoken against the law even in the same letter. As writes Rapa (2008, 625), the key to Paul's thought in this verse is the term translated 'summed up' *peplērōtai*, meaning "has been fulfilled" which he (Paul) wrote with Mathew 5:17-20 and 19:19 in view. In actual fact, Paul never implied here that Christians are to do or perform the law or works of the law to achieve righteousness or a relationship with God. The idea here rather, is that Christian love fulfils the law, as the result of Christ identity and not as its origin. Therefore, he who is governed by self-love, properly and Scripturally speaking, will devote his whole soul to God, and earnestly and constantly seek all his peace, happiness, and salvation in the enjoyment of God; and such will certainly extend same to his neighbours. The truth here is as one loves his neighbour in the Spirit of Christ he fully satisfies the demands of the law. In Christ, believers have the Spirit's enablement to "fulfill the requirement of the law to love God and fellow men.

V15. The churches in Galatia seem to have indulged attitude that had brought about a high level of distraction; there were continual altercations among them. They had fallen away from the truths of the Gospel of grace; and as Christ no longer lived in their hearts by faith, pride, anger, ill-will and all unkind and uncharitable tempers, took possession of their souls, and in consequence alternatively, they were destroying each other (Clarke's Biblesoft, 2006). The imagery here, as Rapa puts it, such is both sarcastic as is shocking as the description of the Body of Christ is depicting as it were wild beasts tearing one another into pieces. Their concern for themselves left no room for attention to others' needs or desires, and the intensity of their self-protective words and deeds could only be described in these dreadful terms. Such selfish ferocity towards one another is antithetical to love, which is accomplished in the Spirit of by service to others without consideration for oneself.

V16. Then came the advice from the Apostle: "walk in the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh." In other words, Paul was here saying to Galatians and all Christians by extension, that any in such act or state should get back the Spirit of God which has been grieved and lost; and take back that spiritual religion which such has abandoned. If the Spirit of God dwells in and rules the heart, the whole carnal mind will be destroyed; and then not only carnal ordinances will be abandoned, but also the works and the propensities of flesh. In other words, the life that is now lived is not a nomistic lifestyle; nor is it a libertine one. The life "by the Spirit" is the life of freedom to live out the dependent obedience in Christ that Paul had continually exhorted the Galatians to practice (cf. 3:1-5; 5:5).

V17. Paul here explained what he meant in verse sixteen which actually engendered this study. Life “by the Spirit” inhibits doing the biddings or promptings of the sinful nature. On the other hand, living on the basis of the lusts of the sinful nature is just a simple possibility, as Paul’s admonition against the Galatians’ “biting and devouring each other” explains. This is unequivocally true because the Spirit and the desires of the carnal nature are incompatibly opposed to each other, and the end result is always conflict in the life of the Christian – that is, self-opposition and self-distracted. In the view of Rapa (2008), Paul here was referring to behavioral categories regarding the struggle one has in his doing right, living by the Spirit and fulfilling the law. Paul therefore, in context, spoke of an ethical and not an anthropological or cosmological dualism as has often been misconstrued by many. The result of the ethical dualism, however, with respect to the sinful nature is that “you do not do what you want.” Even where one wants to do good, there is an ongoing struggle to live by the Spirit, and not by the sinful nature (cf. Rom. 7:14-25). Thus, the apostle exhorted them, Gal. 5:16, to walk in the Spirit.

V18. The verse starts with the word “but” in some versions or “and in other versions. If one works with the former, a new idea is suggested rather than what the flow suggests normally. If on the other hand the latter is taken, a continuation of the flow is maintained. In context, the latter sounds more appropriate. Invariably, the apostle by way of concluding the section was here saying that life by the Spirit places one above the law. Thus, the believer could now live in keeping with the freedom in Christ, behaviorally realising the righteousness that that his in Him, avoiding the compounding of transgressions that comes by living under the law (cf. 3:19-25). Thus, the solution to the struggle of conflict in one’s life between the lusts of sinful nature and the presence of the Spirit can only be found in being led by the Spirit (cf. v 16; Rom.7:14-8:11).

The one main term in this study that has spanned across this work so far is *σαρξ* (*sarx*, flesh). Thus, the challenge in interpreting the word is seen more in the truth that the apostle used the term differently somewhere else in the epistle employing it to mean humanity or physicality (1:16; 2:16, 20; 4:13-14 etc.). But here, it clearly has ethical implication. Again, literal translation of the term in the passage as in King James Version, New Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Bible (KJV, NRSV, and NASB) has created some avoidable confusions and thus encourages anthropological dualism which the Church has historically struggled with hence the rendition of “sinful nature” to avoid such notion.

