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PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS: AN INVESTIGATION
OF COSMIC CONFLICT WITHIN THE
CONTEXT OF HUMAN LIFE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

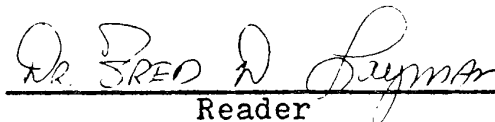
by
Thomas Burton White
July 1975

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INTRODUCTION

In a day when scientific research reigns supreme, anything which cannot be proven by empirical means is regarded with great scepticism, and usually rejected as not real. This attitude has in recent decades permeated the discipline of theological reflection. The result has been a general popularization of the approach of Rudolf Bultmann to strip away from the New Testament what he considered to be a mythological interpretation of reality relevant only to the ancient world. Another camp, namely the "secular theologians" of the 1960's, have turned away from the realm of the transcendent and have thrust themselves into a search for God within the life processes of the secular existence of man and his world.

Today, with the secular eschatology of "progress" failing, with the uncertainty of the future of economic stability increasing, and with the consistent advance of the atheistic Communist ideology succeeding, there is occurring a sudden rise of interest in that which is unseen, or hidden. The revival of the occult and "religion" of all sorts is evidence that materialism and existential philosophy have not produced spiritual satisfaction for the masses. The search continues for that source of goodness and ultimate human

fulfillment which satisfies the heart of the one who longs for truth. Likewise, the search for the cause of evil in human relationships and in the world intensifies. The planet has survived the short but fearsome reign of Adolf Hitler, and evidence recently uncovered has shown that he was surrounded by the demonic influence of Tibetan magicians and members of European secret societies.¹ The United States has witnessed in the early 1970's a purge of persons involved in the abuse of power in high places. Those who identify themselves with the "Free World" continue to resist the threat of the Communist powers in their effort to spread their ideology. Is human history to be viewed only in terms of various natural dynamics, i.e., survival instincts, desire for economic gain, and the quest for political power, or is there a supernatural dynamic which brings to bear a significant influence upon human existence? The question of who, or what, is ultimately in control of history continues to plague the minds of many who hope and wait for the future.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The specific problem of this study will be to identify the nature and function of that supernatural dimension known to the Apostle Paul as "principalities and powers." In a day when the trend in theological thinking is to identify this Pauline concept with existential forces or impersonal dynamics

¹Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier, The Morning of The Magicians (New York: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 277-283; Eric Norman, This Hollow Earth (New York: Lancer Books, 1972), pp. 135-36.

of political, economic and social life which condition human existence, it is needful to determine precisely what Paul himself had in mind. James Stewart brought to light the contemporary neglect of the essence of New Testament demonology:

I submit that in our Christian anthropology we have lost something vital here. Too much there has been lost the sense of a cosmic battle which emerges visibly on to the stage of world events....We have lost the emphasis that what is really at issue in the age-long tragic dilemma of Romans 7, what in fact is always at stake in every moment of temptation, is not a higher self or a lower self, personal integrity or dishonour--that is the least of it. What is at stake is the strengthening or (please God) the weakening of the spirit forces of evil that are out to destroy the kingdom of Christ.²

Certainly Stewart has not been alone in his concern for this vital lack in New Testament theology. James Kallas more recently sounded a similar warning:

In my estimation, the tragedy of contemporary theology is that theology has failed to accept the hub of demonology-eschatology....This process of rejecting demonology-eschatology is called demythologizing, that is, getting rid of the myth, the archaic, the no longer valid world view.³

Perhaps the price being paid by the demythologizing movement is a weakened gospel robbed of its vitality, and emptied of its reflection of a realm of reality which is indeed proving to be as relevant to modern man as it was to the ancients. To replace the notion of a cosmic battle between good and evil with rational explanations that sin is merely the result of "existential forces" or of internal

²James Stewart, "On a Neglected Emphasis in New Testament Theology," Scottish Journal of Theology, IV (1951), 293.

³James Kallas, The Satanward View (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 133.

human tensions, is to fall into self-deception and to deny the essential claims of the gospel. In such instance, one would need only to examine Paul's discourse before King Agrippa, wherein he recounted the words of Jesus calling him, and commissioning him to go to both the Jew and the Gentile,

...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me (Acts 26:18).⁴

Paul followed this with the qualification, "Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19). Neither ought the servant of God in the twentieth century dare to be disobedient to the heavenly vision of reality which has been set forth in the Scriptures.

In speaking of the fallen cosmic powers, Heinrich Schlier captured one of their attributive elements: "to seem not to appear is part of their essence."⁵ Satan, and the powers subject to his control, are masters in the art of subtle concealment. To the extent that a sceptical humanity remains ignorant of the deceptive schemes of the evil hosts, the bondage of men to false gods will continue. The prime purpose of this study will be to bring to bear upon this problem the light of revelation from both Old and New Testaments, the insight of the Jewish writers of the apocalyptic

⁴New American Standard Bible (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, Inc., 1971). Note: all further biblical references will be from this version unless otherwise stated.

⁵Heinrich Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), p. 29.

literature of the inter-testamental period, and the reflective thinking of scholars and theologians. The basic working thesis is that there is a created order of angelic beings who, though once appointed by the Creator to rule over the forces of nature and over the religious and political life of humanity, fell into prideful rebellion and have come to serve their tempter and deceiver, Satan, and have thus sought to separate men from the knowledge of God through the control of earthly political systems and false religion. These angelic powers, whose subtle schemes were unveiled by Jesus Christ and by the Apostle Paul, were technically "dethroned" at the resurrection, but until the return of Christ they continue to exercise an "apparent power" over the life of humanity. The committed and enlightened Christian is to discern the continued workings of these fallen powers, and to witness to the victory of Jesus Christ over them and to His supremacy in the universe.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

The procedure followed will be governed by a serious and systematic study of the available evidences. Chapter 1 will deal with the passages in the Old Testament relevant to the theme. There the existence of the "national angels," and the developmental change in the doctrine of "the Satan," will be discussed. Further, an investigation of the apocalyptic literature will provide substantial verification of the Old Testament evidences.

Chapter 2 will deal with the world of New Testament

demonology, and in particular, with the Pauline concept of principalities and powers. The attempt there will be to identify and define the nature and function of the powers. Chapter 3 is an investigation of the connection between the powers and various religious systems which serve to hold men in bondage to a false view of reality, and Chapter 4 examines the question as to whether there is any significant connective relationship between the powers and earthly governments. In Chapter 5 the implications for the angelic powers of the victory of Christ at the cross will be considered. And Chapter 6 is an attempt at making a practical application of the insights gained in the course of this study to the context of the Christian life and mission in the world.

In light of the particular perception of reality dealt with in these pages, wherein the powers of spiritual discernment must be exercised, it is fitting to hold the promise of St. Paul before the mind's eye:

...the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4, 5).

Chapter 1

THE GOD OF ISRAEL AND THE "HOST OF HEAVEN"

The background for the study of the demonological thinking of the New Testament, and of the Apostle Paul in particular, is to be found within the Old Testament and in the Jewish apocalyptic writings. In the interest of bringing this background to light, consideration must first be given to how Israel, to whom the monotheistic revelation was entrusted, dealt with the polytheistic religion surrounding her. This will result in some indications as to how the concept of lesser supernatural powers subservient to Yahweh developed. Secondly, the development of the doctrine of "the Satan," or, "the Adversary," will be examined. This doctrine underwent significant change from the early days of Israel's history to the post-Exilic period, the understanding of which provides a necessary preparation for an adequate appraisal of both Jesus' and Paul's views of the nature and origin of evil. And finally, an investigation of the historical context and content of Jewish apocalyptic thought will serve as a transition to New Testament demonology. Throughout, the attempt will be made to probe into the evidences concerning the cosmic powers of creation, to the end that the identity of these powers, their relationship to God, and their influence upon mankind might be determined.

"THE GODS" OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The cosmological thought which permeated the lives of the peoples among whom Israel existed was centered around the personalization of natural forces. Since men were wholly dependent upon these forces for survival, their religion consisted of a manipulative magic which would maintain an order or a harmony between the gods. For example, the nature and purpose of the cult of Assyro-Babylonian religion has been explained by Theodorus Vriezen:

Here the cult is a service for and to the gods in order that this world of which man forms a part...should survive. Here the cult ensures in principle the existence of the gods and therefore of the cosmos....¹

The God of Israel, however, appeared suddenly as the "Most High" God (Num. 24:16), the personal and transcendent Being who was both Creator of nature (Ps. 104) and controller of human history (Gen. 12:3). This God claimed absolute supremacy (Ex. 23:1-7; Is. 44:6; Ps. 89:6, 7). He was the mighty One who controlled all of the forces of nature (Ps. 29; Is. 40:26; Jer. 27:5) and who reigned over all things with strength (Ps. 93:1). He was holy and just (Lev. 19:2, 18), and was to be obeyed above all other gods. Thus, the essence of the cult in Israel was derived from the maintenance of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and His people. The element of manipulation ceased, and the practice of atonement was instituted. Walther Eichrodt, commenting on the fact

¹Theodorus Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, translated from the Dutch by S. Neuijen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 254.

that the many personal names of God point to His personality, concluded that these names "reveal the deity as closely concerned with regulating the life of his worshippers," to the point that the will of God alone was determinative.² Thus, God was also called "Jealous," the One who would allow of no rival (Ex. 20:5; 34:14). Eichrodt went so far as to say that the dual attribute of holiness-jealousy "must be recognized as the basic element in the whole Old Testament idea of God."³

Walter Grundmann strengthened Eichrodt's observation on the distinctiveness of God's character:

His power is not caprice; it is the expression of His will and is thus determined by the content of His will, which consists in righteousness....The power of God constitutes the inner energy of holiness and gives it the character of the inaccessible and transcendent.⁴

With the sudden entrance of a supreme personal deity who jealously expected the obedience of His chosen people, how were these people to relate their new religious experience to the dominant world view surrounding them? What, precisely, was to be the relationship between Yahweh and these other gods and deities? Israel was faced with the problem of interpreting the identity and purpose of these lesser powers. G. B. Caird saw that Israel was faced with three options:

²Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, I, trans. J. A. Barker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 209.

³Eichrodt, p. 210.

⁴Walter Grundmann, "ἱσχυρισμός," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, II, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 293 (This source will hereafter be referred to as TDNT).

1) syncretism, or, the identification of Yahweh with either El or Baal, 2) suppression of the other deities, or 3) subordination of the gods to the supremacy of Yahweh.⁵ Clearly, Israel chose the latter, for what are found in the Old Testament are supernatural beings who form a heavenly council under God (Ps. 89:6, 7; 1 Sam. 17:45; 1 Kings 22:19; Neh. 9:6). The deities who had once been identified with the forces of nature and with the astral bodies were now envisioned to be subservient to the "Lord of Hosts." Consequently, in Israel's history, "the earlier period left a legacy of belief in a heaven populated with beings of a higher knowledge and greater capabilities than those possessed by men."⁶ Substantial support for this idea came from D.S. Russell:

It is false to assume that the Old Testament writers ...conceived of God as alone in isolated majesty over against men, the creatures of his will. There is ample evidence to show that this conception of monotheism was held in conjunction with a belief in a spiritual world peopled with supernatural and superhuman beings who, in some ways, shared the nature, though not the being, of God.⁷

Vriezen likewise claimed that monotheistic Yahwism could be quite compatible with the remnants of pagan polytheism:

Far from clashing with monotheism this conception

⁵G.B. Caird, Principalities and Powers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 1.

⁶Harold Kuhn, "The Angelology of the Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalypses," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXVII, Part 3, (1948), 218.

⁷D.S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 235.

lays the greatest stress on the Majesty of Yahweh. Yahweh is a unique God, but He is not alone (*italics in the original*).⁸

What is the proper identity of these beings? They must be seen to have existed, but they must also be seen as powerless apart from the will of the sovereign God. Dualism was foreign to Old Testament cosmology. Monotheism, therefore, and not henotheism, is the term best descriptive of Israelite religion. Yahweh was not merely the God of a localized tribal group, but was the supreme Lord of the creation (Is. 44:6-8).

Prior to the book of Daniel and the apocalyptic literature, it is difficult to determine the exact relationship of the supernatural powers to God. There are, however, general indications given in select passages which give clues as to what role these powers played in the divine plan.

Deuteronomy 4:19

Beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

Pagan worship was characterized by the reverence given to natural objects, the personification of which were the gods. Eichrodt, in searching for an identification of the "host of heaven," agreed with V. Maag that they were "the mythical forces of nature in the Canaanite spiritual system, which were stripped of their divine power in the time of the Judges."⁹ Worship of these powers, therefore, amounted to

⁸Vriezen, p. 328. ⁹Eichrodt, p. 193.

idolatry, for it denied the nature and character of the one true God who was a spiritual Being transcendent over nature. But this passage has shown that God allowed the nations surrounding Israel to worship and serve lesser gods. Henry Shires and Pierson Parker commented that "admittedly, the existence of national gods is not only not denied, but is formally acknowledged....Yet these other deities are subordinate and subject to Yahweh's appointment."¹⁰ Whether or not the conclusion can be pushed that God actually "appointed" these powers, it must be recognized that this idea of the "national angels" gained considerable momentum in post-Exilic times. Deuteronomy 4:19 supplies solid evidence supportive of the search for the origin of principalities and powers.

S. R. Driver elucidated the function served by these cosmic powers:

The God of Israel is supreme; He assigns to every nation its objects of worship; and the veneration of the heavenly bodies by the nations (other than Israel) forms part of His providential order of the world. Natural religion, though it may become depraved (Rom. 1:21ff.) is a witness to some of the deepest needs and insights of humanity; in default of a purer and higher faith, the yearnings of mankind after a power higher than themselves find legitimate satisfaction in it.¹¹

Surely there may have been "satisfaction" in such worship, but it must be understood that such religion was allowed to develop among humanity after the fall and after the resultant separation from fellowship with God. Due to the rebellious

¹⁰Henry Shires and Pierson Parker, Deuteronomy, The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick, II (New York: Abington Press, 1953), p. 356.

¹¹Samuel Driver, ed., Deuteronomy, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), p. 70.

and idolatrous inclinations of men, God gave them over to the worship and servitude of these lesser deities. The "providential order of the world" is thus God's permissive provision for the religious strivings of humanity.

George Smith brought to light the beliefs of Clement of Alexandria on this matter. He felt these deities preserved the Gentile nations from falling into utter ignorance of God.¹² Clement also claimed that these gods guided men to the true God. This idea must be rejected, especially in the light of Romans 1 and Acts. Stephen said that "God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven" (Acts 7:42). Paul claimed that "in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways" (Acts 14:16), and he later referred to the days prior to Christ as the "times of ignorance" (Acts 17:30b). What may be concluded from this is that men were allowed to "grope after God" in their own ignorance, to worship the objects in the heavens, and the spirits who supposedly animated them. The implication was that God appointed certain angelic beings to rule over human affairs, and to serve as objects of religious devotion. As unregenerate men thus worshipped the sun, moon and stars, they lived in awe and in fear of the personal powers identified with the heavenly bodies. Israel, however, was called out from among the mass of humanity to know and to trust in the transcendent and sovereign Lord of creation:

¹²George Smith, The Book of Deuteronomy, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 66.

For every nation he appointed a ruler, but chose Israel to be his own possession (Ecclesiasticus 17:17).¹³

Deuteronomy 32:8, 9

When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of men, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.

Connected with the exegesis of this verse are linguistic and interpretive problems which are of no little consequence. The final phrase, "the sons of Israel," appears as stated in the earliest Hebrew manuscripts. The Septuagint, however, recorded it "the sons of God." Driver concluded that "Israel" is the correct reading, referring to the seventy sons of Jacob (Gen. 46:27).¹⁴ Yahweh thus reserved a place for Israel adequate to its number of people. Smith believed that "angels" or "sons" of God was a later adaptation of the Hebrew concept of guardian angels to the original text. Having accepted the original "sons of Israel" he concluded, with Driver, that "the purpose of this division was to leave room for Israel's numbers."¹⁵ Recent evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, however, as noted by Anthony Phillips, supports the Septuagint reading: "This Septuagint reading has been confirmed...over against the Hebrew 'sons of Israel.'"¹⁶ A

¹³The New English Bible with the Apocrypha (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 139.

¹⁴Driver, p. 356. ¹⁵Smith, p. 347.

¹⁶Anthony Phillips, Deuteronomy, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 216.

similar opinion is that of Millar Burrows, who noted that "on the basis of the Septuagint, which reads 'angels of God,' scholars have long believed that the original text was 'sons of God....'"¹⁷ George Ernest Wright chose "divine beings" as the correct meaning.¹⁸

What, then, is to be concluded from this controversy? A likely solution may be found in the research of George Foot Moore, who discovered a Palestinian Targum on Deuteronomy 32:8 which combined the two meanings into one tradition. The Targum reads as follows:

When the Most High gave the world in possession to the nations which sprang from the sons of Noah, when he gave mankind different ways of writing and different languages in the generation of the dispersion (after the Tower of Babel), at that time he cast lots with the seventy angels, princes of the nations, and at that time he established the boundaries of the peoples corresponding to the number of the persons of Israel who went down into Egypt.¹⁹

Whatever the original text may have said, the conception which grew up in Jewish thinking was that God both allotted to the nations these ruling princes, and apportioned the land according to the space required for the people of Israel. If "sons of God" is the correct reading, this passage lends substantial support to the hypothesis that in Old Testament

¹⁷Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), p. 319.

¹⁸George Ernest Wright, The Old Testament Against Its Environment (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 35.

¹⁹George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, Vol. III (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. 62.

thought the Gentile nations were subject to angelic overseers. This conception is the seedbed from which emerged the full flowering of the idea of the "princes" of Daniel 10:13, 20, 21, and of the cosmology of apocalyptic literature.

"The Council of Yahweh"

Parallel with the above passages is the repeated reference in the Old Testament to the heavenly "council of Yahweh" or to the spiritual beings who surround His throne. Various words were used to describe these divine beings: "angels," "holy ones," "sons of God," and the "host of heaven." The most explicit passages are 1 Kings 22:19 and Psalm 89:6, 7 (cf. Job 1:6, 38:7; Is. 6; Ps. 82:1):

And Micaiah said, "therefore hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right and on His left."

For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord, a God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all those who are around Him?

In light of the biblical evidence, the reality of these powers cannot be denied: "The conception of a host of angels or heavenly beings surrounding Yahweh is always present in Israel."²⁰ A literalistic interpretation of the above portions of Scripture has been affirmed by H. Wheeler Robinson:

One of the chief perils in the exegesis of ancient writings is that we should take figuratively that which in origin was meant quite realistically....The council of Yahweh was felt to be just as much a reality as Yahweh Himself.²¹

²⁰Vriezen, p. 327.

²¹H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," Journal of Theological Studies, XLV (1944), 151, 152.

To qualify the stress upon the transcendence of God, this idea of the "council" indicates the mediatorial agency of personal beings who carried out the will of God in the creation. Thus, the purposes of God were brought nearer to the people, especially through the word of the prophet (who, as in the case of Micaiah, was regarded as a participant amidst the "council").

Psalm 82 may be regarded as a further description of the heavenly "council." Here the Psalmist is a witness to the proceedings of divine justice:

God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked (82:1, 2)?

This was most likely a scene of judgment upon those in authority who had failed to administer the divine rule of justice. Who these rulers were is a point of great debate. Verses 6 and 7 seem at first sight to indicate divine beings:

I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes."

The word that appears in verse 1 to describe these rulers is "Elōhīm," a term which is taken in Exodus to refer to earthly judges (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28). This evidence inclined A. F. Kirkpatrick to consider the correct meaning to be "judges:"

...it is clear that the administration of justice at the sanctuary by those who were regarded as the representatives of God is meant in these passages.²²

Kirkpatrick appealed to Jesus' own use of this verse

²²A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Book of Psalms, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 495.

in John 10:34. In meeting the accusation of blasphemy, He stated that if the Old Testament writer called "gods" those "to whom the word of God came," then how much more should one who was sanctified and sent by the Father be entitled to be called the Son of God. Jesus was referring, apparently, to human individuals. Whether these persons were evil rulers and judges in Israel, or foreign rulers, cannot be determined.

G. E. Wright took issue with Kirkpatrick's position by arguing that the "rulers" were in fact divine beings who failed to fulfill their commission to rule justly over the nations. Wright drew a parallel between this Psalm and Deuteronomy 32:8, 9. The "rulers," in his mind, were those national angels appointed by Yahweh to superintend the affairs of men. They were disobedient, and were thus condemned to die as mortal men.²³ John Durham identified the "congregation" of Psalm 82 with the "divine council," and regarded the "rulers" as those angelic beings who had failed to fulfill their responsibility.²⁴ The Pseudepigraphal text of Jubilees 4:15, where the list of the descendants of Adam and Eve was recorded, sheds some light upon this matter. One named Mahalalel is mentioned, and it is stated that,

...in his days the angels of the Lord descended on the earth, those who are named the Watchers, that they

²³Wright, pp. 30-39.