Freud’s Concept of Inner Conflict: Three-part Personality Structure

Freud’s intellectual contribution was an attempt to understand the forces of human irrationality through reason and science. His theories concern the forces whose antagonism produces unconscious conflict and the effects produced when they clash. Thus, he divided the personality structure into three parts – id, ego, and superego. These are mental processes or systems and not actual physical structure (Griggs, 2006). Freud believed that personality is the product of the dynamic interaction of these three systems.

The **id**, according to him, is the original personality – that is, the only part present at birth and the part out of which the other two parts of human personality crop up. In other words, the id is the most primitive portion of the personality, from which the

other two are derived. In its nature, the id has the content of the basic biological urges: to eat, drink, eliminate, be comfortably warm and, most of all, to gain sexual pleasure (Gleitman, 1991). It basically responds to the **pleasure principle** – satisfaction now not later, regardless of circumstances and whatever the cost. Most of all its blind strivings for pleasure knows no bounds between self and the world, fantasy and reality, and between wishing and having.

The **ego** on its part is the second in the personality structure which starts developing within the first year of life in order to find outlets for the id's needs. While the id operates in response to pleasure principles, the ego works in tandem with the **reality principle** finding gratification for instinctual drives within the constraints of reality (norms of society). Because it is derived from the id, the ego is essentially yet in the service of it but such is done pragmatically. In reality, this plays itself out within the system when the opposition between needs and reality leads to the emergence of more and more skills, all direct to the same end, as well as a whole system of the thought and memories that grows up concurrently (Gleitman, 1991).

The ego's function in the personality structure, as it were, is like that of the manager or executive in a system. Its mediation is not only between the id and its instinctual drive and reality as indicated above, it also serves a third party in the structure, the **superego** which represents the conscience and idealised standards of behaviour in any given culture or society. Like the ego, the superego develops from id energy during childhood, but a little later in age, and spans all levels of awareness. It determines ego's actions. Essentially, one would say that superego acts in accordance with a **morality principle** and it puts forward to ego as to how one ought to act. Thus, the formation of superego puts ego in a difficult position because its two masters, as it were, issue conflicting demands. In other words, if ego were a human being, it would complain that its job is a difficult one, having to seek to respond to the demands of id and that of superego at the same time in most cases. For instance, if the id hunger drive demanded satisfaction and the ego had found a way to steal some food without being caught, the superego would threaten to overwhelm the individual with guilt and shame for such an act. Such is what really happens in the personality structure with respect to the mediating role of ego. In order to prevent itself from being overcome with anxiety, the ego uses what Freud called **defense mechanisms**, processes that distort reality and protect man from anxiety (Griggs, 2006). Griggs adds that ego has many different defense mechanisms available for such self-deception which include repression, displacement, and rationalisation.

One will hardly be able to say so much with respect to several things Freud and his students may have said in this regard especially given the subject matter of this discourse. But the summation of this in his believed that unhealthy personalities develop not only when one becomes too dependent upon defense mechanisms, but also when the id or superego is usually strong or the ego usually weak because, in such cases, the ego cannot control the other processes. For instance, a person with a weak ego would not be able to hold the id drives in check, invariably leading to a self-centred personality. Again, where a person is strongly imbued with superego, such will be so much concerned with morality possibly leading to a guilt-ridden personality. A healthy personality, however, is one in which none of the three

personality systems (id, ego, and superego) is dominating, allowing the three systems to interact in relatively harmonious way.

Relating the Three Concepts of Inner Conflicts in Context

The first question that may quickly come to mind here is where do the three different concepts of human internal conflicts meet? And where do they diverge? Basically, all the three believe, in one way or the other, that there is such thing as inner conflict in the human person. But the three perceive such differently due to the individual persuasions of the individual authorities.

Beginning with Plato and his fellow Parmenidean or two-realm cosmologies philosophers (Unah, 2010), the conflict according to Boer (1976) is more in the endless disagreement between the world of ideas and that of matter, where all that is spiritual of the world of ideas is good and all that is material of the world of matter is evil. As posits Boer, the quarrel is without resolution because both are eternally equal in strength and power since Plato's soul is eternal having preexisted in the world of forms before being joined with the body. As a matter of fact, till the emergence of Kant who saw reason in both views the conflict between the world of ideas and that of matter in the soul is infinitum.