²⁴John Durham, "The Psalms," The Broadman Bible Commentary, ed. Clifton J. Allen, Vol. IV (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1971), pp. 340-41.

should instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth.²⁵

The possibility emerges that certain angels were appointed to rule over the affairs of men. Psalm 82 could be, conceivably, a description of their failure to achieve that purpose. Though agreement with Kirkpatrick is reasonable that humans were being described, the text seems to more fully support the position of Wright and Durham. The point to be recognized is that this "divine council" consisted of semi-divine beings who carried out God's commands. What may be learned from Psalm 82 (regardless of what position one chooses), is that no authority could be exercised apart from the ultimate judgment of God. No ruler, whether human or divine, could rule unjustly and escape the chastisement of the Lord of hosts.

In summation, the fact must be acknowledged that the Old Testament writers did recognize the existence of supernatural beings to whom God delegated authority. Caution must be taken, however, not to group all of these angels into one general category, for there were many such beings who, no doubt, remained loyal to Yahweh. Perhaps it is needful to discern between the faithful and the unfaithful in the court of God. The difficulty with such discernment derives from the fact that earlier Old Testament revelation had not yet developed the concept of limited dualism, wherein a certain class of angels would be regarded to have fallen prey to a

²⁵Robert Henry Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 18.

chief deceiver, Satan. The search for the proper identity of these cosmic powers must therefore extend into a consideration of the character of Satan.

SATAN AS ADVERSARY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIMITED DUALISM

The historical basis for the development of a doctrine of limited dualism has been suggested by D.S. Russell:

There gradually grew up, no doubt under the influence of foreign thought, the notion that the angels to whom God had given authority over the nations and over the physical universe itself, had outstripped their rightful authority and had taken the power into their own hands. No longer were they simply God's envoys to whom he gave the charge of punishing those who denied his rule; they themselves became part of the rebellious family and took upon themselves the right to reign. They refused any longer to take their orders from God, but were either rulers in their own right or were prepared to take their orders from someone other than God who, like themselves, had rebelled against the Almighty.²⁶

The Entrance of Rebellion

If there are in existence cosmic, supernatural powers who have fallen from the grace and service of their Creator, the question must arise as to how such a fall occurred. Is there any particular influence to which the motivating dynamic of sin might be attributed?

The Old Testament provides scant but probable evidence that at some point in the past an angelic being of high estate and vocation turned from his service of God to the satisfaction of his own pride. Sin, and the resultant separation of creature from Creator, go back beyond the appearance

²⁶D.S. Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, pp. 237-238.

of humanity. The serpent in the garden planted the seed of mistrust in the minds and hearts of the first human pair with the suggestion, "has God said?" (Gen. 3:1). Though there is no conclusive evidence as to when the fall of Satan took place, it is clear that he was active in the devious temptation of the progenitors of humanity (cf. Rom. 16:20; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7). "The book of Genesis," said J. Barton Payne, "contains no direct revelation of Satan; but it does describe the serpent in Eden who acted as the instrument of man's temptation."²⁷

In the earlier history of Israel there was no direct treatment of Satan as a personal being. There was simply no need for the concept, for God was the supreme power who brought good and evil, mercy and judgment upon His people. Several passages may be examined, however, which point to the probable pre-historic activities of Satan.

Isaiah 14:12-14. A hypothesis set forth by such men as H.A. Ironside, Donald Barnhouse and Merrill Unger raised the speculation that an angel known as Lucifer was given authority over the planet earth:

Intimations are not lacking in Scripture that the highest of all God's created angels, "the day star, son of the morning," was placed in charge of the earth when this planet was originally created.²⁸

²⁷J. Barton Payne, The Theology of the Older Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 291.

²⁸Merrill Unger, "Old Testament Revelation of the Beginning of Sin," Bibliotheca Sacra, CXIV (October, 1957), 327.

The basis for this conclusion was taken from Isaiah 14:12-14, where judgment was spoken upon the "son of the dawn" ("hēlēl" in the Hebrew, "Lucifer" in Latin) for his prideful rebellion against the "Most High." Because this judgment began in verse 4 of chapter 14 with mention of the king of Babylon, many scholars have ruled out all attempts to identify this rebellion with that of Satan. Edward J. Young believed that this passage was descriptive of the end of a tyrannical earthly reign.²⁹ Kenneth E. Jones noted that Tertullian, Gregory the Great, and Jerome saw in this fall the person of Satan (cf. Luke 10:18), but he himself agreed with Young:

Since this passage clearly depicts the end of a reign it does not fit the fall of Satan, though it is in some sense analogous to it. This passage describes the fall of the king of Babylon.³⁰

On the basis of a clear sense of Scripture and of the temporal circumstances of history, this is a reasonable conclusion. But, as Jones intimated, because Satan is so closely identified with the rulership of earth, a prophecy against a sinful and arrogant king might also apply to the grand deceiver who inspired and empowered that king to commit ungodly acts. This description of sin and judgment could conceivably be applicable to both the king of Babylon and to the "shining one" who fell from grace. Such a dual application of the prophecy was applied by Payne:

²⁹Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. I, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 441.

³⁰Kenneth E. Jones, "The Book of Isaiah," Vol. III, The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, ed. Charles W. Carter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 60, footnote no. 52.

The proud Babylonian monarch is clearly compared to something; but the planet Venus, which does not try to raise its throne and become like God, hardly seems an adequate point of reference. In the light of Revelation 9:1, it appears likely that the fall of Satan is the real subject of this inspired comparison. For it was Satan who, in pride (1 Tim. 3:6), attempted to rival God and was condemned.³¹

Unger saw in this prophecy the inference that Satan, "as prince of this world-system, is the real though invisible ruler of successive world powers...."³² A summarization of this interpretation was expressed by Gleason Archer:

This title is addressed to the king of Babylon, not so much as a specific human individual..., but as a representative or embodiment of Satan, who is regarded as the power behind the king's throne.³³

Ezekiel 28:11-19. There is a similar kind of prophecy which appeared in Ezekiel, where the judgment was directed against the "king of Tyre," who was also identified as the "anointed cherub who covers." Part of the prophecy read:

You were in Eden, the garden of God....
 You were the anointed cherub who covers;
 And I placed you there.
 You were on the holy mountain of God....
 You were blameless in your ways
 From the day you were created,
 Until unrighteousness was found in you
 (Ezek. 28:13, 14, 15).

A definite conclusion as to the object of this prophecy is

³¹Payne, p. 294.

³²Merrill Unger, "Old Testament Revelation Concerning Eternity Past," Bibliotheca Sacra, CXIV (April, 1957), 135.

³³Gleason Archer, "Isaiah," The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, ed. Everett F. Harrison and Charles F. Pfeiffer (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), p. 622.

again most difficult. The three major interpretations of the passage have identified this figure with 1) a symbolical portrait of Satan (a position held by the early Church Fathers), 2) a Canaanite myth concerning Eden used to parallel the fall of Adam with that of the king of Tyre, and 3) a poetic lamentation concerned only with the king of Tyre.³⁴ In support of the first position, Ironside confidently asserted that "undoubtedly we have here the original condition and the fall of Satan himself."³⁵ Satan, the prince of the earth, was thus discerned by the inspired eye of the prophet to have imparted his own character to earthly kings who sought power and self-glorification. He had fallen from honor before God to condemnation apart from God. The kings of Babylon and Tyre would be subject to a similar fate.

Following from the investigation of Isaiah 14:12-14, such a conclusion would be most convenient, but it is doubtful that the text here allows for the direct identification of Satan. The conclusion reached by Bert Hall most closely approaches the exact meaning of the passage. He believed that the comparison was being made with the fall of Adam. However, he admitted that "while...the passage does not teach about Satan and his fall directly, it does point us to the Satanic

³⁴Bert H. Hall, "Ezekiel," Vol. III, The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, ed. Charles W. Carter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 444.

³⁵H. A. Ironside, Expository Notes on Ezekiel, The Prophet (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1949), p. 191.

pride that goes before destruction.³⁶

What can be determined definitively from the two passages is that at some point a dynamic power of volition in opposition to the will of God entered into existence. Since the New Testament depicted Satan as the deceiver of the world (Rev. 12:9), and the one in whose power the world lay (1 John 5:19), it becomes possible to recognize Satan as being the one who stood behind human manifestations of sin and rebellion.

Satan may indeed have been entrusted originally with the rulership of earth. On the other hand, he could have been thrust from heaven to earth after his rebellion. Whatever interpretation is taken, it is clear that he continued to function within the permissive will of God, and that he sought to lure other beings to participate in a rebellion similar to his own. God therefore allowed him to serve as the "accuser" of sinful men, a function which most clearly emerged in the temptation of Job (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-10). There is no clear evidence in Job to prove the fall of Satan, but the role he played is obvious. Job of course had not yet sinned, but it was Satan's intention to entice him through circumstantial adversities to cast away his faith and trust in God. This forensic function characterized the Old Testament concept of the nature and role of Satan. God seems to have him carry on his employment as "deceiver" in the overall plan of providence, but as such he became the chief enemy of mankind.

³⁶Hall, p. 444.

The Changing Conception of the Adversary

Having conducted a thorough and in depth investigation of Old Testament demonology, William Bradshaw reached an established conclusion:

In the Hebrew Scriptures there is no doctrine of active evil spirits in opposition to God, for in the Old Testament God is portrayed as being in complete control of the world and responsible for all events which take place therein, both good and evil.³⁷

Evil spirits were understood to be subservient to Yahweh, but they also served His purpose for judgment (1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Kings 22:23; 2 Chr. 18:20-22). Satan, likewise, was the divine agent of the heavenly court who served to accuse and to punish men for their wrongdoings. At some point Satan seems to have become more an autonomous agent of his own evil devices rather than merely serving in the divine courtroom.

H.H. Rowley clarified the concept of the adversary:

In the Old Testament we find the Satan, with a defined function, but it must be remembered that at first this was not a proper name, but merely a title defining the function of a member of God's heavenly court. He was the Adversary, a sort of Public Prosecutor at the bar of divine justice, until he became thought of as the embodiment of the evil he had to expose, and his office of adversary became his name, Satan.³⁸

The book of Job, therefore, recorded the activity of Satan not in terms of personal identity, but of function. He was known as "the Adversary," or, "the Satan." Nevertheless, the implication of personal agency was there. In Numbers

³⁷William Bradshaw, "Demonology in Hebrew and Jewish Tradition" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1963), p. 328.

³⁸H.H. Rowley, The Relevance of Apocalyptic (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 56.

22:22, the term "satan" depicted the angelic adversary who stood in the path of Balaam. Zechariah 3:1, 2 still connects "satan" with the definite article, but the idea of personal agency is clear in that "the satan" stood to accuse Joshua, the high priest, before the presence of God. 1 Chronicles 1:21 (most probably compiled by Ezra) finally presented Satan as a personal character bearing the name of his office. Paul Carus made an interesting observation concerning this role of Satan: "it is noteworthy that Satan, in the canonical books of the Old Testament, is an adversary of man, but not of God; he is a subject of God and God's faithful servant."³⁹ Likewise, in the New Testament, Satan was seen as serving a continuing function of remedial punishment, and, in the case of St. Paul, he was allowed to keep the saint humble through affliction (2 Cor. 12:7). Paul himself regarded the devil as serving indirectly to remedy the sin of a believer:

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5).

T.C.G. Thornton may very well have been correct when he asserted, "I would suggest that in all these passages Satan is not thought of as God's enemy, but rather as God's agent."⁴⁰

There is considerable paradox encountered here. To grasp that Satan was thought of as both enemy and agent of God is to grasp the meaning of the divine dynamic which

³⁹Paul Carus, The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil (New York: Land's End Press, 1900), p. 71.

⁴⁰T.C.G. Thornton, "Satan: God's Agent For Punishing," The Expository Times, LXXXIII (February, 1972), 151.

causes all things to serve the glory and purposes of the God of creation. His allowance and use of evil perplexes the human mind. Were one to stand with the "holy ones" in the divine council of God, perhaps then he would understand the mysterious tension between the goodness of God and the working of evil. The point of perspective which will serve the present purpose is to see that the development of monotheism in early Israel required a vision of reality which posited Yahweh as the supreme commander of all forces and events. The earlier phases of progressive revelation did not unveil the full scope of the conflict between the powers of good and evil. The experience of exile into foreign lands, and the captivity under oppressive rulership, brought significant expansions in the Hebrew interpretation of monotheism.

Satan and the Rise of Apocalypticism

One of the more fascinating phenomena of human existence is the effort to harmonize the painful distance between an ideal hope and an actual, present reality. The nation of Israel, expecting divine favor and deliverance, was suddenly shocked by the loss of her land and her freedom. Entrance into captivity brought with it a reconception of reality, wherein God became more transcendent, leaving the heavens populated with cosmic beings who controlled the activities of earthly life. William Oesterley wrote of this change in the thinking of the chosen nation:

In exilic and post-exilic times...when the monotheistic belief was firmly established, and there was not the danger of a reversion to polytheistic tendencies, the

activity of angels as the means of communicating God's will to men was fully recognized.⁴¹

In order to explain all that had befallen them, the Hebrews were led to conceive of evil forces who worked to defeat God's purposes. His miraculous acts in history, and His control over all events, had seemingly ceased. Belief in the existence of autonomous cosmic beings emerged into their religious conception. The "Adversary" was now seen to provide a substantial threat to the chosen covenant community:

...by the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jewish people had lived under the heel of foreign rulers for four hundred years. In apocalyptic thought, the continuing dominion of these foreign powers was no longer intelligible as an exercise of God's rule; rather..., their dominion was more plausibly interpreted as connected with the rule of evil cosmic forces. The book of Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll evidence this kind of understanding.⁴²

The remainder of this chapter will be given to a discussion of the significant developments of the concept of principalities and powers as evidenced in Jewish apocalyptic thought.

APOCALYPTICISM AND THE COSMIC POWERS

Apocalyptic refers to a particular view of life, history and the supernatural.⁴³ Within the religion of Israel,

⁴¹William Oesterley, "Angelology and Demonology in Early Judaism," A Companion to the Bible, ed. T.W. Manson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), p. 333.

⁴²R.H. Hiers, "Satan, Demons, and the Kingdom of God," Scottish Journal of Theology, XXVII (February, 1974), 40.

⁴³Gr., ἀποκάλυψις, "revelation," "uncovering," especially in connection with the secrets of the transcendent world and the plan of God.

the otherworldliness of the apocalyptic conception grew up in the midst of a historical situation which demanded theological explanation. This period spanned the years from 170 B.C. to 135 A.D., bounded at the start by the Maccabean revolt and at the close by the Bar Kochba revolt. There are certain books of writings which, taken broadly, contain representations of this world view: Daniel (canonical); Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, 2 Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon (apocryphal); 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, Jubilees, The Assumption of Moses, 4 Ezra, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Psalms of Solomon, The Sibylline Oracles, The Martyrdom of Isaiah, The Life of Adam and Eve, The Apocalypse of Abraham, and the War Scroll recently discovered at Qumran (all of the latter are pseudepigraphal). George E. Ladd believed that the above literature was brought into being primarily through three factors: 1) the identification of the Hasidim, the Pharisees, and the Qumran sect with the "righteous remnant" of Israel, 2) a need to explain the problem of evil and political oppression, and 3) the cessation of prophecy.⁴⁴ Many have held that apocalyptic was grounded in the prophetic movement, and simply took on a new form with the changing historical situation. Rowley claimed that "apocalyptic is the child of prophecy,"⁴⁵ and Stanley Frost asserted that "in general, prophecy shifted

⁴⁴George Ladd, "Apocalyptic," Baker's Dictionary of Theology, trans. Everett F. Harrison (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), pp. 50-51.

⁴⁵H.H. Rowley, "Apocalyptic Literature," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 484.

its eschatological interest from the outworking of history to the end of time itself, and re-emerged as apocalyptic."⁴⁶ This interpretation brought objection from Gerhard von Rad, who stated that "the roots of apocalyptic seem primarily to be in the wisdom tradition."⁴⁷ Von Rad saw in apocalyptic a radically different view of history as opposed to the prophetic vision. Most reasonable, however, was Frost's assertion that this unique world view was a "shift" in the scope of prophecy itself. Surely the desperate situation of Israel during the exile demanded a change in the prophetic perspective of reality.

The Historical Milieu of Apocalyptic

To understand the historical situation which gave rise to the apocalyptic genre of literature, it is necessary to view briefly the milieu within which Israel found herself between the years 200 B.C. and 135 A.D. After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., his empire was broken up into three major powers: Macedonia, Egypt, and Syria under the Seleucids. This latter power exerted the most extensive influence upon the people of Israel:

It was chiefly the Seleucid empire, and, in particular, the oppressive policy of its most notorious ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes--made emperor of Syria in 175 B.C.--which brought about the first of a series of crises

⁴⁶Stanley B. Frost, Old Testament Apocalyptic (London: Epworth Press, 1952), p. 83.

⁴⁷Gerhard von Rad, The Message of the Prophets, trans. D.M.G. Stalker (London: SCM Press, 1968), p. 272.

within Judaism which profoundly affected its religious development.⁴⁸

Antiochus sought to impose strict Hellenizing reforms upon the populace, and he banned the practice of Jewish faith and built an altar to Zeus in the temple (1 Macc. 1:54). The result was that there arose within Israel a movement of faithful Jews called Hasidaeans, or "pious ones," who opposed these reforms and gave support to the Maccabean revolt in 166 B.C. which recaptured Jerusalem in 165 B.C. This period produced the major sects of Judaic faith: the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Essenes of Qumran.

The dating of the book of Daniel has been a matter of controversy among scholars. Whatever conclusion is reached about the date of the canonical book of Daniel--sixth century or second century B.C.--there is a universal agreement among recent authors that it was the proto-type and closest parent of the inter-testamental apocalyptic writings. In general, the book is an affirmation of faith in the ultimate success of God's purposes in history; the devices of evil men and angelic powers would not prevail, for "His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14). All hope is directed towards the end of time when the "Son of Man" would appear to break the power of oppressive human rule and establish an enduring righteousness (Dan. 7:27). The tone of Daniel, and of the other apocalyptic literature, was conditioned by a realistic optimism. There

⁴⁸Matthew Black, "The Development of Judaism in the Greek and Roman Periods," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 693.

was an affirmation that the best was yet to be. At times the ancient Davidic expectation of a political restoration was revived, but for the most part these writings revealed that "the main orientation of the Jewish mind in this period was towards a supernatural and extra-mundane salvation."⁴⁹ Their purpose was to keep alive a vital faith in God, and to remind men that He was still in control of human history.

The strong influence of Persian religion on Israelite thinking during these times must be mentioned. Commonly accepted is the notion that apocalyptic literature reflected much of the content of Zoroastrian dualism. For example, the War Scroll of Qumran depicted a conflict between "the prince of light" and "the angel of darkness." Other elements of Persian thought are to be seen: the schema of the "two ages," the ranking and naming of the angels, the last judgment, and the resurrection of the dead. The following conclusion was reached by Moore:

The resemblances are so striking that many scholars are convinced that this whole system of ideas was appropriated by the Jews from the Zoroastrians, as well as that Jewish angelology and demonology developed under Babylonian and Persian influence.⁵⁰

The Persian dualistic conception, however, differed significantly from that of Israel. In Zoroastrian cosmology, Ahri-man, or Angra-Mainyu ("Enemy Spirit"), was the prince of demons who led his host in tempting men to commit evil acts. He was an independent and eternal spirit who owed no subservience to Ahura-Mazda, the co-equal Creator. Old Testament

⁴⁹Black, p. 696. ⁵⁰Moore, Judaism, II, p. 394.

revelation, on the other hand, revealed Satan as a creaturely being who stood under the sovereign authority of Yahweh. A significant difference is therefore to be seen in these two cosmologies. Though the entrance of the above ideas has been clearly shown, it still may be affirmed that the religion of Israel remained true to its beginnings:

Despite their indebtedness to the cultural and religious world outside Judaism, they nevertheless remained true to their Jewish faith, using alien truths to unveil the fuller revelation of the only true and living God.⁵¹

The influence of Babylonian religion as concerns the naming and ranking of angels, and the unveiling of their activities, is the chief interest of this study. The light which emerges from apocalyptic literature concerning the identity of Satan and his influence upon other angelic beings, provides an invaluable base from which to evaluate the New Testament concept of principalities and powers.

The Angelology of Apocalyptic

In the inter-testamental literature the so-called demons of the Old Testament became active evil spirits who worked rather independently of God and against His divine purposes. Satan, likewise, ceased to be a mere accuser in the heavenly court, and was revealed as the chief or leader of the evil powers. God was still in a sense in control of all things, but He allowed the existence of a counter-kingdom of evil and deception. A limited and temporary dualism

⁵¹Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, p. 20.

thus turned the attention of the faithful "remnant" to the hopeful expectation that one day this power of perversity and evil would be broken. Harold Kuhn reminded his readers that "angels were introduced into the theological system for the purpose, among others, of harmonizing certain doctrines with the realities of history."⁵² These realities produced a time of fear and uncertainty in the lives of the chosen people. The matter of the control of human destiny needed to be understood.

The "Princes" of Daniel. Some general introductory remarks have already been made on the book of Daniel. This book is the first and only place in the Old Testament where specific reference is made to "the angelic Watchers" (Dan. 4:13, 17) and to "Princes" (Dan. 10:13, 20, 21) who operate in the heavenly realms in connection with particular nations. Daniel represents the first instance where the writer is concerned with the naming of angelic powers, and with their mediation of the divine purpose in the lives of men. Gabriel was the angelic agent who aided Daniel in the interpretation of his visions (8:16; 9:21), and Michael was recognized as battling the forces of evil in favor of Daniel's cause (10:13). The picture presented was that of extensive activity behind the visible scenes of human history. Conflict between the servants of God and the servants of an alien power is evident throughout the book. The power struggles

⁵²Kuhn, "The Angelology of Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalypses," p. 230.

between men and their kingdoms was seen to continue until the time when the Messiah will appear and "the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One..." (7:27).

The unveiling of the "Princes" who stood behind the Gentile nations strikingly parallels the mention of the "host of heaven" in Deuteronomy 4:19 and the "sons of God" in Deuteronomy 32:8. Undoubtedly, God had at some point in history delegated His rulership of creation to a certain class of angels. Some of these angels entered into disobedience, however, and thereafter served their self-interest, as well as continuing to fulfill (in some measure) their God-given responsibility. Jubilees 15:31, 32 sheds some additional light on this conception of the "national angels:"

...for there are many nations and many peoples, and all are His, and over all hath He placed spirits in authority to lead them astray from Him. But over Israel He did not appoint any angel or spirit, for He alone is their ruler....⁵³

Perhaps this parallels an Old Testament motif whereby God hardened the hearts and blinded the spiritual eyes of those who had initially rejected Him. This certainly was true in the case of Isaiah's commission to "render the hearts of this people insensitive" (Is. 6:10a). Apparently, when God had temporarily "given up" on the human race and its idolatry, He allowed the lives of men to be ruled and administered by subordinate deities who fell prey to pride and to

⁵³Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Vol. II, p. 37 (All further apocalyptic references will be taken from this source and volume).

the satisfaction of their own purposes. James A. Montgomery related this conception to the monotheistic scheme of Israel:

The malicious inference is drawn by Jubilees 15:31f. that these spiritual chiefs were appointed to lead the nations astray. The undeniable existence of the 'divinities' of the nations (cf. Ps. 82) was assimilated to the Jewish monotheism under the scheme of an imperial organization in the heavens.⁵⁴

What this organization was entrusted to do, and how it was to function, must be the next concern.

The angels and their functions.

Know, therefore, my children, that two spirits wait upon man--the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit. And in the midst is the spirit of understanding of the mind, to which it belongeth to turn whithersoever it will (The Testament of Judah 20:1).

The writer of this verse believed that there were two powers in creation which vied for the attention and loyalty of men's minds. This duality was evidenced by the conflict that was carried on in the spiritual world. To see how this state of affairs came about, the functions for which the angelic beings were created must be examined.

Jubilees 2:2 lists three classes of angels, those "of His presence," those of "sanctification," and those who control the phenomena of nature. Jubilees 4:15 refers to another class of angels named the "Watchers" who, at a particular point in time, descended to earth "that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth." The angels "of His presence" were continually engaged in praising their

⁵⁴James A. Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, The International Critical Commentary, ed. Samuel Driver (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), p. 419.

Creator (1 En. 39:12, 13; cf. Rev. 5:8f.), and in bringing the prayers of the righteous before the throne of God (Tobit 12:12-15; cf. Rev. 8:3, 4). Some angels had the responsibility of bearing messages from God to men (1 En. 60:11; 10:7-15) and of interceding for men (Tobit 12:12; Test. of Dan. 6:2; Test. of Asher 1:6; 1 En. 39:5). They were to guide men into right living (Jub. 4:6), and thus were named in many instances "guardian angels" (Ecclus. 17:17; Jub. 35:27). Jubilees 2:2 goes into further detail to describe the many angels who control nature, i.e., fire, wind, clouds, darkness, snow, hail, thunder, lightning, and the four seasons. Most of these angels, however, did not keep their high estate, and some (particularly a number of the "Watchers") were led into sin and rebellion by Satan.

The fall of the "Watchers." The angelic "Watchers" who had first appeared in Daniel 4 are given extensive treatment in other apocalyptic writings. 1 Enoch 20 begins, and "these are the names of the holy angels who watch...", and proceeds to list the names of Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraquael, Gabriel and Remiel, names which have come to be associated with the term "archangel." There is evidence that these "Watchers" were of two sorts: 1) those who loyally served God (such as those listed above), and 2) those who had fallen from loyalty and who were awaiting judgment (1 En. 10:9, 15; 13:10; 16:1). How the latter fell is the subject of major portions of both 1 and 2 Enoch.

In conformity with the earlier hypothesis that Satan was the first being to rebel and to fall, the witness of

1 Enoch reveals that there was sin in the heavenly spheres long before the "Watchers" sinned. Specifically, their sin is identified with the incident in Genesis 6:1-4 where it was recorded that "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose." These "sons of God" were a certain contingent of the "Watchers" who were enticed by Satan to lust after human flesh. 1 Enoch 15:8, 9 states that the offspring of these abnormal unions were "giants," the spirits of whom were released at the time of the death of the body, thus becoming evil spirits and demons:

...the giants, who are produced from the spirits and flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the earth, and on the earth shall be their dwelling. Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies; because they are born from men and from the holy Watchers... (cf. 1 En. 9:1f.).

1 Enoch 6-8, 86, and Jubilees 5:1f. give further detailed description of this apostasy. Another interesting verse, one which gives the nature of the sin and the punishment, is 1 Enoch 54:6:

And Michael, and Gabriel, and Raphael, and Phanuel shall take hold of them on that great day, and cast them on that day into the burning furnace, that the Lord of Spirits may take vengeance on them for their unrighteousness in becoming subject to Satan and leading astray those who dwell on the earth.

The one responsible for this mass apostasy is given different names throughout the literature. 1 Enoch names Satan and lesser "satans" as the deceivers. 2 Enoch employs the name "Satanail" (7:1f.; 18:3; 29:4, 5), and explains that Satanail's plan was to lure the "Watchers" in the fifth heaven to rebel with him. Some who responded were cast down

with Satanail into the second heaven and imprisoned there (7:3; 18:4). Others went to earth and seduced "the daughters of men," and were then imprisoned beneath the earth (18:4-7; cf. Jude 6). Satanail was also envious of Adam (for God had given him rulership over the earth), and so he enticed Eve into mistrust of God (31:3; cf. The Apocalypse of Moses 15f.). Other names appear for the deceiver, such as Azazel (1 En. 9:6; 10:4-8), Semjaza (1 En. 9:6), Beliar (Testaments of Asher 1:8; Simeon 2:7; Zeb. 9:8; Levi 18:12), and Mastema (Jub. 10:8). This latter verse records the words of Mastema to God when the judgment of the evil spirits is decided:

"Lord Creator, let some of them remain before me, and let them hearken to my voice, and do all that I shall say unto them; for if some of them are not left to me, I shall not be able to execute the power of my will on the sons of men; for these are for corruption and leading astray before my judgment, for great is the wickedness of the sons of men."

It is then recorded that God chose to condemn nine-tenths of the demons, and leave one-tenth to serve Satan in his task of tempting men to sin.

This apocalyptic thought serves as an enlightening background for understanding the nature of the demonic in the New Testament. What is depicted is a select group of fallen angels, some of whom have been imprisoned and await destruction (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4), and others who still roam the heavenlies, subject to the "prince of demons." Also, there has been presented an account of the origin of the demons who appear in the synoptic gospels, and who are free to afflict and torment men until the time of their destruction (Mark 1:24). Apparently, God had seen fit to allow Satan to

continue to function as a tempter and tester of men.

Apocalypticism and the New Testament

What is the relevance of this concept for the New Testament? Most scholars agree that the world view of Jesus and Paul relied heavily upon the cosmology of Jewish apocalyptic. Leon Morris allowed that apocalyptic added a significant strain of influence to New Testament thought, but he did not agree with Ernst Käsemann that the former movement was a "parent" of the New Testament writings.⁵⁵ Bradshaw concluded: "there can be no doubt that the demonic ideas which emerged from the apocalyptic literature were the greatest single influence on the formulation of Jesus' demonology."⁵⁶ Perhaps the most concise and accurate comparison was drawn by Russell:

Their teaching concerning 'the two ages,' the imminent coming of the Messiah, the Messianic kingdom, the woes of the last days, the judgment of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the future lot of the wicked and the righteous--all these would have a familiar ring and would in turn influence Christian thinking deeply.... There are differences between Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, and yet they are essentially one.⁵⁷

They are essentially alike in their full recognition that redemption from evil and bondage was to be accomplished by God Himself. They are different in the fact that Jesus' coming, and His promise to return, were visible and tangible manifestations of God working in history. Satan had been

⁵⁵Leon Morris, Apocalyptic (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 72.

⁵⁶Bradshaw, "Demonology in Hebrew and Jewish Tradition," p. 341.

⁵⁷Russell, The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic, p. 34.

judged, the demons were being repelled, and the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given. The New Testament was thus one giant step closer to the realization of the apocalyptic hope.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A general survey of the writings of canonical and non-canonical writings of early Israelite religion has been made, in an effort to find explicit identification of cosmic powers, i.e., their nature, function, and relation to humanity. The discovery emerged that within the context of a strict monotheistic conception, early Israel thought of the "gods" of her polytheistic neighbors as being subservient to the supreme command of Yahweh. Moreover, the evidence supported the hypothesis that God appointed certain angels to rule the nations and to serve as objects of worship for the masses of men who groped in the darkness of their ignorance. Israel, however, was to be His own special possession, preserved and protected from idolatry.

The biblical understanding revealed that even though there was a "divine council" of cosmic beings surrounding Yahweh, there was no allowance for the independent operation of power apart from His will. Through an investigation of the development of the doctrine of "the Satan," however, it became clear that certain of these angels did indeed assert their wills contrary to that of the Creator. Whereas Satan was earlier understood as performing the function of prosecutor in the heavenly court of justice, he is revealed in the apocalyptic literature as embodying the evil and sinfulness

his office was supposed to uncover in the lives of men.

The rise of apocalypticism was occasioned by the pressing need to give theological interpretation to the historical chaos surrounding Israel during the captivity. Having absorbed much of the influence of Persian dualism, the apocalyptic writers developed a limited dualism, wherein a counter-kingdom of evil under the control of Satan and other cosmic powers threatened to undermine the purposes of God for His people. Some significant information was discovered concerning the fall of the "Watchers," those beings to whom God had once entrusted the rulership of earth. Enticed by Satan, some had descended to earth and had taken human wives, thus corrupting the progeny of mankind. Further, the offspring of these matings were certain "giants," the death of whom produced the evil spirits who were to roam the earth and torment the lives of men and women.

Some of these "Watchers," however, had remained in the heavenly realms with their deceiver, and had thus been bound along with him to remain there until judgment. This situation, consequently, provides an interesting background for the New Testament, where there are both tormenting demons, and a host of principalities and powers who are subject to the master deceiver and who continue to obstruct the redemptive intentions of the living God. Generally, the apocalyptic concept of reality may be said to correspond quite closely with the New Testament in the areas of eschatology, final judgment, the "two age" scheme, the coming of the Messiah, and the resurrection. In short, when Jesus

appeared proclaiming the immanence of the kingdom of God, casting out demons, and announcing judgment upon Satan, He was not bringing to bear upon the people a foreign world view. Rather, many believed in Him and responded to His teaching, recognizing that He alone had the power to deliver them from sin and evil oppression. As the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14), He was the living witness that the divine plan of redemption was indeed in process of fulfillment.

Chapter 2

THE IDENTITY OF PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS IN PAULINE THOUGHT

The Old Testament understanding of the origin of evil does not affirm any specific point at which Satan became the Adversary of God and of men. The apocalyptic writings contributed the probable explanation that Satan (or, Mastema, Beliar, Azazel) was already at work coincident with the creation of Adam and Eve, and that at some point following the creation of man he further enticed others of his kind to turn away from obedience to the Creator. Thus, by the time of the inter-testamental period, there was recognized a kingdom of evil championed by Satan and committed to deceiving, tormenting and tempting humanity. This cosmic scheme called forth an increasing expectation for the coming of a Messiah, a Deliverer who would break the power of these demonic forces.

NEW TESTAMENT DEMONOLOGY

In the New Testament, there is a continuation of the two major Jewish concepts of the coming kingdom of God.¹ The Davidic hope, held by many of the Jews of the day, was based on the expectation of the immanent appearance of a political kingdom. Thus, after Jesus and the disciples fed the five thousand, there was an apparent mood to "take Him by force,

¹James Kallas, The Satanward View (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 16.

to make Him king" (John 6:15). On the other hand, the apocalyptic expectation, the Danielic hope, was based on the premise that the world awaited a cosmic deliverance from the domination of evil, supernatural forces. A cleansing of and victory over sin, evil, and the very power of death was a prerequisite of the coming promised kingdom.

Jesus, as the "Son of Man" and submissive servant of God, was the embodiment of this hope. To Pilate He said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), and He taught the disciples to look forward to the time when He would return "with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). But even with this stress upon the future fulfillment of redemption, Jesus manifested the closeness of the power of the kingdom of God in His ministry of teaching, healing, and the casting out of demons. Mark recorded the words of an unclean spirit confronted by Jesus:

What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?
Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the
Holy One of God (Mark 1:24).

The kingdom of God was surely "at hand," in that the dominance of the evil powers over man and the world was in the process of being destroyed by the appearance of God incarnate.

The hope revealed in Jesus Christ was a fulfillment of both the Davidic and Danielic expectations. God had chosen, however, to cleanse His creation from sin and evil through the propitiatory power of the atonement, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to "convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:9). The kingdom, therefore, was a present reality, and was to be

evidenced by the presence of the Church (as a servant of the risen Christ, and as a channel for the power of the Spirit). The believer was also to look forward to the day when Jesus would return in His kingly power to abolish "all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

Jesus knew Satan to be a personal embodiment of evil and deception. In John 12:31 He proclaimed, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." The word for "ruler" used here is ἀρχὴν, meaning either a high official, one who exercises authority, or one who has at his command supernatural powers.² Jesus was quite obviously referring here to Satan, and the indication is that though Satan had exercised rulership over the world prior to that time, his power had come under judgment. In John 14:30 and 16:11 similar references were made to Satan. He was a deposed prince, possessing only a pseudo-power,³ and yet, as Paul showed, he still continued to hold and use this power (Eph. 2:2; 6:12). As "prince of the power of the air" he controlled the spiritual atmosphere surrounding the earth. The powers who inhabited these realms were subject to his deceptive purposes, and thus sought to determine "the course of this world." The picture painted by both Jesus and Paul was one of a temporary and transitory dualism, wherein evil

²Gerhard Delling, "ἀρχὴν," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), I, pp. 482-84. (This source will hereafter be referred to as TDNT).

³Robert Recker, "Satan: In Power or Dethroned?", Calvin Theological Journal, VI (November, 1971), 146.

had already been revealed and judged, yet for a continuing period remained unpurged from and still operative within the world. But for the individual Christian and for the Church, the promise was given that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20).

The point to be recognized is that Jesus viewed the world as in bondage to the powers of sin, death and evil, all of which were manipulated by the "ruler of this world." The Son of God clearly knew Himself to be the One to deliver the world from this bondage, and John in his first epistle pointed to this messianic identity by saying that "He appeared in order to take away sins," and "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:5,8). This, in brief, is the hope which Jesus embodied. With the validity of His own witness and mission established, consideration may now be given to the Pauline concept of principalities and powers.

THE SOURCES OF PAUL'S THOUGHT

In Paul there are definite parallels to the Jewish apocalyptic writings wherein the angelic powers were viewed as existing on higher or lower levels in the heavens (e.g., 1 En. 20; 53:3; 87, 88; 2 En. 7, 18). The Rabbinic teachings spoke of angels who had authority over the forces of nature. Gordon Rupp identified Paul's source as follows:

Paul seems to have found the expression in late Jewish apocalyptic thought, and to have applied it to a common conception of the Hellenic world, the belief in supernatural cosmic forces, a vast hierarchy of angelic and demonic beings who inhabited the stars, and who,

all-seeing and all-knowing, were the arbiters of human destiny.⁴

A characteristic of the apocalyptic literature is the high degree of speculation concerning the identity and nature of these powers. Such speculation is lacking in Paul. In Alan Richardson's view, "Paul's own interest is evangelical and religious, not at all speculative and philosophical."⁵ Paul pointed out the negative aspects of these powers, and demonstrated that Jesus Christ had conquered them. In the majority of cases where Paul referred to the powers, he did so in relation to the Lordship of Christ.

Gnosticism and Mystery Religion

Some scholars, such as G. H. C. MacGregor, have concluded that Gnostic beliefs and mystery religion served to influence Paul's thought.⁶ J. Y. Lee asked, "Where are we to look for the background of these ideas?" He answered by saying that Paul borrowed freely from both Jewish and pagan sources, from both the apocalyptic cosmology of his ancestors and the astrological conceptions of pagan religion. In the Hellenistic world, the Zoroastrian tradition had survived which regarded the seven major planets as the source of evil

⁴Gordon Rupp, Principalities and Powers (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 9.

⁵Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 212.

⁶G. H. C. MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought," New Testament Studies, I (September, 1954), 19.

for those who refused to submit to their power.⁷ In New Testament times, Jewish and Greek thought were, in the words of D.E.H. Whiteley, "cross-fertilized."⁸ Both cultures had developed and grown up together in the Eastern Mediterranean, and it is to be expected that there would be a merging of common ideas and conceptions.

In spite of this intertwining of thought, Whiteley asserted firmly that St. Paul was not indebted to the mystery cults, nor to Hellenism. His background was deeply rooted in the rabbinic teachings, a fact which Paul himself attested to in Philippians 3:4-6. W.D. Davies, having explained the difficulties involved in determining the influences on Paul, set out to prove the primacy of the Judaic background:

...we shall not seek to deny all Hellenistic influence upon him; we shall merely attempt to prove that Paul belonged to the main stream of first-century Judaism, and that elements in his thought, which are often labelled as Hellenistic, might well be derived from Judaism.⁹

As to the claim that Paul drew heavily from Gnostic teachings, there is still a serious question as to whether Gnosticism in any systematic form existed in the first century. J. Gresham Machen has shown clearly that Gnosticism

⁷J.Y. Lee, "Interpreting the Demonic Powers in Pauline Thought," Novum Testamentum, XII, No. 1 (1970), 55-59.

⁸D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 5.

⁹W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), p. 1.

was not a source of pre-Pauline paganism:

It is certainly very hazardous to use Gnosticism, a post-Pauline phenomenon appealing to Paul as one of its chief sources, as a witness to pre-Pauline paganism.¹⁰

Further, Machen demonstrated that though Paul was surely conversant with the pagan thought of his day he was not dependent upon it for his religion.¹¹ Whiteley found that a Gnostic papyrus, discovered in 1945, contains a proto-Gnostic teaching, but says nothing about the characteristic "aeons" or the "demiurge" associated with Gnosticism. He suggested that Gnosticism borrowed from Christian doctrine, instead of the opposite being the case. Whiteley thus concluded "that it is possible that in Colossians he presented the gospel to men whose mental background was the seedbed from which Gnosticism developed."¹² Ernst Käsemann took up the issue of what context Paul was addressing himself to at the church in Corinth. He identified at Corinth what he termed a "Hellenistic Enthusiasm" which was spreading the notion that baptism into Christ brought with it an immediate participation in His resurrection. Paul, on the contrary, redirected the resurrection of the believer to the time of the parousia, a doctrine in accord with apocalyptic thought.¹³ This action is further proof that Paul took a definite stance against the ascetical influences of pagan religion. The source of his

¹⁰J. Gresham Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1923), p. 249.

¹¹Machen, p. 260f. ¹²Whiteley, p. 7.

¹³Ernst Käsemann, New Testament Questions of Today (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 124-37.

religion was derived primarily from the traditional faith of Judaism, apocalyptic thought, and from the direct revelation received from the risen Christ.

The Dominant World View

Paul, it must be remembered, was writing to Jews and Gentiles who were familiar with the predominant world view of the Graeco-Roman civilizations, a view which had received contributions from many sources including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the mystery cults. Later, it will become evident that Paul was in the position of communicating Christian doctrine to people saturated with this world view, and he had to use terms which would be understandable to his readers. Such terms may be synonymous with pagan terms for astrological deities and forces. This is not to conclude that Paul borrowed from these sources. It is to conclude that he employed terminology which would communicate to believers in Christ the essential characteristics of sound doctrine. Further, such doctrine need not be wholly discontinuous with the common conceptions of the day. In fact, much of the cosmology of the ancient world may have approached an accuracy which awaited the proof, clarification, and fulfillment of divine revelation. This kind of qualification led Whiteley to conclude that "for St. Paul astrological forces are so clearly merged with principalities and powers that it is not possible for us to disentangle them."¹⁴ This is a most discerning word, and will prove helpful to an understanding of

¹⁴Whiteley, p. 23.