The similarity or relationship between this view and Paul's lies more in the fact that both believe that anything spiritual is superior to anything material. The departure lies essentially in the source of both because Plato's philosophy of "two-realm cosmologies," for instance, cued from Parmenides who copied from Orphism that is Zoroastrian in essence which is of no consequence to Christian belief. Here, the dissimilarity plays itself out. The conflict in Galatians 5:16-18, for example, especially as rendered in King James Version according to Rapa suggests "anthropological dualism" as holds some Platonists. Paul's use of the term *sarx*, as elucidated in one of the sections above, simply suggests ethical issues.

The question then arises, if albeit, the passage discusses ethical matters is inner conflict not equally implied without necessarily alluding to anthropological dualism? The answer is simple. Inner conflict could be implied which plays itself out in verse fifteen as it were, but the matter is neither inner conflict nor ethical issues but the source and the approach. In Plato's concept, much is said about the soul and reason but in Paul's concept, it is all about the "sinful nature" (the flesh) and the accomplishment or fulfillment of the demands of the law through the submission of oneself to the Spirit of God – that is, not frustrating the grace of God by depending on human efforts by going the way of legalism which is fruitless in essence (cf. 5: 4, 14-16). Thus, while Plato was essentially intellectual and psychological in approach adopting Parmenidean thought which was basically Zoroastrian in nature, Paul was simply ethical dissuading his readers from sticking to Mosaic approach to godliness by adapting themselves to the teachings and life of Christ to the end that they could enjoy the benefits of His grace devoid of the stressful life of normism.

With respect to Freud's mechanistic ego/id/superego model which though speaks about inner conflict is just scientific and has no blend with religion (Uebersax, 2007) even though Freud himself published many works on religion as well as having root to Greek culture reflected most in his Oedipus complex. The concept

merely brings to the bear the struggle one goes through when faced with some difficult ethical issues. The balance here albeit, is his (Freud's) belief that one should all the more strive to maintain healthy personality by avoiding tilting to defense mechanism or guilt consciousness. This is where some people get tempted to compare the three because they all deemphasize unhealthy personality in one way or the other.

Conclusion

Central to this paper is the popular saying that truth is parallel in all ramifications. The truth here is all about the intra-personal conflict which metamorphoses to inter-personal, and degenerates to inter-tribal and of course, international – that is, one who lacks peace within himself, depending on his level of influence, can pass same to others till it turns to what no one can control. Plato and his co-two-realms philosophers proffered that the solution to such was the use of 'rational' part of the soul to control the appetitive and spirited parts. But, Paul who was better informed on the teachings of the ancient Jewish writers which according to Philo (40 BC-AD 20), as stated above, was superior to Greek thoughts (Boer, 1976), in text under review, proffered that the solution was subjection of the flesh to the control of the Holy Spirit. In his view, Freud opined that the solution was avoidance of defense mechanism or guilt consciousness.

Looking at these objectively, one can quickly say that in each of the views, attempt was made to have a healthy society. Each of the three proffered solution to human needs in this regard using what he had and what was accessible to him. The exclamation of the same Paul in Romans 2:1, "Therefore you have no excuse, man" comes to the bear here. There is no group or sect philosophical, religious, or scientific that is lacking in terms of wherewithal to enjoy healthy environment or peaceful co-existence.

What appeared to the Greeks as rational part of the soul expected to be in use in order to ensure healthy personality behaviour wise, the Christians through Paul endeavour to achieve as one yields himself to the control of the Spirit whereas Freud sees such achievable when none of the three systems (id/ego/superego) is dominating others, allowing the three systems to interact in relatively harmonious way. The theme is similar but the sources and approaches are dissimilar.

While Plato and Freud were literal and secular, Paul was basically sacred and spiritual though it is believed that Plato was religious. But Plato (the Greeks), like the ancient prophets of Israel (cf. 1 Peter 1:10) never had clear perspective of what they were speculating of though in their thinking, all they were doing as it were was eternal (Uebernax, 2007). Thus, if Paul ever copied or modeled after the Greeks or Plato anywhere in his writing; it was not here, for he would have ended up copying what he preached against (cf. Colossians 2:8-23, where he vehemently warned against, repudiated their teaching). Because the group that held such view was the Gnostics and all New Testament preachers of the Early Church era including Paul taught, preached, and lived against the Gnostics' doctrine and lifestyle. As he taught against Mosaic normism so he taught against Gnosticism (McCain, 2010). In essence, he (Paul) simply discussed the Christian life governed by God's Spirit in the text and the similarity between the text and the two concepts evaluated in this

study is the main reason for this work. This similarity is seen basically in the reality of the presence of internal struggle when one is faced with the difficult question of choosing between wrong or right thing. And Paul gave an unquantifiable solution in the text as has been so far substantiated.

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