Paul's thought. The words of George
be heeded in this regard:

It is apparent that the concept reaches into every department of that it cannot be dismissed as a superstition....He is describing with which he and his fellow Christians have personal experience.¹⁵

There is strong evidence, especially in Ephesians 6:12, that Paul knew firsthand that Paul were indeed the "man in Christ" who "went up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2), that his knowledge of the supernatural realms was of experiential quality. Any attempts to "rationalize" that which for the Apostle Paul was a direct communication, are highly inadvisable. The theologians who have chosen this path, and who have robbed the gospel of much of its essential meaning. Disappointing, therefore, is the statement by Whiteley:

How are the realities referred to in the Bible by means of such conceptions as principalities and powers to be presented in twentieth century forms? I personally believe that, whatever the conceptions of the Synoptics, St. Paul, was using mythological language. There are no principalities and powers in this language to express something that is both true and important.¹⁶

Other theologians have attempted to present Paul's concept in terms understandable to the modern

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¹⁵George Bradford Caird, Principles and Powers
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p.

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¹⁶Whiteley, p. 20.

purpose of this chapter is to show that Paul was indeed speaking of "spiritual realities," and that to set aside these realities is to limit the scope, and the focus, of evangelical truth.

CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE

The range of terminology employed by St. Paul in reference to the cosmic powers includes various words and titles, all of which may be said to be synonymous terms. Peter also wrote in one instance of the powers who have been subjected to Christ (1 Pet. 3:22). This concept, therefore, is not exclusively limited to Pauline thought. Paul himself left no clue or means whereby one might discern any significant differences between the words he used. It must therefore be concluded that he described the same manifestation of power by way of a variety of descriptive terms. The primary usages are "principalities" (ἀρχαὶ), "authorities" (ἐξουσίαι), "powers" (δυνάμεις), "dominions" (κυριότητες), "rulers" (ἀρχαὶ), "thrones" (θρόνοι), and "angels" (ἄγγελοι). For the sake of clarity, these words will be examined by giving specific regard to the contexts wherein they are found. The purpose in doing so is threefold: 1) to see what the text is saying in each case, 2) to arrive at a more precise definition of these cosmic powers, and 3) to determine the nature, function, and ultimate destiny of the powers.

Colossians 1:16

In Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or

dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

These powers were a product of the creative activity of God in Christ, and were originally brought into being to fulfill a specific purpose and to serve in a special capacity. As contrasted with the demons of the Gospels, whose activity it was to oppress and possess individual human beings, these powers are "cosmic spirit forces which possess and control not only individual human lives but the very course of the universe."¹⁷ In the observation of Heinrich Schlier, "these powers were originally creatures of God, and part of the reality which God called into being."¹⁸ H. Berkhof led his readers closer to a definition of their original purpose:

The powers serve as the original substratum of the world, as the underpinnings of creation. By no means does Paul think of the powers as evil in themselves. They are the linkage between God's love and visible human experience. They are to hold life together, preserving it within God's love, serving as aids to bind men fast in His fellowship; intermediaries, not as barriers but as bonds between God and man.¹⁹

This indeed may have been the purpose for which the powers were called into being, but it will become progressively apparent that this purpose became perverted, and that some of these powers served to undermine rather than support the proper relationship between God and the human race.

¹⁷MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought," p. 19.

¹⁸Heinrich Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961), p. 37.

¹⁹H. Berkhof, Christ and the Powers (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962), p. 22.

ἄρχή. Two of these Pauline terms for the powers must be singled out. The first of these, in its singular form, is ἄρχή (cf. Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21, 6:12; 1 Cor. 15:24), which most frequently means "beginning." In a context such as Colossians 1, however, where governmental power is indicated, ἄρχή is more accurately translated "power," "ruler," or, as in the extra-Pauline case of Jude 6, "domain" or "estate."²⁰ Delling traced the word in the Septuagint to Daniel 7:27 where it is stated that "all the dominions will serve and obey Him" (i.e., the "Son of Man"). Thus, it is seen that the ἄρχαι have at some point been entrusted with certain governmental powers which, through the effect of sin and the fall of the human race, have been used for purposes contrary to the will and redemptive purpose of God.

ἔξουσία. Perhaps the most definitive word found in Colossians 1:16 is ἔξουσία (cf. Eph. 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:24), the use of which will be examined in Chapter 4. Werner Foerster noted that in original Greek usage, the word meant "the ability to perform an action, the right to do something or the right over something."²¹ In the Septuagint, ἔξουσία took on the connotation of the power of a king, or of God. In the New Testament the word was employed in a new way to delineate a certain class of spiritual powers, as well as denoting political power and rule (Luke 19:17; Matt. 13:34; Acts 9:14;

²⁰Delling, "ἄρχή," TDNT, I, p. 482.

²¹Werner Foerster, "ἔξουσία," TDNT, II, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 562f.

Luke 20:20; Rom. 13:1). Foerster qualified his definitions by observing that all authority is grounded in the creative and providential power of God. As such, political power is a reflection of the sovereign lordship of God in a fallen world where nothing takes place apart from His authority. All of creation stands under the authoritative will of God. Because He has chosen to create creatures who are free to choose and to respond to His will, these creatures are free to function under His permissive will. Consequently, the power which Satan possesses is not a power originating in and of himself (e.g., the Zoroastrian cosmic duality of good and evil), but is a power allowed him by God. This peculiar and rather paradoxical situation evoked from Foerster an observation:

The final mystery is not the power of evil itself. It is the fact that the power of evil, which is radically hostile to God, may be exercised as such and yet be encompassed by the divine overruling.²²

Foerster has referred here to such perplexing passages as Luke 4:6, where Satan tempted Jesus, saying, "I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish."

In narrowing down an identification of the ἐξουσία, Foerster found that 2 Enoch 20 located them in the seventh heaven, along with the archangels, powers, principalities, dominions, cherubim, and seraphim. Significantly, Testament of Solomon 20:14 indicated a separation existing between the realm of the demons and the higher regions wherein were found the principalities, authorities, and powers. Foerster thus

²²Foerster, p. 567.

concluded that the demons were limited in their sphere of activity to the air (ἀήρ, Eph. 2:2), as distinguished from the cosmic powers: "it is hardly possible to regard the ἀρχαί and ἐξουσίαι as groups of angels in some contexts and groups of demons in others."²³ The summary by the scholar is highly significant and insightful:

This leads to a conception of several cosmic powers with whose government human life is connected in many ways, and which mediate between God and man. As powers of the created world, they share its twofold character. On the one side they represent the carnal side of fallen creation with the powers which seduce and enslave man. On the other, they belong to the creation which is created ἐκ Χριστοῦ and εἰς Χριστόν (Col. 1:15f.). This twofold aspect is the distinctive feature of the relevant New Testament statements. The decisive point for Paul is that in no regard, whether as fate, or nature, or intermediate beings, or servants of God, can these powers separate the Christian from Christ or lead him to Him.²⁴

The question must be introduced at this juncture as to whether the powers are personalistic beings or abstract forces of some sort. Foerster has not decided one way or the other. Whiteley was content to say that they point to something "both true and important," but that is as far as he dared to commit himself. Berkhof was of the opinion that these powers refer to various structures which God ordained for the maintenance of order in creation, i.e., human traditions, moral laws, ethical rules, the ordering of the state, nationalism, etc.²⁵ As such the powers serve a positive function in the world alienated from God, in that they unify men and establish social order, but in doing so they may

²³Foerster, p. 573. ²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, p. 23.

separate men from the living God. Before answering the above question--personal beings or cosmic forces--it will be helpful to consider the evidences of Romans 8:38 and Ephesians 6.

Romans 8:38, 39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If these powers are "good angelic beings," created to serve a positive function, then what is one to do with those passages, such as the above, which depict these powers as being potential threats to the purposes of God? If, on the other hand, these powers are classed among the fallen angels, how are they understood in their positive function? Increasingly it shall become apparent that Foerster's insight into the twofold nature of the powers will prove most helpful in the determination of that demonic distortion which disaligns the very nature and purpose of the cosmic powers. This distortion is evident in the Romans passage. Here Paul gave his readers a list of those forces which condition earthly life, making the point that none of those things have the power to separate those "in Christ" from the love of God. "Principalities" and "powers" are included here with both personal and non-personal forces, and thus nothing conclusive as to their true identity can be inferred from these verses. What can be learned is that these powers may potentially serve to hinder the relationship between God and man. How this is so has been explained by Richardson:

In St. Paul's thought, these world-rulers had fallen from grace and had rebelled against God and become corrupted; the 'Fall' was a cosmic event, and was not simply the Fall of man.²⁶

The powers, apparently in the same fashion as Satan (whether at the same time of his rebellion and fall cannot be known), had sought to usurp the sovereign authority of God and establish themselves as independent "rulers" over the affairs of this world. Consequently, under the permissive will of God, they still functioned to maintain order in the course of human life, but by standing behind such institutions as the political state (Dan. 10:13, 20) and religious structures (Gal. 4 and Col. 2, cf. Chapter 3), they served to hold men in bondage to their power, and sought to be worshipped as "gods."

Significantly, the words used for "height" (ἕψωμα) and "depth" (βάθος) in these verses refer to the highest and lowest points reached by a heavenly body in its orbit. Whether Paul was aware that he was using astrological terms cannot be known for certain, but when the question of the στοιχεῖα is considered in Galatians 4 and Colossians 2 it becomes quite probable that Paul directed a polemic towards the bondage not only of the law of Moses, but also of the enslavement to the worship of astral deities. For the present purpose, it is enough to say that Paul's intent was to demonstrate that literally nothing in the universe was greater in power than the love of God in Jesus Christ.

²⁶Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, p. 213.

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

In this passage of Scripture, the powers seem suddenly to take on more definite characteristics of personality. Paul had just spoken of the "schemes of the devil" in verse 11, and this thought is expanded in verse 12 with an elaboration of how the powers are involved in these schemes. The implication may thus be drawn that these angelic beings possess a high intelligence and are capable of scheming against the purposes of the servants of God. In previous passages, it is not difficult to admit the possibility that these cosmic powers might in fact be mere structures of existence, or impersonal forces. But in light of this verse, it must be recognized that Paul has described a literal warfare with an enemy committed to the strategic destruction of the work of God.

A new word appears here which carries with it great significance. Κοσμοκράτορας ("world forces") is the very same word used in the Hellenistic mystical writings describing the seven supreme astral deities who were thought to rule over human existence. Likewise, the Orphic hymns, the Gnostic writings, and the Rabbinic literature used this word.²⁷ Lee noted that Κοσμοκράτορας was applied also to the ancient saviour gods, e.g., Serapis, Isis, Mithras, Mercury, and Zeus. The sphere of these deities was thought to be in the

²⁷MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought," p. 21.

realm of the air.²⁸ W.E. Vine gave an excellent definition of these "world rulers." They are, in his words:

...spirit powers, who, under the permissive will of God and in consequence of human sin, exercise Satanic and therefore antagonistic authority over the world in its present condition of spiritual darkness and alienation from God.²⁹

"Spiritual realities." The ἀρχάς and the ἐξουσίας are grouped in a synonomous manner with these κοσμοκράτορας, all of which are identified as intelligent, willful creatures. Is it not therefore logical to assume that these "principalities" and "powers" were, in Paul's mind, "spiritual realities" which had turned from being servants of God to be His enemies? Such an assumption may be seen to approximate most closely the truth of what the Apostle was communicating.

Delling offered support for this interpretation:

The powers of the air, i.e., of the lowest heavenly sphere, have, somewhat schematically, separated God and man until the coming of Christ. They believed that with the rejection of the human race by God (Rom. 1:24) they would become unconditional κοσμοκράτορας, until God's original plan of salvation was disclosed in and with the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 3:10).³⁰

It is under the influence and domination of Satan, the "prince of the power of the air," that the powers seek to maintain their own dominion over man and the world. Their chief aim is to divert the attention of man away from God,

²⁸Lee, "Interpreting the Demonic Powers in Pauline Thought," p. 59.

²⁹W.E. Vine. An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), p. 307.

³⁰Delling, "ἀρχαί," TDNT, p. 483.

and unto themselves. Their means of achieving this aim is accomplished by presenting to man a deceptive and false interpretation of reality, whereby the world appears to be ruled by the power of death. Further, the powers work to lead men into temptation and sin, which creates enmity with God. And lastly, they are most likely responsible for the development of religious systems which picture the world as being in bondage to the "fates" or the astral gods.³¹ In short, it becomes apparent that the prime intention of the powers is to control autonomously the religious, political, and social activities of mankind. In violating the awesome responsibility with which they were originally entrusted, they set themselves up as independent sources of power and authority. This observation as to the nature of the cosmic powers lays a basic foundation upon which the following chapters of this study will build.

The powers: personal or impersonal? The question must be raised again, are these powers personal beings or impersonal forces? Whiteley asked the same question: "in theological language we may ask whether they were hypostatized or whether they were mere personifications."³² Whiteley, in his attempt to resolve this dilemma, apparently has fallen into contradiction. He readily admitted to the reality and personal character of Satan and the demons, but he also stated that

³¹Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament, pp. 32-37.

³²Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul, p. 28.

"there are no principalities and powers" in the same personal sense as in the case of evil spirits.³³ His question, "are they 'real' like Satan, though not personal, or are they 'figurative' like sin in Romans v. 13?"³⁴ is right where he left the matter--unresolved! Other scholars have not given much additional help. Marcus Barth concluded that the powers in Pauline thought were synonymous with "the world of axioms and principles of politics and religion, of economics and society, of morality and biology, of history and culture."³⁵ This sounds reasonable, but does such an interpretation do justice to what Paul was communicating? Lee reviewed all of the various possibilities and arrived at this resolution:

Whether the powers may be interpreted in our times as personal or social maladjustment, political or economic determinism, religious or cultural axiom, existential or empirical disharmony, and whatever names may be attributed to them--as long as they separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, they are cosmic powers.³⁶

This resolution isolates the nature and apparent aim of the powers, but it also evades the central question. Paul may indeed have had in mind structures of earthly existence, i.e., political, religious, and social institutions which, when influenced by sin, serve to distort human life by becoming ultimate objects of worship and loyalty in and of themselves. To depend upon and trust in the security of earthly

³³Whiteley, p. 20. ³⁴Whiteley, p. 29.

³⁵Marcus Barth, The Broken Wall (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1959), p. 90.

³⁶Lee, p. 69.

government (as an ultimate end in itself), or to practice in a spirit of self-righteousness a religio-ethical code is, in the eyes of God, to elevate the creature above the Creator, and to fall into the sin of idolatry.

Even though there is a close connection between the powers and the above structures, must the definition stop there? Was not Paul recognizing that behind these structures stood intelligent, spiritual personal beings who wielded this paradoxical power which has been described? Surely the terms "power," "authority," and "dominion" connote the intellectual and volitional aspects of personality. On the one hand, these powers served to preserve within a world alienated from the authority of God. But, considering that God had built the element of freedom into His creation, it follows that these powers, at some indeterminable point, became subject to the influence of sin, and from that point on became more subject to the "prince of the power of the air" than to God. Consequently, the final mystery of life is not the origin of evil itself, but the fact that evil is allowed to rule over, in, and through this world, yet still "encompassed by the divine overruling." And it is precisely because sin can only result from the choice of a free moral agent that these powers of whom Paul spoke are indeed personal in nature, and are therefore subject to either reconciliation or condemnation before the judgment seat of God.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the perspective of Old Testament revelation and

the apocalyptic writings, the intention has been in this chapter to identify the nature and function of "principalities," "powers," "rulers" and "authorities" in the worldview of the Apostle Paul. His conception of the cosmos was influenced primarily by Judaic tradition and apocalyptic thought, but corresponded as well to the common conception of the ancient world. These powers were a special order of created beings (to be distinguished from the "demons" of the Synoptics) who at one time were wholly obedient to their Creator, and who exercised a legitimate rule over the lives of men. These beings, similar to human beings, had been created with the capacity of free will. Both man, and some of the powers, rebelled, and set in motion an inevitable reaping of judgment upon their sin. Satan, who was first to rebel, has sought throughout human history to separate men from the knowledge of God through deception, temptation and lies. Only the power of the presence of God incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ could break the bondage by which Satan and his powers held humanity. Only the Son of God could recapture the wills of men and bring judgment upon the evil one.

Until such judgment is fully accomplished, however, God is allowing men and kingdoms to reign on earth. He is allowing these principalities and powers to reign in the heavenly places in spite of their disobedience. Thus, mankind lives in the tension of a temporary, transitional dualism, where the victory has been won, but where also the redeemed of God continue to "wrestle" with the powers of evil. These powers have worked, and continue to work through

human government, religion and culture to capture the minds of men, and to bring them into bondage to a false life-system wherein the powers themselves receive (either directly or indirectly) worship as ruling deities. There is thus a concerted, conspiratorial effort on the part of the fallen powers to control human life. Consideration must now be given to the form this effort has taken in the sphere of false systems of religion.

Chapter 3

THE POWERS AND THE "ELEMENTAL SPIRITS OF THE WORLD"

The treatment of Ephesians 6:12 in the preceding chapter pointed to a possible connection between the "rulers," "powers," and "authorities," and the astrological deities of pagan religious systems. This connection must be explored further. In addition, there is in the Pauline writings significant evidence of a relationship between the cosmic powers and the Mosaic law. Both of the above connections occur in the context of Paul's use of the term στοιχεῖα (Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20), the precise meaning of which is a much debated issue. In the following pages the texts of Galatians and Colossians will be examined, in an effort to come to a reasonable conclusion as to the proper relationship between the cosmic powers, the στοιχεῖα, and the lives of human beings both in and outside of Christian faith. First, it is necessary to deal briefly with the situational contexts of the churches in Galatia and Colossae.

GALATIA AND COLOSSAE: THE RETURN TO THE στοιχεῖα

Widely known is the fact that Paul's purpose in writing to the Galatian church was to chastise them for giving heed to "a different gospel" (1:6), and to point out the errors of those who were in their midst attempting "to

distort the gospel of Christ" (1:7). He asserted that the gospel which he had given them came "through a revelation of Jesus Christ." He then proceeded to explicate the right relationship between the law and faith in Christ. Galatians 3:19 reveals the interesting statement that the law was instituted in the life of man because of his transgressions, and that it was "ordained through angels." Further, Paul stated in verse 23 of Chapter 3 that until the coming of faith, man was kept "in custody under the law," and therefore "the law became our tutor to lead us to Christ" (3:24). With the appearance of salvation by faith, the need for subservience to a tutor ceased, for the one who belonged to Jesus Christ through faith would be an heir "according to promise."

In Galatians 4:1f. Paul applied the idea of a son under a tutor to the condition of humanity in general before the revelation of Jesus Christ. He claimed that just as the son is a slave to the tutor, "so also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου" (4:3). In the following four verses Paul explained how Jesus Christ had delivered believers from the bondage to the law, making them sons of God and no longer slaves. Then in verse 8 he referred back to the time before the coming of faith:

However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless στοιχεῖα, to that which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

The Galatians, by turning their ears to listen to "another gospel," had returned to a state or condition of pre-Christian religion, in which they once again engaged in the observ-

ance of "days and months and seasons and years" (4:10). The question to be answered in this passage is, what are the στοιχεῖα to which the Galatian believers were returning? Since Paul was confronting a similar problem in Colossae, the situation there must be examined before an attempt is made to identify the στοιχεῖα.

Undoubtedly the Apostle was writing the Colossian church in regards to a heretical teaching that was threatening their faith, but it is not at all certain as to what heresy this actually was. The key verses are Colossians 2:8, 20, where the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου are mentioned as being a threat to the salvation they had already received in Christ. The Colossians seemingly had weakened in their trust in the all-sufficiency of their redemption in Christ, and were turning to human efforts at securing salvation. Colossians 1:15-20 is a discourse aimed at establishing the pre-existence and pre-eminence of Christ, concluding that the fulness of deity dwells within Him. Also, there is an emphasis in the letter on the forgiveness freely given by God in Christ to those who have received Him (1:14, 20; 2:13; 3:13). Such assurance of the full deity of Christ, and the full efficacy of His atoning death were intended to meet these heretical teachings. The Colossians were falling prey to temptations to return to the στοιχεῖα, by submitting themselves to human "decrees" (2:14, 20). After an adequate definition is given to the στοιχεῖα, a more detailed analysis of the Colossian problem will be possible. It suffices at present to know only the general situation to which Paul addressed himself.

THE ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ

James Kallas, in analyzing Paul's attitude toward the law, made the following observation:

It is his conviction that the law, which was good and sent of God, had capitulated and was under the control of God-opposing forces, numbered with the enemy, hence, not only unnecessary to observe, but downright dangerous to adopt, for it was to 'turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits' (Gal. 4:9) who stood behind the law.¹

As in the case of the principalities and powers, there is no lack of divergent viewpoints as to the identification of the ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ. Delling was correct in noting that "among the ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ in Galatians 4 is on the one side the Torah,...and on the other side the world of false gods whom the recipients once served."² Undoubtedly, the ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ refer to elements common to the religious practices of both the Jew and the Gentile. In its simplest meaning, the word means "elements," in the sense of indicating "a row, a line, a rank, a member of a series, or of an organism."³ To this basic idea is added two possible applications, one of which relates ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ to the letters in a word, or to a syllable, and the other connoting the idea of "element," the constituent part of an organism.⁴ From this application the meaning

¹James Kallas, The Satanward View (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 40.

²Gerhard Delling, "ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΩΝ," TDNT, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), VII, p. 684.

³G. Adolf Deissmann, "Elements," Encyclopedia Biblica, ed. T.K. Cheyne and J.S. Black (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1901), II, column 1259.

⁴Ibid.

"rudiments" or "elementary principles" may be derived. The development of the term was traced by Deissmann. Its meaning moves in the following progression: "member of a series, element, elemental deity, deity (demon, spirit), tutelary spirit." Most of the modern translators have taken the word to mean "rudiments" or "elements," as applying to the crude beginnings of human religion. The New American Standard Bible translated it "elementary things" or "rudimentary teachings."⁵ J.B. Phillips chose "basic moral principles,"⁶ and though The New English Bible used "elemental spirits," there appears the alternate reading, "elementary ideas belonging to this world."⁷ Deissmann, however, believed the στοιχεῖα to be personal spirits:

Paul...is speaking of cosmic spiritual beings, and by them he understands, in verse 3 the angels by whom, according to 3:19, the law was 'ordained,' and in verse 9 the heathen deities whom the Galatians had formerly served. Jewish bondage to the law, as being bondage to angels, and Gentile service of strange gods as being bondage to demons, are alike slavery to the powers of the world.⁸

For Deissmann, then, the στοιχεῖα were personal "spiritual beings" who held both Jew and Gentile in bondage to their respective religious systems. They were the "elemental

⁵New American Standard Bible (Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, Inc., 1971), p. 291.

⁶J.B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 405.

⁷The New English Bible (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 242.

⁸Deissmann, col. 1261.

spirits" of the world. Similarly, in Colossians 2:8, 20, Deissmann identified the στοιχεῖα with the "principalities and powers" mentioned in verse 15. He believed that Paul was speaking of a synonomous reality in both instances. This, for him, cleared up the disputed reference in verse 18 to "the worship of angels," for Deissmann explained that in returning to the στοιχεῖα, the Colossians were likewise returning to a direct worship of those angelic beings who stood, as enforcers, behind the law.

Trevor Ling was in essential agreement with Deissmann. He qualified his discussion by noting that in στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου the κόσμου does not refer to the "universe," but to the entire sphere of human activity, in short, "humanity."⁹ Ling observed that the Galatians had once lived in bondage to the elements of pagan religion, and that now they were being tempted to return to the στοιχεῖα as represented by the law of Moses. In his specific identification of the στοιχεῖα, Ling followed Deissmann in equating them with spiritual beings who may be synonomous with the "principalities and powers," for they are both intimately connected with human bondage to pre-Christian religion. He noted that "in his death Christ is said to have 'put off from himself' the principalities and powers (Col. 2:15). But he is said also to have 'died out from under' the elemental spirits of the

⁹Trevor Ling, The Significance of Satan (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1961), pp. 70-71.

world (2:20)."¹⁰ Ling thus concurred with Deissmann:

...The terms στοιχεῖα and 'principalities and powers' stand for essentially the same reality. This is the conclusion reached also by G. B. Caird: "The demonic forces of legalism, then, both Jewish and Gentile, can be called 'Principalities and Powers' or 'elemental spirits of the world.'"¹¹

Ling's conclusion, therefore, is that the στοιχεῖα "are spirit forces who govern the life of human society before and outside of Christ; in particular, they mediate the pre-Christian forms of religion."¹² These conclusions have drawn support from Charles Masson:

In a context where the elements were compared with the 'tutors' and with the 'curators' whom men were under up until the coming of Christ (4. 1-3), it is evident that the elements were personal powers, angelic, upon whom depended the religious life of humanity before Jesus Christ and upon whom it still depends for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ.¹³

Clearly, then, the function of the στοιχεῖα is not disputed. The question still stands, however, as to whether Deissmann, Ling and Masson are correct in their assumptions that the στοιχεῖα and the principalities and powers are both angelic, personal beings.

στοιχεῖα: Impersonal Elements?

Delling offered the hypothesis that the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου are in fact not personal beings in and of themselves, but are to be taken more as the elements of human religious observances before the appearance of the gospel of Christ:

¹⁰Ling, p. 71. ¹¹Ibid. ¹²Ibid.

¹³Charles Masson, L'Épître de St. Paul Aux Colossiens, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament (Neuchâtel: Delâchaux and Niestlé, 1953), p. 122f. (this writer's translation).

"to speak of spiritual forces is a forced solution which conflicts with the linguistic findings and is hardly in accord with the context."¹⁴ Delling traced the meaning of the word through classical Greek usage, and concluded that if στοιχεῖα is to be taken in its meaning outside of the New Testament, it is to be rendered, "elements." But, in the contexts of both Galatians and Colossians, Delling readily agreed that the term takes on a new meaning. στοιχεῖα does not refer to the original physical materials from which the universe was constructed. Neither does it refer directly to the stars. What it does refer to may be adequately explained in the words of Delling himself:

στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου denotes that whereon the existence of this world rests, that which constitutes man's being. Paul uses it in a transferred sense for that whereon man's existence rested before Christ even and precisely in pre-Christian religion, that which is weak and impotent, that which enslaves man instead of freeing him.¹⁵

Here again the very heart of Paul's polemic against the στοιχεῖα emerges. Seen in conjunction with Romans 8:38, 39, it is his concern that nothing in heaven or on earth separate the believer from a relationship with God. Through incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection, Christ, the Word of God made flesh, had "put off from Himself" the powers and principalities, and He had "died out from under" the bondage to elemental religion as enforced by the cosmic powers in their dominion over the life of humanity.

¹⁴Delling, "στοιχεῖον," TDNT, VII, p. 685. ¹⁵Ibid.

F.F. Bruce took the position that the στοιχεῖα in Galatians 4, understood in reference to the Gentiles, may have referred to the astral deities who were worshipped in the astrology cults. The real point which Paul was making, thought Bruce, was that idolatry in any form led to a bondage to "weak and beggarly elements:" "for those who did not live in the good of Christian freedom the στοιχεῖα were 'principalities and powers,' keeping the souls of men in bondage."¹⁶

A Probable Solution

The argument in favor of the personalization of the στοιχεῖα has received strong support from William Bradshaw's work on Old Testament and apocalyptic demonology, where he made reference to the writer of 1 Enoch:

When the original writer of this narrative looked for names to give the sinful angels he chose names associated with the natural elements. In all likelihood these names were not pure invention, but probably they were names adopted from some local Palestinian demonic concepts. It is entirely possible that these names were in Paul's mind as he referred to the στοιχεῖα (the elemental spirits) in Galatians 4:3, 9, and Colossians 2:8, 20, and thus that he was referring to the fallen angels, that is, specific evil spirits.¹⁷

The στοιχεῖα and the powers, therefore, may be descriptive in some sense of the very same spiritual reality. Delling's position is appealing, and most logical, but when the worldview to which the Apostle was communicating is considered,

¹⁶F.F. Bruce, "Galatian Problems: 'The Other Gospel,'" Bulletin of John Rylands Library, LIII (1971), 269.

¹⁷William Bradshaw, "Demonology in Hebrew and Jewish Tradition" (unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 1963), p. 331.

the identification of the στοιχεῖα with elemental spirits is the more reasonable solution. Joseph N. Sanders added his opinion to the others already stated: "These στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου are the demonic powers which control the stars, and through them the destinies of men. These astral demons haunted the minds of men in the first century A. D."¹⁸ It cannot be determined definitively whether or not the στοιχεῖα are synonymous with the principalities and powers. What can be asserted is that they both serve to bring men into bondage to false religion, by enforcing religious laws and regulations. The fallen powers, by rebelliously usurping an independent authority apart from God, sought to subject humanity to themselves, becoming in their own estimation "gods" to be worshipped and obeyed. Just as the law had become an idolatrous means of salvation for the Jew, so the angels through whom the law was ordained (Gal. 3:19) sought to become idols of those who were under the law. Whether in bondage to the law, or to the fatalistic worship of astral deities, men before Christ were "slaves to those which by nature are no gods" (Gal. 4:8).

The lesson to be learned here is that self-sufficient and prideful worship of any power less than God Himself leads to bondage and condemnation. The remedy for rebellion was provided in Christ: to trust in Him alone as the Messiah of God, to receive forgiveness of sins, to be justified and

¹⁸Joseph N. Sanders, "Galatians," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 976.

redeemed, was to enter into true human freedom. The aim of the fallen powers was to prevent this reconciliation from taking place, for they themselves had lost all hope of obtaining it in the sight of the Ruler of Creation.

THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

A concern which must further be dealt with is the question of what specific form of false teaching Paul was speaking about in Colossians. The question centers around the meaning and interpretation of the noun ΔΟΓΜΑΤΙΝ in Colossians 2:14, and the verb ΔΟΓΜΑΤΙΖΕΣΘΕ in verse 20. What kinds of "decrees" or "ordinances" were the Colossians submitting themselves to? Were these regulations of a pagan philosophy, or were these the decrees imposed by the law? Thayer defined Δόγμα as "an opinion, a judgment, doctrine, decree, ordinance."¹⁹ In the specific context of Colossians 2:14, he identified τοῖς Δογμασίν with "the rules and commandments of the Law of Moses." To support this, he drew a parallel reference to Ephesians 2:15, where Paul spoke of the "Law of commandments contained in ordinances (Δογμασίν)." The verb form, likewise, carries the meaning "to decree, command, enjoin, lay down an ordinance."²⁰ Thus, if Colossians 2:14, 20 refers to the same "ordinances" as Paul mentioned in Ephesians 2:15, it is clear that the law of Moses is indicated. But with this interpretation there remains the problem

¹⁹Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1889), p. 153.

²⁰Ibid., p. 154.

that pagan philosophy of some sort was threatening to seduce the Colossians, perhaps as well as the temptation to retreat into the observance of the law.

Pagan Philosophy

Eduard Schweizer presented the hypothesis that the "heresy" at Colossae was not Jewish legalism, but pagan philosophy which was influenced by Judaic precepts, a philosophy according to the στοιχεῖα. The "elements." in his mind, were the physical elements of the world, which, among the Persians, were connected with personal "gods" who indwelt and controlled the elements. Schweizer found a Greek text of the first century which referred to the followers of Pythagoras. In this text, nearly all of the characteristics of the Colossian heresy appear, and are strikingly similar to the philosophy of Pythagoras contained therein:

The Greek god Hermes, messenger of the highest gods, carries the soul through all the elements to the highest one. If it is pure enough, it remains in this highest element, that is, in heaven; if not, it is returned to the lower elements, to the air, to the water, or even to the earth again, according to the level of purity it has reached....In order to reach the purity necessary for the exaltation to heaven, one should abstain from all sorts of food and sexual intercourse.²¹

This is an interesting passage in light of the Colossian controversy. Schweizer's understanding was that the Christians there no doubt believed in Jesus Christ as Lord, but they were confused as to how to reach Him, and how to become pure or righteous enough to obtain salvation. The assumption was,

²¹Eduard Schweizer, "Christ in the Letter to the Colossians," Review and Expositor, LXX (Fall, 1973), 453.

according to Schweizer, that if the soul was not pure enough, it would not be able to ascend to heaven. Therefore, the "decrees" or "ordinances" were rights of purification and abstention. The "angels" were the intermediary beings who stood between Christ and the world, and could reasonably be identified with the STOLXELIA. Though Gnosticism did not formally emerge until the second century, these ideas may have been characteristic of its basic teaching concerning the "aeons," the "demiurge," etc. Albert van den Heuvel contributed to Schweizer's hypothesis. Concerning these angels:

Their function was not only to rule the world; they could also help man to liberate his divine spark from the earthly prison. If man was able to pacify and satisfy the in-between realm of angels, demons and the like, he might be able to return to his creator, and his soul would be where God is. Religion in Colossae was...interested only in the in-between realm. Many ways were indicated whereby man could satisfy the angels. Asceticism and mysticism were the most popular.²²

The control by the angelic powers of the religious life of humanity is again apparent, whereby they seek to impose upon men a system of works-righteousness and purification rights. It may now be understood why Paul devoted the first part of his letter to developing proof that Christ was indeed the Creator of, and Lord over, these powers. His stress upon the elements of "redemption," "forgiveness," and "reconciliation" are also understood. He needed to reassure the Colossians that Jesus Christ had already obtained full salvation for them. His exhortation thus takes on new meaning: "as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord,

²²Albert van den Heuvel, These Rebellious Powers (New York: Friendship Press, 1965), p. 45.

so walk in Him" (Col. 2:6). In short, the Apostle was calling them to awaken to an appropriation of the freedom that was theirs in Christ. No longer did the στολχεια and the principalities and powers have dominion over them. This, it appears, was Paul's message.

The στολχεια and the Law

If the Colossians were being taken "captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men" (Col. 2:8), then how does this figure in with the references to the law of Moses in verses 14 and 20? The church at Colossae must have been the victim of a deceptive attack by the cosmic powers who did not want to lose their control over humanity. Jesus Christ had soundly defeated them (2:15), and yet they were still making an effort to bring men into bondage to their religious rules. Following from the discussion of the στολχεια, it appears that both pagan philosophy and the law of Moses were used as enticements by the powers to draw attention away from the sufficiency of Christ's atonement and to the illusory need to satisfy the demands of religious regulations, i.e., the law, the worship of angels, purification rites, etc. Whatever form it might take, there was a denial of the work of Christ which brought to men a freedom from the accusation and condemnation of the law, and from the fatalistic powers of the astral deities.

Paul's concern with the condemnatory force of the law drew the attention of Herold Weiss. Relying upon the work of the Catholic theologian Bandstra, he developed an interesting

commentary on the "certificate of debt (χειρόγραφον) consisting of decrees" in Colossians 2:14:

Bandstra identifies the cheirographon with mankind's body of flesh which Christ took on himself to the cross. He reaffirms that the cheirographon must refer to a written document of some kind, but that it cannot refer to either a certificate of indebtedness signed by mankind or to the Mosaic Law. Rather it is to be understood in terms of the usage of the word in the Apocalypse of Elijah. In this apocalypse the accusing angel holds in his hand a book in which are recorded the sins which the seer had asked be forgiven. This book is called a cheirographon....This picture is that of a denizen, armed with a cheirographon listing the sins of men, acting as the accuser in the heavenly court. Understood in this way, the argument in Colossians would be that Christ took away from the accusing angel the instrument by means of which he carried out his work. Without the cheirographon the accuser no longer has power over the lives of men. Paul is using metaphorically the imagery of the Apocalypse of Elijah. The book listing the sins of men is, Bandstra argues, mankind's flesh which Christ took on himself to the cross.²³

Bandstra's work leads his readers to entertain seriously the possibility that Paul was referring to this concept of the χειρόγραφον. The angelic powers would indeed derive their grounds for accusation of and control over man from the indebtedness resulting from the sinfulness of his fleshly nature. This indebtedness Christ "nailed to the cross" and thereby removed all condemnation from the one who was baptized into His death (2:12):

By nailing the cheirographon to the cross Christ took away that against which the law stands, that is, the sins condemned by the law. The principalities and powers of 2:15 are servants of Satan in the role of accusers.... Once the flesh of sin, that is the cheirographon, is put off, the accusers are left without anything against which to use the law.²⁴

²³Herold Weiss, "The Law in the Epistle to the Colossians," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XXXIV (July, 1972), 301.

²⁴Weiss, pp. 302-303.

Whereas Bandstra chose to identify the χειρόγραφον with the body of flesh, it seems more accurate to identify it with the actual sins themselves, as referring back to verse 13: "He made you alive together in Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (italics not in the original). This idea would more closely parallel the Apocalypse of Elijah, wherein the χειρόγραφον was the listing of man's sins. The chief point is that the principalities and powers have now been robbed of the means whereby men are placed under bondage to their power. Jesus Christ, in taking upon Himself the sins and transgressions of mankind, has "through the blood of His cross" (1:20) reconciled all things to God the Father. Ephesians 2:15 supports this conclusion by stating that Christ abolished in His own flesh the enmity of man's flesh, "which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances." This redemptive work broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. The result was that both groups were reconciled to one another by God who, through the cross, "put to death the enmity" (2:16). Christ carried with Him the sinfulness of humanity to the cross, received in His body the judgment upon sin, and through the power of forgiveness established reconciliation and peace between Jew and Gentile, and potentially between all men and God. Not only was humanity set free from sin (conditioned upon faith and baptism), but also from the dominance of the fallen angelic powers.

Are the δύναμιν of Colossians 2:14 to be identified with the law of Moses? In this particular verse it is likely that they are, for the law pointed out man's sin (Rom. 7:9).

This is Bandstra's position. Weiss, however, believed that δογμασικ "...denotes the ascetic practices false teachers were imposing on the Colossian Christians. These practices were the expression of a religious syncretism...."²⁵ Truly, it is difficult to discern and to know for sure what Paul was confronting. On the one hand, there is reason to hold that the δογμασικ refer to the law. On the other hand, the verb form in verse 20 is most understandable in terms of Schweizer's theory of pagan ascetic influence, for there the decrees are tied with "do not handle, do not taste, do not touch," things which are "in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men" (2:21, 22). Perhaps the resolution of this conflict is to be found in the recognition that the Colossian church was threatened by a syncretistic teaching such as that suggested above by Weiss.

Colossae: Syncretistic Heresy

The safest and most reliable path to take is to surmise that what was threatening the faithful at Colossae was a syncretistic teaching which centered around the necessity of works and asceticism. The sufficiency of salvation in Christ had been set upon the shelf and, as is common to human religious instinct, the believers returned to their fascination with "empty deception, according to the tradition of men..." (2:8). The message from Paul was that God in Christ had accomplished the salvation of mankind, and that He had been exalted "head over all rule and authority" (2:10b). That

²⁵Weiss, p. 304.

should be good news for any religious seeker! But the subtle and self-protecting στοιχεῖα had set a trap for the Colossian believers. The form this trap took is not the real issue, however, for whatever serves to separate the potential disciple from the love of God in Christ can become an instrument in the hands of Satan and the other powers of the air. To turn away from the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου is to turn away from the weak and beggarly elemental spirits. In short, to denounce idolatry and self-righteousness enables one to announce his inheritance of sonship to the true God through faith in the atoning work of Christ.

When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Gal. 4:4, 5).

The Christian is a free man, no longer held in bondage to the rudiments of both man-made and mystical religion. Instead, he is held fast in the arms of the heavenly Father, forgiven of his sin, and assured through faith that nothing in all of creation can separate him from his Father's love.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the preceding pages the attempt has been made to identify the relationship between the fallen angelic powers and the religious life of humanity. This search entailed an investigation of St. Paul's use of the word στοιχεῖα to describe the spiritual condition of mankind before the entrance of Jesus Christ into history. The conclusion is that these στοιχεῖα were, in Paul's thinking, not merely elementary

principles of pre-Christian religion, but were to be identified with those angelic beings who had been ordained by God to oversee the natural creation but who, through the influence of sin, had sought to gain a power of dominion over the lives of men. The στοιχεῖα and the principalities and powers (perhaps synonymous terms) assumed the roles of accusers of men, whereby they sought to maintain a hold upon the conscience. Fear of punishment and of death would thus drive men to seek means of justification. This motivation led to the misuse of the Mosaic law, the practice of ascetic religion, and the worship of angels (all in evidence at Colossae).

Jesus Christ, by destroying the "body of sin" on the cross, removed the "handle" by which the powers could keep men in bondage to false religion. Through forgiveness, the one who trusted in the atonement wrought by Christ would be freed from all bondages. The στοιχεῖα sought to capture the wills of men through fear. The plan of God was to re-capture the wills of men through His own love and through the power of faith. The Christian communities at Galatia and Colossae were under attack from a conspiratorial contingent of subtle powers who were working to obstruct the liberating power of faith in God. This manipulation of false religion is but one of the strategies of the powers to separate men from God. The focus of the next chapter will be on the connection of the principalities and powers with the exercise of power in human political structures.

Chapter 4

THE POWERS AND HUMAN POLITICAL STRUCTURES

In the investigation of Galatians 4 and Colossians 2, the linguistic and exegetical evidence revealed that the principalities and powers are so closely bound up with the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου as to be nearly indistinguishable from them. These fallen cosmic powers in some way stand behind the various forms of human religious systems, having distorted their God-ordained purpose by seeking to separate men from God and to subject men to themselves.

In this chapter consideration will be given to the question of whether there is any close relationship between these powers and the political life of humanity. Is there a point of contact between the powers and earthly government? If so, what exactly is the nature and extent of this contact? Paul's use of τὰς ἀρχάς and τὰς ἐξουσίας strongly suggests a power which is political in nature. These powers are recognized by Paul to rule "in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12), but do they rule as well in some limited sense upon earth? Foerster has already shown (see page 51) that the real paradox in studying the powers is not the source of evil itself, but the apparent fact that God allows in "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4) for evil forces to rule over the world, yet still subject to His own sovereign authority. George Brad-

ford Caird, in relating this paradox to the New Testament context, made the following comment:

All power and authority belongs to God, and evil can exist as a force in the world only because it is able to take the powers and authorities of God and to transform them into the world rulers of this darkness. So it had come about that Israel and Rome, the highest religion and the best government that the world had seen, had conspired to crucify the Lord of glory.¹

God certainly could at any point directly check and eliminate the reign of evil in the world, but because He has built a freedom into His creatures, He has allowed history to take its course. In this way, perhaps evil will prove to be its own worst enemy, thus revealing the fact that nothing which exists apart from the power and authority of God Himself can stand the test of time.

One of the aspects of Jesus' mission was to judge "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). But this judgment does not yet mean that Satan and his forces are deposed, for Paul showed us that the spirit of the "prince of the power of the air" is still working in those who are disobedient to God (Eph. 2:2). Also clear is the fact that the Christian still "wrestles" with the forces of evil (Eph. 6:12). "The god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) is still active in blinding the minds of unbelieving men, that they might not see the glory of Christ.

CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE

In approaching this controversial question on the

¹George Bradford Caird, Principalities and Powers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 53.

relationship between the cosmic powers and human government, it will be necessary to understand that "this present evil age" is a transition period in the redemptive history of God, a time of tension between the atoning sacrifice of Christ and His return in glory to judge the nations, resurrect the dead, and establish the divine rule of righteousness. What, then, is the nature and extent of the contact between the fallen, rebellious powers and earthly governments in the duration of the present age?

1 Corinthians 2:6-8: "The Rulers of This Age"

We do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

An adequate identification of the "wisdom" Paul was speaking of is beyond the scope of this present paper. But it must be pointed out that Paul, in this context, was drawing sharp distinctions between the wisdom of men and the "hidden wisdom of God," the latter being Jesus Christ Himself. D.E.H.

Whiteley, drawing from such passages as Proverbs 8 and Colossians 1:13-20, concluded that "wisdom" in the Scriptures is explicitly hypostatized. But Whiteley further qualified this observation in light of the Apostle Paul:

When St. Paul speaks of Christ in terms of Wisdom his intention is not to identify Him with an hypostatization of Wisdom, but to ascribe to Him the function of being God's agent in creation, revelation, and redemption.²

²D.E.H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 112.

Jesus Christ, therefore, was God's intermediary agent who carried out the divine purposes in creation. In light of the Judaic understanding of "Wisdom," He certainly may be considered the active manifestation of "God's wisdom."

The prime question to be answered is, who are the "rulers of this age" who crucified the Lord of glory? Were they, in Paul's mind, merely the human rulers who were responsible for the death of Christ, or were they perhaps the "rulers" who in other contexts were spiritual powers? Is there any indication here that Paul was employing the Jewish conception of the "folk angels" of Daniel 10, those angelic beings who were identified with particular nations?

A beginning may be made with Delling in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. He gave the meaning of ἄρχων in the New Testament as "a high official, one who exercises authority."³ The word was used in speaking of Roman and Jewish officials of all kinds. Another primary usage, however, denotes those who have at their command supernatural and ungodly powers (Matt. 12:24; Luke 11:15; Mark 3:22). The plural form, ἄρχοντες, was employed in the Septuagint to identify the "princes" of Daniel 10:13, 20, 21. In regard to the verses in the gospel of John cited above, Delling noted a "transitory dualism," wherein the world was ruled by Satan, the ἄρχων, who stood judged and already condemned by the power of God. In reference to 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, he

³Gerhard Delling, "ἄρχων," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Gerhard Kittel, I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 482.

concluded that Paul was definitely speaking of supernatural, and not temporal rulers. This conclusion seems to be the correct interpretation. In light of other Pauline passages, especially Ephesians 2:2 and 6:12, the assumption may be made that the "rulers" in the Corinthians passage were, in Paul's mind, the spiritual powers who rule in this present age. Most New Testament scholars are in agreement on this point. But this is not to rule out the possibility that Paul was referring also to the human rulers:

Behind Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas, behind the Roman state and the Jewish religion of which these men were the earthly representatives, Paul discerned the existence of angelic rulers who shared with their human agents the responsibility for the crucifixion.⁴

As confirmation for this interpretation, Caird turned to 1 Corinthians 6:3, where in reference to the settling of Christian disputes in secular law courts, Paul stated that "we shall judge angels." The suggestion is that Paul was speaking of the angelic beings who were given supervision over the activities of the secular state. Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 11:10, a woman was to have "a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels." Caird posited that these angels were the appointed guardians of the natural order of society.⁵ The subjection of women, according to the verses which follow, was not in line with God's requirements, but was apparently a requirement stemming from the ancient structure of society as administered by these angelic powers.

⁴Caird, Principalities and Powers, p. 16.

⁵Caird, p. 17.

Therefore, a woman ought to have a covering only for the sake of the angels, and not necessarily for the sake of God. This point is made to show that Paul indeed recognized the presence of "angels," or in the case of 1 Corinthians 2:6-8 "rulers," who stood behind the religious and political institutions of mankind. G.H.C. MacGregor presented considerable support for this thesis:

By 'rulers of this world' the Apostle appears to mean both the 'principalities and powers' and also their actual human executives; and the very kernel of his doctrine of redemption is that by their tragic miscalculation the 'rulers' become the instrument of their own destruction.⁶

Clinton Morrison aligned his position with that of Dibelius in arriving at the conclusion that the "rulers" were angelic powers:

...this passage actually represents in itself an immediate coincidence of heavenly and earthly activity when Pilate, the high priests, and others were effectively in the power of their spiritual superiors. So understood, this passage appears to be a clear case of Paul's reliance upon the form of Judaism's belief in folk angels.⁷

Here is found the direct inference that the angelic powers may control the public life of man by filling the earthly rulers with their own ungodly spirit. It will presently be seen that Paul believed in the divine ordering of the state, and that human rulers stood under the authority of God. But the point to be grasped here is that the rulers, both earthly

⁶G.H.C. MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought," New Testament Studies, I (September, 1954), 23.

⁷Clinton Morrison, The Powers That Be (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), p. 24.

and spiritual, contained within themselves the capacity to distort the redemptive purposes of God, and to act against His authoritative will. Thus, Caird was correct when he said that "whatever Paul believed about the divine authority of the state, there can be no doubt that he believed also in its demonic capacity."⁸ The powers, whose influence is seen in the state as well as in the religious sphere, still possess their God-given authority to rule in the remainder of the present age, though the incarnation and resurrection of the Christ have brought judgment upon them, whereby their power is presently waning, and will ultimately be taken away.

Romans 13:1-7: The ~~ΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΣ~~ Controversy

Another passage used by scholars to prove the inter-relatedness of the spiritual powers and earthly government is Romans 13:1:

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities (~~ΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΣ~~). For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

The question of Pauline authorship. In the light of a supposed Pauline doctrine of the proper relationship of the Christian believer to the secular state, some scholars have believed strongly that this passage in Romans cannot be reconciled with Paul's view of the state in other relevant New Testament passages. In light of the demand made to "be in subjection" some have said that if Paul indeed was the writer of this passage, he would be contradicting his own

⁸Caird, p. 26.

theology. Herbert Gale, for example, stated that "it is, indeed, entirely correct that in the usual interpretation a discrepancy exists between this passage and everything that we know of Paul's attitude."⁹ James Kallas attempted a resolution of the problem by putting forth the idea that this passage was an interpolation: "there is unmistakable evidence that the latter part of the epistle has been subjected to some kind of alteration."¹⁰ Kallas noted three major ideas of Paul which, to his thinking, stand in contradiction to the Romans passage. First, Paul was expecting the end of the world to occur immanently. Romans 13:1-7 presents a world view in which the present order is expected to continue. Second, Kallas recognized correctly that everywhere else that Paul used the term ἐξουσίαις he was referring to cosmic powers. Here the reference is to human rulers. Morrison's work substantiates this: "sound New Testament scholarship can affirm the consistency of exousia's reference to the spiritual powers in Paul's writing, with the exception of Romans 13."¹¹ Thus, Kallas concluded that Paul did not author Romans 13:1-7. Third, Paul used "authorities" elsewhere to denote the demonic powers of evil, and not the beneficent powers of the state. How could Paul argue in support of this

⁹Herbert Gale, "Paul's View of the State," Interpretation, VI (October, 1952), 409.

¹⁰James Kallas, "Romans XIII:1-7: An Interpolation," New Testament Studies, XI (July, 1965), 365.

¹¹Morrison, p. 42.

present world order, when he had stated emphatically in other places that it is evil?

The only conceivable answer to this dilemma is found in assuming that this passage was written later than Paul at a time when the Church was obliged, by the failure of the end to come, to re-evaluate the nature of the world.¹²

This is not, however, the only "conceivable answer" to the problem. Even if Paul and his fellow believers were expecting the end of the world, such expectation would not necessarily justify an active disobedience to the Roman state. Also, just because Paul in every other usage of ἐξουσίαις refers to the spiritual powers, it is not a forced conclusion that he did not therefore write Romans 13:1-7. The word itself carries these two meanings, and in this context it would be expected that Paul, in speaking of the governing rulers, would employ the word for "authorities." It follows from this that the state does not have to be regarded as evil in itself, as Kallas would think. In short, Kallas attempted to substantiate Paul's eschatological world view by disallowing the Romans passage. What must be asserted is that this cannot be done safely, and that a Pauline authorship of Romans 13:1-7 is possible, given a correct understanding of Paul's message.

There have also been attempts made to relativize the message in this passage. Such an attempt was that of Marcus Borg. He presented a thesis that Romans 13:1-7 must be viewed in the context of Jewish nationalism in Rome. Paul, he believed, was communicating the inadvisability of putting

¹²Kallas, p. 370.

up any resistance against the Roman authorities. Borg found evidence to the effect that the Roman church needed this advice, and concluded the following:

Romans 13:1-7 continues the thought of Romans 12:14-21 rather than being a 'self-contained envelope.' As such, it is not intended as a generalized statement about the Christian's attitude to all civil authorities at all times, but a statement with a particular meaning to the Roman Church in their particular situation.¹³

While this may have been one of Paul's purposes in writing these words, it seems that Borg has limited the extent and full purpose of Paul's message. There is more here than Borg was willing to allow for.

In the attempt to discover what Paul was really saying in Romans 13:1-7, it will be assumed in the first place that Paul was the author in question, that this message did fit in the context where it appears, and that what is being said is not contradictory to the eschatological tenor of the other New Testament writings. C.E.B. Cranfield set forth three possible explanations as to why Paul enjoined his brethren to submit to the authority of the state.¹⁴ First, Paul may have been basing his exhortation on the grounds of his own positive experience with the Roman government. Second, Paul was here describing the ideally intended purpose of the state and its function. And third, Paul was in some way explaining that obedience to government will work for the

¹³Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Romans XIII: 1-7," New Testament Studies, XIX (January, 1973), 214.

¹⁴C.E.B. Cranfield, "Some Observations on Romans XIII: 1-7," New Testament Studies, VI (April, 1960), 245.

ultimate good of the gospel, because government is ordained by God to keep order in the world, an order which would provide a climate ideal for the propagation of the gospel. This final explanation is the one Cranfield chose. Surely it best satisfies the tenor of Paul's gospel, especially in the light of 1 Timothy 2:1, 2:

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity (italics not in the original).

The "Christological Foundation of the State." Assuming that the state has a positive function in the redemptive purpose of God, the concern must be with the nature and extent of that service. This is where the heat of the linguistic and exegetical battle begins. Since Oscar Cullmann has developed a controversial interpretation of the Romans passage, one involving the supposed contact between the principalities and powers and earthly governments, it is expedient that his position be set forth. When this is done, and when the critics have been allowed to evaluate Cullmann's argument, a reasonable and accurate estimate of what Paul was saying may be formulated.

The position of Cullmann regarding Romans 13:1-7 is popularly known as the "Christological Foundation of the State." The concept is based on his belief that through the victory of Christ the rebellious powers have been brought into subjection to His Lordship and now serve His redemptive purposes by ordering the activities of the state:

....These powers, in the faith of primitive Christianity, did not belong merely to the framework 'conditioned by the contemporary situation.' It is these invisible beings who in some way--not, to be sure, as mediators, but rather as executive instruments of the reign of Christ--stand behind what occurs in the world (italics in the original).¹⁵

In support of his position, Cullmann appealed to the apocalyptic concept of the "national angels" (Dan. 10:13, 20; Jub. 15:30-32). Carrying this into the New Testament, he observed that wherever mention of the principalities and powers occurs, there also the Lordship of Jesus Christ is set forth. In his approach to Romans 13:1, Cullmann therefore rendered the meaning of the ἐξουσίαις as being the angelic powers who, as a result of the resurrection, have been subjected to Christ. These powers, as overlords of the earthly rulers, see to it that the judicial wrath of God is exercised upon evildoers, thus promoting good and orderly behavior. As long as the rulers (both earthly and spiritual) remained in line with the purposes of God, it was the duty of Christian believers to "be in subjection" to the state. This subjection, suggested Cullmann, carries with it a qualification:

The Christian believer will always place over against the state a final question mark and will remain watchful and critical because he knows that behind it stand powers which do indeed have their place in the divine order determined by the victory of Christ, but which nevertheless for the time being still have a certain possibility of permitting their demonic strivings for independence to flare up into apparent power.¹⁶

The imagery Cullmann offered his readers to describe this

¹⁵Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, trans. Floyd D. Filson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 192.

¹⁶Cullmann, p. 200.

"apparent power" is the picture of the powers being held on a "leash," restrained by the Lordship of Christ, yet still able to assert their rebelliousness. The angelic powers are to be submitted to in that they are serving in the performance of a divine purpose, but they are to be watched and held in check. This present age Cullmann called the "kingdom of Christ," to be distinguished from the "kingdom of God" which will come at the end of the age when Christ has "abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). Until that time, the state is to continue in its divine purpose (which, Cullmann explained, has extended back to all governments of pre-Christian times). A summary of Cullmann's position was given by Morrison:

In short, the work of redemption, even the proclamation of Christ, cannot be defined in terms of the Church alone, but only in terms of the Church and the State. In the period of tension the State was ordained (in Christ, through Christ, and for Christ) to provide an environment conducive to the proclamation of the Christian message and its being heard.¹⁷

Cullmann's position evaluated. Cullmann's reasoning makes it understandable why Paul would enjoin the Roman church, and believers today as well, to "be in subjection" to the state. There is much in Cullmann's work that is commendable. His insight has probed to the heart of the "tension" of the present era of salvation history. But, it must be asked, is his interpretation realistic? In short, are the rebellious powers of darkness whom Paul so clearly portrayed as enemies really subject to the direct control by, and service of, the

¹⁷Morrison, The Powers That Be, pp. 37-38.

Lord Christ. Further, is Cullmann's exegesis correct in its assumption that the ἑξουσίας are the spiritual powers? His position breaks down at these points. Many scholars have reacted critically to Cullmann's thesis.

J.L.C. Abineno, for example, sided with Foerster in rejecting Cullmann's definition of ἑξουσίας.¹⁸ The word itself, used both in the singular and in the plural, is in the majority of passages ascribed a purely political meaning (e.g., Luke 12:11; Tit. 3:1). Morrison, therefore, stated that the word can have no set or predetermined meaning, but must be considered in its context.¹⁹ The appearance of ἑξουσίας in the Romans passage is clearly distinguished from all other Pauline usages: 1) it is not catalogued with other powers, 2) the usual appearance of ἀρχαί with the term for "principality" is lacking, and 3) ἑξουσίας does not appear in context with any mention of the Lordship of Christ. In Morrison's judgment, Paul's prime intention was to indicate subjection to the governmental authorities.²⁰ Whiteley concurred with this: "it is beyond dispute that St. Paul in Romans 13:1...enjoins universal obedience to the civil authorities."²¹ Whiteley recognized that there is also an element of subjection to the angelic powers, but such subjection is not a result of the victory of Christ over the powers, but

¹⁸J.L.C. Abineno, "The State, According to Romans 13," Southeast Asia Journal of Theology, XIV, No. 1 (1972), 24.

¹⁹Morrison, p. 42. ²⁰Morrison, p. 43.

²¹Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul, p. 229.

is instead in accord with the guidelines of God's created order. But this, it would seem, is an unnecessary distinction, since all things have been created in, through, and for Jesus Christ in the first place. Whiteley's meaning was perhaps clearer when he stated that Christ has now established de facto what was previously merely de jure. Whiteley finalized his point of view with the following comment:

The exousiai of Romans 13:1 would seem to be the archontes of 13:3. This word also is ambiguous and might refer to invisible powers as in Ephesians 2:2, but in Romans 13, where we are concerned with taxes, than which nothing could be more mundane, this is hardly to be maintained.²²

The weakness of Cullmann's argument becomes apparent. His assumption that the fallen angelic powers are now in direct service of the rule of Christ cannot be supported. Linguistically, the evidence favors the temporal rulership. Exegetically, there is no evidence which supports Cullmann's theory that the powers are now a part of the divine order. There is no New Testament text which would support the idea that the rebellious powers have been given a positive position of authority in the kingdom of Christ. Cullmann, to his own detriment, seems to have overlooked the strong note of warfare with, and hostile resistance from, the powers (Eph. 6:12). Morrison's comment along these lines is fitting: "is there any New Testament doctrine which declares Satan to have been converted, or that Christians should be subject to him?"²³ No, there is not! The activity of Satan to deceive

²²Whiteley, p. 231. ²³Morrison, p. 53.

the minds of men (2 Cor. 2:11, 4:4, 11:13-15; Gal. 4; Col. 2; Eph. 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 John 5:19) and to hinder the work of God is a continuing reality. In addition, it is to be seen that the Roman state did not undergo a radical change after the resurrection. Rather, on a historical and political level, life pursued its usual course. The new exception was the presence of the Church, the redeemed community of souls filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit, suddenly in the world as a witness to the emerging manifestation of a new order. Though Cullmann is wrong in his optimistic theory that the powers have been subjected to Christ and are now a part of the divine order, he was headed in the right direction when he qualified himself by stressing the responsibility of the Christian to watch closely the workings of the powers. Cullmann did not press this strongly enough, however, for the powers do not merely exercise an "apparent power" but a very real, autonomous and ungodly power! One need only look at the continuing political turmoil and the religio-cultural conflicts of history to see that the kingdoms of this world are not as yet, in any direct sense, a part of the divine order instituted by Jesus Christ. The principalities and powers, and the governments subject to their influence, are still under the strong sway of sin and the "evil one." For Cullmann to say on the one hand that the powers are subject to Christ, and on the other hand that they still exercise this "apparent power," is a contradiction. His schema which divides history into "this present age" and the "age to come," with an overlapping period of tension, is

correct. But he has failed to discern the seriousness of the continuing hostile threat which the powers seek to exert over the life of humanity.

ROMANS 13:1-7: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

What, then, was Paul really intending to communicate concerning the reality of the supernatural powers? After the appearance of Jesus Christ in history, how is the present purpose and eschatological character of the powers to be understood, still this side of the parousia?

Unfortunately, contemporary study of the New Testament canon, and of the times in which it emerged, fails too often to give full consideration to the religious background and consciousness of the churches to which Paul wrote. In order to arrive at a sound understanding of what Paul was saying, it is essential to know something about the thinking and circumstances of the people to whom he expressed himself. The question therefore must be, did the Roman Christians possess any understanding of a world view which pictured the presence of spiritual powers standing behind the earthly powers of government? Was the notion of the "folk angel" of apocalyptic writings familiar to the minds of men living at the time of Jesus? Morrison asked this question, and concluded that "exousiai in Romans 13 meant to Paul precisely what Paul thought it would mean to the Church at Rome."²⁴ He devoted considerable time to developing the thesis that

²⁴Morrison, p. 57.

the mind of the ancient Graeco-Roman world considered the earthly and spiritual "rulers" as being inseparable. The "law of correspondence" between natural and supernatural events formed the basis for the belief that cosmic order was the product of both human and spiritual personalities:

It is now evident that the political significance of the word, even for Paul and the Roman Church, is implicated in the cosmic dimension of the Graeco-Roman concept of the State. Exousiai were powers, human and spiritual, divinely appointed to particular responsibilities in the cosmic order. Spiritual authorities were generally considered to lie behind the human ones, and the 'fluidity' of the terminology only emphasized the inseparable relationship between the spiritual and material in the one Cosmos. Subjection to the exousiai was therefore subjection to an established cosmic order, most clearly evident and commonly experienced in the rule of Rome.²⁵

Morrison's thesis makes good sense, and it sheds some much needed light on the ἔξουσιαις controversy. Paul is not commanding subjection on the basis of his own "good experience" with the Roman authorities. He is not speaking of the supposed function of an idealized state. He is communicating the fact that those who hold positions of authority are servants of God, in that they are the representatives of a world order which has been ordained by God. Thomas W. Manson supported Morrison's contention when he spoke in reference to the spiritual powers:

That the Jews believed such powers to exist and to influence the affairs of nations is hardly open to doubt; and it is likely enough that Paul shared the belief. In counseling obedience to the Imperial Government he may be held to imply obedience to the spiritual powers behind it.²⁶

²⁵Morrison, pp. 102-03.

²⁶Thomas W. Manson, "Romans," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 825.

Though the "authorities" (both human and spiritual) are not always in an attitude of perfect obedience to God, they are to be subjected to on the basis of their God-given purpose to punish evil and promote good. Thus it was that Paul could say, "he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13:2b). Paul was speaking directly of the Roman authorities, but there was also an indirect or understood reference to the spiritual authorities who stood behind the earthly rulers. This conclusion, of course, necessitates the possibility that there were in fact some of the angelic powers who remained obedient to their Creator, and who attempted to carry out their destined task. It would be wrong to cast the whole of this class of powers into a categorically defined role of direct disobedience and sinister deception. Though Satan may yet rule this world for a time, the possibility cannot be ignored that some of the powers are serving faithfully the divine plan. The chief of such loyal powers are to be seen in operation in Daniel 10, where Michael and Gabriel battle on Daniel's behalf against the evil powers who controlled the destinies of the Gentile nations.

The Lordship of Christ and Human Government

There are two questions which, at this juncture, demand consideration: 1) what is the proper connection between this God-ordained scheme of cosmic order and the Lordship of Jesus Christ? and, 2) what is the relevance of the above understanding of the Romans 13 passage for contemporary society? In response to the first question, the

analysis of the Colossians 1:16-20 passage revealed that the powers had been created in, through, and for Christ. As the Word of God made flesh, He is the all-encompassing focal point which connects God the Father with all of creation. This Christocentric view serves as the background to Romans 13:1-7. The confession by the early Christians that their Christ was indeed Lord was an affirmation that God's redemptive purposes were being fulfilled in all areas and aspects of life. This is precisely why Paul could move from his description of Christian community life in Romans 12, to an exhortation to subjection to the governing authorities. In the plan of God, it is not the place of the Church to punish the evildoer and to maintain social order, but it is her place to support the God-ordained function of the state:

Government is traced to its source in God....Where no order reigns, there is no security. Absolute equality is impossible amongst men; society has no safeguards, no cohesion, without a recognized tribunal of authority.²⁷

Such authority may take varying forms, for God did not ordain any particular form of human government. Thus, if His purpose is fulfilled, it matters not whether the rule is by a chosen few leaders who administer justice, or by the common consent of a democratic society.

Church and state provide, therefore, two divine functions in the world. The Church serves as the vessel for the revelation of truth and salvation in Jesus Christ, and the

²⁷S.R. Aldridge, "The Epistle of Paul to the Romans," The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XVIII, ed. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 400.

state serves to prevent the world from falling into chaos. Both of these functions are united in the redemptive heart of God Himself, who longs to reconcile the world to Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). The state is purposed by God to maintain conditions compatible with the calling of the Church to perform her ministry of reconciliation. God's work of redemption necessitates, under normal conditions, a harmonious "working together" of Church and state. The believer is called upon to be in subjection "for conscience' sake" (vs. 5), knowing that it is God who ultimately controls the affairs of men (Dan. 4:17, 25: 5:21).

There are two sides to the responsibility of the conscience of the servant of Christ, and of the Body of Christ as a totality. On the one side, to the extent that the ruling authorities do carry out their task of administering justice, the Christian is to support them by the payment of taxes, obedience to the laws of the land, and prayer (Rom. 13:5, 6; 1 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 3:1). But, on the other side, when the state begins to use power in demonic deviation from redemptive goals, seeking to oppress innocent men and to sever them from the knowledge of God, then it is the calling of the Christian to discern this abuse of power and to witness against it. In light of an obedience to the higher law of God, John B. Anderson, a member of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, commented that "the Christian must be prepared in some instances to answer the call of that higher law, but be prepared also to accept the

penalty of non-compliance with the authority of the state."²⁸ The role of non-violent civil disobedience, as motivated by the love of God and fellow men, will receive expanded treatment in Chapter 6 of this paper.

The Form of the Kingdom

A significant problem yet remains. If the state is ordained by and subject to the redemptive will of God, then why did it not undergo any visible transformation after the victorious mission of Christ? A correct answer to this question will point out the precise error of Cullmann's "Christological Foundation of the State." The New Testament evidence does not prove that the powers themselves were "redeemed" or "transformed" at the time of the resurrection. They continued to function in their rebellious capacity. Also, it was not long after the death of Paul that Emperor worship became a condition of Roman citizenship, a requirement to which the Christians could not in good conscience submit.

In light of these negative manifestations of power, it may be concluded that the redemptive power of God in His Son, and as manifested among men by the presence of the Holy Spirit was intended to transform the lives of individual persons. A divine community, representative of the kingdom of God, was to witness within the world to the Lordship of Christ. The Church was, consequently, the community of the redeemed, and the vessel through which God had chosen to

²⁸John B. Anderson, "Civil Disobedience," Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics, ed. Carl F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 105.

reveal Himself in history. The principalities and powers were not themselves the objects of such salvation. Indeed, they continued to stand under authority of God to fulfill their function but, as will be made clear in the next chapter, it yet remains to see them actively subjected to the Lordship of the conquering Christ. The question raised as to the relevancy of this interpretation for the contemporary context will be taken up in detail in Chapter 6.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter has been to determine the nature and extent of the connection of the cosmic powers to human government during this present age of transition from the kingdoms of men into the kingdom of God. In spite of the obstacle of paradox, a general understanding has been reached of the message Paul was imparting to the Roman Christians, and to believers in the present day. In spite of the sinfulness, weakness, and potential rebelliousness of both earthly and spiritual "authorities," God has seen fit to allow the reins of rulership of the world kingdoms to be held by fallen creatures. Further, He continues to allow the Accuser and Tempter of the souls of men, Satan himself, to exert his influence over these rulers. The responsibility of the Church of Jesus Christ thus becomes painfully apparent. The Christian community is to be the light in this present world darkness, revealing the will of God and the Lordship of Christ in human history. The cosmic battle in the sphere of the supernatural yet awaits its consummation (Rev. 12:7-12).

Likewise, the reflection of this battle onto the plane of historical fact still reveals through wars, political tension, religious conflict, and natural catastrophes, the presence of a demonic power still working "in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Thus it is that the hope of the Christian is fixed upon the eschatological deliverance of the world from the dominion of the fallen powers and the damning activities of Satan. Until that day, the Church lives by faith, assured of the victory of Christ, and obedient to the carrying out of His commands:

We may speak of Christ's subjection of the powers as such only when the Lordship of Christ has accomplished its purpose, and a liberated creation is handed over to God (1 Cor. 15:28).²⁹

²⁹Morrison, The Powers That Be, p. 120.

Chapter 5

THE DEFEAT OF THE POWERS

The focus of this study thus far has been to make sense of Paul's concept of the powers as regards their relationship to human life and activity. In the following pages, an examination of the fate of the powers will be explored, and here there will be more explicit evidence by which to chart a course of study. According to Paul, the final destiny of the powers has already been sealed through the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What is the nature of that victory? Were these cosmic powers annihilated, or merely defeated? Has the real battle already been won, or does it still lie in the future? There are some who become quite uncomfortable at the thought of these powers being still on the loose. They sense the necessity of recognizing that Christ is Lord here, now, and today. Robert Recker expressed this attitude:

Certainly the 'already' of the result of Christ's coming into this world and of His work must not be denied in the process of emphasizing the 'not yet' of the dislocation, tension, enmity, and rebellion still existent in the world.¹

Did the Lord Christ soundly defeat the devil and subject the rebellious powers beneath His feet, or did He not? Scripture

¹Robert Recker, "Satan: In Power or Dethroned?", Calvin Theological Journal, VI (November, 1971), 136.

affirms that He definitely did (John 12:31; 1 John 3:8; Phil. 2:10; Heb. 1:13). He Himself makes the claim that "all authority in heaven and on earth is given unto" Him (Matt. 28:18-20), that He has bound the "strong one" (Matt. 12:29), and that He has beheld "Satan fall from heaven like lightning" (Luke 10:18). There can be no question that Christ is the conqueror, and that Satan has been cast out of his position of authority.

Why then have not Satan and his puppets of "apparent power" disappeared from the scene of history? Frederick Struckmeyer offered a viable answer by saying that "having brought intelligent beings into existence, God is no longer free simply to will them out of existence."² Again, this element of creaturely freedom becomes an essential criteria in the consideration of the defeat of evil. It is important to see that Christian faith does not expect a total victory; man, in his own freedom and willful sin, is in the awesome position of determining the quality of his life, in both the natural and supernatural realms of existence. Satan once possessed such freedom and responsibility. His determination to establish himself as an object of worship and loyalty independent of God led to his fall into evil (Is. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:11-19; 1 Tim. 3:6). In the consequent span of eternity and time, God has seen fit to allow the scheme of Satan to run its course, one day to culminate in the full personal expression of evil and blasphemy in the one who will be known

²Frederick Struckmeyer, "God and Gamesmanship," Religious Studies, VII (Spring, 1971), 235.

as "antichrist" (1 John 2:18), the "son of destruction" (1 Thess. 2:3), "the man of lawlessness" (1 Thess. 2:3f.). At that time the free reign of Satan and the influence of the powers of darkness will be overcome by the manifested power of the Son of God at His return in glory and judgment (Matt. 24:29, 30).

"ALREADY-BUT-NOT-YET" FULFILLMENT

In looking at this present age in which the Church has been about its mission, one may agree with Ragnar Leivstad that "if the cosmic rulers have in principle been dethroned at the Resurrection of Christ, they continue to exercise authority as long as the old cosmos has not been succeeded by the new."³ In familiar terminology, what the New Testament teaches is an "already-but-not-yet" fulfilled eschatological victory. Cullmann suggested that the present age may be likened to a war in which the strategic battle or "turning point" has been gained, with the result that the world now awaits the final defeat of the enemy.

Other theologians have spoken of the "nearness" of the kingdom of God.⁴ Jesus' deliverance ministry, His proclamation of saving truth, His healing of the sick, and His atoning death are direct indications that the "kingdom is at

³Ragnar Leivstad, Christ The Conqueror (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), p. 96.

⁴Richard Hiers, "Satan, Demons, and the Kingdom of God," Scottish Journal of Theology, XXVII (February, 1974), 42.

hand" in the sense of being "near." The kingdom is come, but God, consistent with His nature and past procedure, again has chosen to work out His redemptive purpose through historical duration, and through the generations of humanity. If the conquest of Christ and the coming of the kingdom does not occur in the hearts and lives of men, then of what purpose is a kingdom? The mission of the Christian is to believe that the "turning point" is past, to present the gospel to "every creature" in this present age, to confront (in the power of the Spirit of truth) the already waning power of the defeated foes, and to set his vision upon the coming of Christ to consummate that which was initiated on the cross of Calvary. In this time of tension between the atoning death of the Lamb of God and the return of Christ as King, it is the responsibility of the disciples of the risen Lord to make visible His victory over sin, death, Satan, and the principalities and powers. In short, the believer is to live out the full expectations of the command of love, bringing the life of God to the lostness of the human condition.

This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith (1 John 5:3, 4).

THE ATONEMENT: CHRIST THE CONQUEROR

The atoning death of Jesus Christ is an event so profound and so far reaching that it staggers the mind of the one who attempts to formulate an adequate understanding of what God accomplished at Calvary. Throughout history various

theories have been set forth explaining the nature and extent of the atonement. These pages will deal with the revival of interest in one theory in particular, namely, that which is called the "Classic Idea," or "dramatic theory" of the atonement. This "idea" paints a picture of man held in bondage to oppressive supernatural powers exterior to himself. There is a desperate need for rescue, for a divine mission in which God Himself comes into the world and conquers these evil powers which dominate man against his will.

Gustaf Aulen

Gustaf Aulen, in his work Christus Victor, was a proponent of this position:

Christ--Christus Victor--fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself.⁵

Aulen considered both the Satisfaction Theory of Anselm, and the Subjective or Moral Influence Theory of Abelard to be insufficient. The atonement did more than just deliver man from the guilt of his sin and satisfy the justice of God. The victory of Christ accomplished more than merely providing history with an impressive example of God's love and mercy. Aulen asserted that the most comprehensive understanding of the atonement is that which was held in the New Testament, and in the early Church. This he called the "Classic Idea," which, in recognizing the dominance of evil over the life of man, posits a limited dualism against which God Himself

⁵Gustaf Aulen, Christus Victor, trans. A.G. Hebert, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 20.

initiates intervention to overcome the hostile powers and to reconcile the world to Himself. To accomplish this, God provided in the atonement a deliverance from these evil powers, and a cleansing of man's sin. The stress upon the essentiality of the vicarious, atoning death of Christ is thus very strongly maintained in the Classic Idea:

It is precisely the work of salvation wherein Christ breaks the power of evil that constitutes the atonement between God and the world; for it is by it that He removed the enmity, takes away the judgment which rested on the human race, and reconciles the world to Himself, not imputing to them their trespasses (2 Cor. 5:18).⁶

Aulen pressed home his conviction that God in His sovereign grace initiated and completed in Christ the act of reconciliation. Surely his recognition of the helplessness of man, in bondage not only to the power of sin but to the power of demonic beings, is an aspect of soteriology which had been overlooked for many centuries.

James Kallas

In more recent days James Kallas has dealt with this theme. In The Satanward View he noted three differing definitions of sin. One is rebellion, wherein man, as a free and responsible moral agent, becomes an enemy of God by breaking His moral laws. Secondly, sin is guilt, resulting in the necessity of either punishment or pardon. In these two definitions, sin is depicted as the act and consequence of man's free moral choice. The remedy for this situation requires that the love and forgiveness of God reach out and

⁶Aulen, p. 87.

redeem His rebellious creatures. Kallas, however, did not think that the above conception of sin covered enough ground. He therefore followed Aulen in recognizing sin to be primarily bondage or slavery which is forced upon man by exterior forces too powerful to resist. The only hope in this situation is to be rescued by one with a greater power. Thus it is not only the love and forgiveness of God which precipitate the atonement, but it is the power of God which seals the success of the divine mission:

The enormous thrust of Paul's vocabulary is found within this Satanward stream of seeing sin as power, and the answer as being a saving intervention of an even more powerful God who sets man free.⁷

Consequently, salvation is totally a work of divine power and grace, a work which man can participate in only by fully surrendering to God, trusting in the sovereign sufficiency of His power to deliver. This view, in Kallas' mind, is most heavily supported by the New Testament evidence.

The viewpoints represented by Aulen and Kallas bring to this study an important perspective often overlooked in the theological consideration of the atonement. Colossians 1:13, 14 may be said to best summarize this perspective:

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

An adequate interpretation of the atonement must include this dramatic depiction of a cosmic warfare in which man, imprisoned in enemy territory, is rescued by one who daringly

⁷James Kallas, The Satanward View (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 61.

enters into the enemy camp in the confidence of victory.

In accepting this view, however, care must be taken not to set aside the responsibility of man for his own willful enslavement to sin. The element of free choice renders man subject to punishment. Since "the Scripture has shut up all men under sin" (Gal. 3:22), all are subject to judgment and punishment. There is a necessity for a pardon from God. There is the necessity that somehow the wrath of God against sin be satisfied. Thus, an adequate view of the atonement will see both sin and Satan as being the enemies. The condemnation and punishment due to sin is removed through the merits of Christ, on the basis of justification by faith. The power of sin in the life of humanity is removed by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. And the deliverance from the "evil one" and the powers of his domain is secured through faith and trust in the victory of the Son of God, whereby the assurance stands that "greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). The atonement, in its many aspects of efficacious activity, secures the reconciliation of Creator and creature. The cosmic powers are deprived of their hold upon the one who trusts in God. Their grip has been released, their stranglehold broken. Men are no longer slaves to the στοιχεῖα, but now may be children of the living and true God:

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' (Rom. 8:15).

WHAT THE "RULERS OF THIS AGE"
DID NOT UNDERSTAND

The examination of 1 Corinthians 2:6-8 in Chapter 4 revealed that, in Paul's mind, the spiritual "rulers of this age" somehow stood behind the earthly rulers in the conspiracy to crucify Jesus. In this chapter, it must be asked, what is it that the "rulers" did not understand concerning Jesus? What was the fatal miscalculation which led to the sealing of their own fate? Peter Taylor Forsyth gave his readers an accurate clue along these lines:

The holiness of Christ was the one thing damnatory to the Satanic power. And it was His death which consummated that holiness. It was His death, therefore, that was Satan's final doom.⁸

Jesus, in entering the fallen world by becoming flesh, likewise became subject to Satan and his sphere of influence. By "taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7), He entered into the realm of bondage and spiritual slavery:

By assuming sarx, he accepted the position of being a doulos to the powers, in the likeness of all men who are 'enslaved under the elemental spirits of the world' (Gal. 4:3).⁹

This being the circumstance, what was the mistake of the powers? The following explanation will perhaps serve to answer this question. The powers had heretofore exercised

⁸Peter Taylor Forsyth, The Glorious Gospel, London Missionary Society Triple Jubilee Papers, No. 3 (London: Livingston Press, 1943), p. 6.

⁹John A.T. Robinson, The Body (London: S.C.M. Press, 1957), p. 38.

control over all men due to the universal extent of sin. Likewise, they claimed this same control over Christ when He became flesh. But what they did not realize was that Christ did not belong to the corporate unity of mankind by nature, but by free choice.¹⁰ Further, His sinlessness through both virgin birth and blameless life robbed the powers of a legitimate claim upon Him. By putting Him to death, the powers freed Him to prove His deity by exhibiting a victory over death, a victory which robbed the "rulers" of another tool by which to keep men in bondage to them:

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;... (Heb. 2:14).

In His overcoming of death, Jesus was raised "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21). In short, the "rulers" were doomed to extinction. The word used by Paul to describe this defeat in 1 Corinthians 2:6 is καταρροῦμένω, which is translated "come to nought" in the King James Version and "passing away" in the New American Standard Version. This word will receive further attention when it is examined in its more significant usage in 1 Corinthians 15:24, 26. It is sufficient to note here that these "rulers" are in the process of being abolished, because this age in which they rule is passing away. The "wisdom" which the "rulers" did not understand was the

¹⁰George Bradford Caird, Principalities and Powers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 90ff.

plan of God to redeem the human race through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. His victorious ascension, and the giving of the Holy Spirit were evidences of the nearness of the "age to come."

TRIUMPH OVER THE PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

The study of Colossians 2 showed what Jesus Christ has done on the cross: in Him God "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which were hostile to us;...having nailed it to the cross." The transgressions of men are now forgiven, and the one who is baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ is thereby freed from the condemnation of guilt and from bondage to the principalities and powers. Thus, Paul proclaimed in verse 15:

When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him (or "it," in reference to the cross).

The word translated "disarmed" in the New American Standard Version could more accurately be rendered "divested Himself of," or "stripped Himself of." The verb is ἀπενδυσάμενος and appears in Colossians 2:15 in the aorist tense, middle voice. Henry Liddell and Robert Scott thus rendered it, "strip off oneself."¹¹ Vine translated it, "having put off from Himself (the principalities and the powers)," and added the following observation:

¹¹Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, rev. Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), II, p. 184.

The metaphor of putting off from Himself these powers need not be pressed to the extent of regarding them as a garment clinging about Him. It seems to stand simply as a vivid description of His repulsion of their attack and of the power by which He completely overthrew them.¹²

Jesus therefore threw off the bondage which the powers had previously sought to impose upon all of mankind. The cross was the crucible of conflict and combat, where the King of creation confronted the chief contingent of His rebellious subjects. Their strongest weapon, death itself, could not prevail against Him who is life itself. Thus, He "disarmed" them, stripping them of their power over Him and over any man who is alive in Him through baptism. He "made a public display of them," revealing them for what they were, namely, deceivers of men and adversaries of God. And He "triumphed over them," namely, through the power of the resurrection.¹³ There is no question but that these false gods have been caught in their plot to enslave men, and have been dethroned from their apparent position of authority.

Caird suggested that the victory of Christ over the powers may be characterized in three ways.¹⁴ First, there is victory through revelation, wherein the true character and redemptive purpose of God is shown forth in the life of His Son. Second, there is victory through identification, when

¹²W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966), IV, pp. 66-7.

¹³H. Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, trans. John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962), p. 30f.

¹⁴Caird, Principalities and Powers, pp. 83-97.

the believer identifies himself with Christ through faith, transferring his corporate racial solidarity from the first to the second Adam. Through this identification a man may be freed from the power of sin and spiritual death. Third, the cross reveals a victory through obedience (Rom. 5:19), whereby Jesus accepted the will of His Father to suffer and die to cleanse man and the world from sin. In short, what Paul said in Colossians 2:15 is that the deceptive reign of the rebellious and hostile powers is over. They are shown to be "those which by nature are no gods" at all (Gal. 4:8). It is conceivable that Paul was making reference to these defeated powers in 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6:

Even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

There is no question that the resurrection of Christ is the very foundation and hope of the Christian faith. To witness and to receive by faith what occurred on the cross and in the tomb is to find freedom from all false idols. It is to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

THE COMING OF THE END

Following from the victory illustrated in Colossians 2, attention may now be turned to the time of the end of the age, when the enemy will be utterly vanquished:

...when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished (καταύξει) all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. 15:24)!

First, it is interesting to notice that Paul classed the powers as "enemies," paralleling the reference to death as the "last enemy" in verse 26. Trevor Ling asked, "what is the nature of the relationship between the angelic powers and death, that they should be thus linked among the common enemies of Christ?"¹⁵ He suggested for an answer the fact that the powers and death are connected with the law (cf. 15:56, "the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"). Again, the problem arises as to the connection of these angels with legalistic religion outside of Christ (see Chapter 3). In the coming of Jesus, grace has now replaced law, and death has been outdone; both the powers and "the sting of death" will be abolished in the "age to come." The cruciality of the resurrection in Paul's perspective is clear enough: "...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (15:17). Manifested therein is the power of God over the creation, the power which at the end of time will prevail to abolish the hindrances of every enemy.

One of the more interesting aspects of this particular study is the speculation given to determining what the specific fate of the cosmic powers will be. The word which describes their fate in the above verse is *καταργήσῃ*, which to most scholars does not imply directly death or destruction. Vine gave the following meaning: "...to reduce to

¹⁵Trevor Ling, The Significance of Satan (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1961), p. 73.

inactivity, to abolish....Not loss of being is implied, but loss of well-being."¹⁶ Thayer offered this definition: "to render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative, to cause a person or a thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, power."¹⁷ Seen in the light of Colossians 1:16, 20, where the powers are said to be created in and for Christ, and where God is said to reconcile all things to Himself through His Son, the Corinthians passage seems to suggest that the powers will not be condemned to destruction, but perhaps will be in some way redeemed. This suggestion certainly cannot be conclusive, but it is in line with what Scripture itself indicates. The commentary of Charles W. Carter supported this interpretation: "Upon His return Christ shall render null and void all power that exists in opposition to righteousness."¹⁸ C. S. C. Williams, on the other hand, held to the idea of destruction: "...then comes the end when Christ will hand over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has annihilated all spiritual enemies...."¹⁹ Berkhof was of the opinion that death was not the intended fate

¹⁶Vine, I, pp. 13, 14.

¹⁷Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1889), p. 336.

¹⁸Charles W. Carter, "1 Corinthians," Vol. V, The Wesleyan Bible Commentary, ed. Charles W. Carter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 231.

¹⁹C. S. C. Williams, "1 Corinthians," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1962), p. 841.

implied, for the powers were originally created as good, and there is reason to believe (Col. 1:20) that they may again be reconciled to God. Berkhof concluded: "the powers are put out of commission as enemies (vs. 26); at the same stroke they are reinstated in their proper function within Christ's Lordship."²⁰

This latter interpretation may have some validity to it, but it seems that if these cosmic powers have in their long career rebelled against the will of God, and have capitulated to and served Satan, they would need to come to a point of repentance and willful recognition of the Lordship of Christ. Surely if God requires man, a creature endowed with free moral choice, to align himself with the conditions of salvation, there is no reason to doubt that He would require repentance and faith to condition the salvation of these powers. Further, the study of apocalyptic thought revealed that certain of the angelic "Watchers" had yielded to temptation by Satan (see p. 32f.). A certain number of these were bound until the day of judgment:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;...then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment (2 Pet. 2: 4, 9).

Jude 6 stated that the particular punishment of these angels will be "eternal fire." Satan, likewise, will one day be "thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev. 20:10), and his demons destroyed (Mark 1:24). Whether or not the

²⁰Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, p. 32.

principalities and powers can be classed with the above is, in the final analysis, not certain. Paul did not provide a definitive statement on the matter. A substantial and correct conclusion cannot be reached. The most reasonable assumption is, however, that if Satan and his demons await eternal punishment for their disobedience, then these cosmic "rulers" will likewise receive a just punishment for their rebellion. God alone knows the final destiny of any and all of His creatures. While human speculation may stir curiosity, it cannot pronounce with certainty in areas of truth which are not fully visible in the light of revelation. What may be known for certain is that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age (Tit. 2:11, 12).

THE REDEMPTION OF CREATION

A treatment of the defeat of the powers would not be complete without viewing briefly the effect of the appearing of Christ on the physical creation. Romans 8:18-22 clearly indicates that the creation was "subjected to futility" by God Himself, but that with the entrance of the Redeemer into the world, there now is the "hope that the creation itself will also be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (vs. 21). Since all power and authority has been placed in the hands of the King of creation, it is expected that in the age to come the curse upon creation will cease. The harmony of the cosmos

free from the distortion of sin, the harmony of humanity as governed by divine love, yet await the glory of "the revealing of the sons of God."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Walter Grundmann, in his article on power (δύναμις), closed with these words:

The exaltation of Christ implies already the disarming of all cosmic powers. This is one part of the victory of Christ over sin and death and Satan. Here we see the δύναμις of God at work. It is given to Christians to perceive it....It is a matter of recognizing the greatness of the new act of God which underlies the existence of believers. For the existence of those who belong to Christ is newly established by the powerful act of God. It is removed from the sphere of intermediary powers and set under the dominion of Christ.²¹

"It is given to Christians to perceive" that a new governing power is in dynamic process of capturing the complete control of man and his world. The power is that of holy love and righteousness emanating from the very presence of the living God who mysteriously indwells His people. The mission of these "peculiar people" is to bear witness to the "nearness" of their heavenly Father's kingdom. In the assurance of faith, the Church is to live in the victorious trust that the "ruler of this world" has been judged and is on his way out of the sphere of human history. Since in the plan of God Satan and the powers of darkness have yet "a little while" remaining to them, the Body of Christ lives in the midst of continuing struggle with them, holding always to the promise

²¹Walter Grundmann, "δύναμις," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), II, p. 307.

that nothing can separate the believer from the love of God in Christ. The span of history between the old and the new ages is thus a time of intense spiritual warfare between the "children of light" (Eph. 5:8) and the powers of darkness. But even though "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one....this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:19. 4).

To succumb to acknowledging Satan's right to rule would be treason to the Christ; it is an expression of unbelief, and at the worst it is idolatry. I am called upon to confess in the here and now that 'Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!'²²

The proper perspective of power can only be seen from the view that the Christian believer has in being seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20). From this vantage point, the eye of faith perceives the victory of the ages, and is able to focus upon the future day when there will be "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1). The one who endures faithful until the end may incline his ear to hear, in hope, the long awaited proclamation: "behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be among them" (Rev. 21:3). Before that day dawns, however, it is needful to undertake an exploration of practical means whereby the servant of God may deal with the present threat of the hostile supernatural powers.

²²Robert Recker, "Satan: In Power or Dethroned?", Calvin Theological Journal, VI (November, 1971), 153.

Chapter 6

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN CONFRONTATION WITH PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

An attempt has been made in these pages to exercise the mind and the imagination in search of that metaphysical reality known to the Apostle Paul as principalities and powers. This study, centered around the evidences of both canonical and non-canonical writings, supports the notion that supernatural powers who influenced human life were taken very seriously in the ancient world. Since this notion is an integral part of biblical revelation, the continued existence of such powers in modern times may be assumed. Such realization has not been achieved simply in the interest of mental exercise or mystical fascination. What needs to be undertaken at present is the application of some practical suggestions for attitudes and actions by which the Christian can confidently confront these subtle powers. The Apostle John wrote that "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). "God is love," and "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:16, 18). In the presence of light, and in the supreme power of love, the child of faith lives amidst the present evil age in the confident assurance that his Lord has been exalted "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21).

THE POWERS OF DARKNESS AND
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:
A PRESENT REALITY

Should the belief of the ancients and of the early Christians in these angelic powers be reason enough for men today to believe in them as well? Certainly the evidence uncovered in the course of this study cannot be denied, and neither can one deny the rather fearsome and sudden appearance in contemporary times of occult and mystical interests in religion, of social and cultural upheavals, of totalitarian governmental structures (e.g., Hitler in particular, and the Communist movement in general), and of a secular self-sufficiency which has led to spiritual apostasy. If the thesis of this study is true, that the rebellious "rulers" of "this present evil age" (1 Cor. 2:6; Gal. 1:4) seek to capture the minds and wills of men, thereby separating them from the saving knowledge of Christ, then it may be observed that the angelic hosts of evil are active behind the scenes in spreading a conspiracy of deception yet unparalleled in the history of the human race.

There is a multitude of "fads," "fancies," and "fanaticisms" available for human interest in these times. Even when the secular eschatology of "progress" fails to materialize (and it has been failing of late), there is something else that will quickly take its place, i.e., an Eastern guru proclaiming the dawn of a new age, a method of meditation which guarantees peace of mind, a new and dynamic political leader who promises to set things straight, or, on the

domestic front, a divorce from one's lifetime mate and the exciting search for a more stimulating object of fulfillment. In short, the mood of our day is far from conducive to an attitude of faith in the transcendent God of history who chose to reveal Himself fully to men through the immanence of incarnation. A spirit of uncertainty and of disobedience (cf. Eph. 2:2) pervades the atmosphere of our world. There seems to be a strategy behind all of the chaos. There seems to be a schematic method in the way in which men are being cut off from the word of God. In the war between the children of light and the children of darkness, the struggle is carried out in both natural and supernatural spheres of existence. The decisive battle was waged at the cross of Calvary, where the Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6) defeated the principalities and powers (Col. 2:15). Perhaps, at the present juncture of time and eternity, the hosts of Satan and the "holy ones" of God are aligning themselves for the final battle of the age. Perhaps the "blessed hope" (Tit. 2:13) expected by the faithful of God is nearly dawning on the long awaited "day of the Lord" (Joel 2:1f.).

Several New Testament writers spoke implicitly of a spirit of worldliness or of conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15, 16; 1 Pet. 1:14; Matt. 13:22). On the other hand, the Scriptures refer to a spirit of "godliness" (1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:3) and of "holiness" and "righteousness" (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 4:24; Heb. 12:14). There is also the reference to a "spirit of adoption" (Rom. 8:15) by which a man enters into relationship with God, "who desires all men

to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). The "spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) wars against the spirit of godliness and holiness (see Gal. 5:17). Because the battle for the minds of men is waged in the context of spiritual conflict, it is no wonder that Paul exhorted the flock under his care to "stand firm against the schemes of the devil...that you may be able to resist in the evil day" (Eph. 6:10b, 13a). The Christian of the twentieth century needs to realize that "in the last days difficult times will come" (2 Tim. 3:1), for there will be an intensification on the part of the evil powers to capture control of earth and its human inhabitants. The "rulers" of darkness will be working to prepare for the appearance of "the man of lawlessness:"

...that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved (2 Thess. 2:9, 10).

In light of this activity of the enemy, these final pages will be given to the determination of what the servant of God ought to be doing in these times of confrontation. The first priority must be to gain discernment. The effective disciple of Christ, working within the evil world system of this age, will surely long for the same gift of God sought by the young ruler, Solomon:

Give thy servant therefore an understanding mind to govern thy people, that I may discern between good and evil... (1 Kings 3:9, King James Version; cf. Mal. 3:18).

Perhaps the suggestions which follow will shed some helpful light upon the minds of those "who because of practice have

their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:14b).

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT AND THE DEMONIC

The reality of the demonic dimension of existence, as set forth in the course of this study, has been adequately summarized by George Bradford Caird:

Paul believed that society was controlled by angelic rulers, who, though corrupt and doomed to lose their power, retained as long as the present age lasted the stamp of their original God-given authority.¹

The view of Oscar Cullmann was found to be unacceptable, a view which placed these rebellious powers in a role of servanthood under the Lordship of Christ (see Chapter 4, 91f.). The question still lingers, consequently, as to what relationship these powers hold to Satan, and to what extent they are instruments of the domain of darkness. The point at which Satan and the principalities and powers most clearly converge is Ephesians 6:11-13, where they both are seen to be working side by side for the hindrance of the work of God. This is the only explicit reference in the Scriptures which identifies them together. Indeed, a determination of the precise relationship is impossible. Trevor Ling, however, contributed a significant insight along these lines:

...it may be said that the angelic powers represent a particularly important aspect of Satan's being, namely, the potential hostility to the true welfare of men con-

¹George Bradford Caird, Principalities and Powers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 22.

stituted by the religio-cultural systems of Jew and Gentile (italics not in the original).²

This statement lends strong support to the contention of this thesis that the fallen powers work through the religious, cultural, and political systems of men to separate the whole of humanity from the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4b). Clearly, then, wherever Christ is proclaimed, there is an unmasking of the deceptiveness of these powers. There is the entrance of "the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man" (John 1:9).

It is now perceived...that their aim is to hold men in the shadows, and prevent them from coming to the Light by which they themselves have been superseded....The Church, which testifies to the light of Christ, must therefore reckon with their unending hostility. They are powers which operate in the heavenlies, that is to say from a position of superiority to the ordinary man, whom they either now dominate, or, in the case of the believer, seek to bring again beneath their domination.³

These perceptions add a substantial depth to the search for discernment. The recognition of, and an intelligent confrontation with, this realm of reality, are foundational factors in the life of the effective Christian saint.

Discernment in the Christian Life

The sixth chapter of Romans gives witness to the baptism into Jesus Christ whereby the faithful believer dies to the "old self" and is raised to walk "in newness of life."

²Trevor Ling, The Significance of Satan (London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1961), p. 77.

³Ling, p. 74.

Thus, through the act of baptism, "he who has died is freed from sin" (6:7). And if the believer is freed from the power of sin, then he is likewise freed from that which had enabled the fallen powers (serving as "accusers" of men) to exert control over him. To the extent, therefore, that the Christian remains in the life of righteousness by faith in Christ, he remains free from the direct grasp of the powers. This, to be sure, is one reason why the Apostle Paul exhorted the Roman Christians,

...do not let sin reign in your mortal body,...but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. 6:12, 13).

As long as the believer is free from sin, there will be no means whereby the principalities and powers can accuse and bring condemnation upon him. He is to be no longer a slave and servant of sin, but of righteousness and truth. The cleansing of sanctification allows for the full power of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers, thereby providing them adequate means with which to resist the enemy.

Because Christ is the one who has won the decisive victory over the powers (Col. 2:15), and who will ultimately abolish all rule and authority (1 Cor. 15:24), He is the supreme celestial Commander who carries on the offensive battle with the domain of darkness. The prime calling of the Church, therefore, is to abide in her Lord, and to keep free from the deception and dominion of the powers. John Howard Yoder has thus said that "the Church concentrates upon

not being seduced by them."⁴ The Body of Christ must maintain a constant watchfulness governed by a discernment of good and evil (1 John 2:20-27). The individual Christian must heed the advice of Paul to test himself to see whether he is in the faith (2 Cor. 3:5), for to keep "in the faith" is to dwell in that dimension of truth which sets a man free from the bondage to sin. The advice given to Timothy was thus, "keep yourself free from sin" (1 Tim. 5:22).

This concern for the laying aside of the old self, and the complete renewing of the life through Christ is most explicitly explained by Paul in Ephesians 4:17f. He challenged his readers in verse 24 to "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Following this, he proceeded to enumerate all manners of sins which must be laid aside in the new life, and a chief cause given for this renunciation of sin was explained in verse 27: "...do not give the devil an opportunity" (cf. 1 Tim. 5:14, 15). It may be inferred from this that Satan and the powers of darkness seek entrance into the life of the individual Christian and into the activity of the Church, with the motive of destroying faith, setting up barriers to true fellowship, and producing doubt and division. James wrote of a faith which resists the attempts of the enemy: "submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). Likewise, Peter warned his flock that the devil seeks someone "to devour," but his

⁴John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 153.

advice was, "resist him, firm in your faith" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

Jesus Christ is the Lord of a community of persons who are whole, redeemed and free. Such community embodies the fulfillment of the ideal human life as intended by God. Jesus prayed to the Father concerning His followers that He might "keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). Such protection is made possible through the mysterious union of the believer with God the Father and Christ the Son, by means of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 17:21-23; 14:16-18, 23; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:17). The responsibility of the Christian centers around the preservation of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), being faithful to maintain in his own life the truth which has come to him, and to show forth in living witness the freedom that is his in the God of all grace. His responsibility is to "put on the full armor of God" (Eph. 6:11), the "armor of light" (Rom. 13:12), which is to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14). The inner witness of the Spirit, and the outer protection of the armor of light, make for an indefectable defense against "the powers that be."

Detection of False Religion

From the dawn of human history, it has been the strategy of Satan to tempt men with the promise, "you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). The Adversary has set before men alternatives to what had been revealed as the right and acceptable will of God. The investigation of

Galatians and Colossians (see Chapter 3) has shown that the believers there were tempted by false teachings to turn from the full sufficiency of salvation in Christ, and to search for a greater religious satisfaction in the observance of rules and regulations. Trevor Ling helped his readers to see that the deceptive powers purpose to interest men in anything but the true gospel of Christ, for the truth and power of the evangel has already judged and condemned them. John Warwick Montgomery, in his book Principalities and Powers, recognized with the aid of C.S. Lewis that all forms of occult religion offer alternative "shortcuts to reality"⁵ as distinguished from "the way" of salvation embodied in Christ (John 14:6). Every form which "religion" so-called is taking in these days cannot be explored in this study. It can merely be pointed out that the shortcuts offered may encompass such things as the concept of the encounter group and "self-actualization" in the sphere of psychology, various methods of meditation and ascetic discipline offered by Eastern-oriented groups, mysticism, the syncretism of the Scientology movement, the control of "alpha-waves" in the brain to produce maximum peace of mind, etc.

Thieves and robbers. There is surely no lack of "thieves and robbers" who seek to climb "up some other way" than by the "door into the fold of the sheep" (John 10:1). Many involved in the above and in other activities may certainly be well-

⁵John Warwick Montgomery, Principalities and Powers (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1973), p. 174.

meaning persons and, likewise, much of the knowledge gained or methods used by these groups may be legitimate and fully acceptable for their helpfulness offered toward greater humanization. But one must engage in a careful discernment at the point where any of these alternatives claim to provide an ultimate way of human salvation. More than ever before the Church is faced with the awesome responsibility of taking a strong stand on the reality of human sinfulness (Rom. 3:23) and the necessity of salvation in the only One who can forgive that sin (Col. 1:14).

If indeed the gospel is truthful in all of its basic claims, then those who adhere to its message must renounce all notions of self-righteousness, all claims that there is a "god within" each man awaiting liberation, and all modes of humanistic salvation through social involvement. Such may seem to have the form of godliness, but if the presence and power of God is not working through them, they are to be rejected as falling short of redemptive value. Be it understood at this point that all of the aforementioned are not being categorized as being under the domination of the principalities and powers. Such an assumption would be extreme, and would border on fanaticism. What is being asserted is that any form of religious dedication or service which does not derive directly from God may be a means whereby the powers may keep men in ignorance of the truth of the gospel. Further, it must be stated (at the risk of misunderstanding) that even the institution of the Church may deviate in some respects from the essential gospel, and

come under the demonic influence of deceptive powers who would wish to weaken the efficacy of true faith in God. At all points, the need for a genuine exercise of discernment to determine that which is inspired by evil powers and that which is merely a product of human infirmity is essential.

"False teachers." There is considerable warning given in the Scriptures about the deceptiveness of "false teachers." In His Olivet discourse, Jesus advised His disciples, "see to it that no one misleads you" (Matt. 24:4). He prophesied that "false Christs and false prophets will arise...so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:24). Peter mentioned that "there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). The Apostle John wrote of false teachers who had entered into the fellowship of believers (1 John 2:18, 19, 26), and he advised his brethren to "not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Paul wrote to Timothy and charged him to instruct certain men in Ephesus to cease the teaching of "strange doctrines" (1 Tim. 2:3, 4). In a second letter to Timothy Paul foresaw the day when men "will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:4). Thus, it is clear that the early Apostles were gifted with a spiritual discernment by which they were enabled by the Holy Spirit to perceive the presence of evil and falsehood. Though the occurrences mentioned above were conditioned by the times, there is no lack of similar "strange doctrines" abounding in

the present day, satisfying the itching ears of many sincere religious seekers.

Special notice must be given to Paul's exercise of discernment. On his journey to Salamis, he met with Sergius Paulus, the proconsul in that region, "a man of intelligence who desired to hear the word of God." A certain magician, named Bar-Jesus, opposed this meeting, "seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith" (Acts 13:8).

But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, and said, 'You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?' (Acts 13:9, 10; cf. 16:16-18, 19:19).

How desperate the need is in the twentieth century world community for a discernment such as this, and for the boldness to use it for the glory of God. The activity of the fallen powers, working through all channels available to them, must be perceived, confronted and stripped of its weak and apparent power. A significant role of the Christian (often neglected due to scepticism or fear) is to be a "lie detector," cutting through the subtle deceptions of the devil and destroying his strongholds. One must not be too quick to condemn anything that might appear to be a vehicle of evil, for this would be to fall prey to fanaticism and fearful paranoia. The spiritual man should, however, seek daily to be guided by the Holy Spirit, thus being sensitive to the voice and prompting of God Himself who knows better than anyone the schemes of Satan. With such sensitivity, the strategies of the foe will be found out, and the supreme power of Christ the Conqueror known.

The Gospel and Earthly Government

The topic of the subtitle is indicative of a major and massive area of interest, but in the specific light of the thesis topic, the concern may be narrowed down to suggestions of how the individual Christian and the Church are to confront the use and abuse of political power. The findings of Chapter 4 revealed that there is, in the divinely ordained plan of God, a relationship between supernatural "rulers" and the rulers of earthly governments. A conclusion was reached that to some extent human rulers may express the will of the fallen cosmic powers or, if they are obedient to the will of God, they express the administration of His redemptive purpose. It must be recognized that the state can serve the will of God, a fact which is presupposed by Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Timothy 2:2. On the other hand, when the state acts contrary to the express purposes of the Creator, it behooves the Christian to heed the words of Peter and his fellow apostles, "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Humanity cannot live without some form of organized government. Due to the lostness and sinfulness of men, God has allowed that men be subject to the ruling powers in a fallen world. Some, such as H. Berkhof,⁶ have held the hope that since the resurrection of Christ, the rebellious powers would be "Christianized" and would more closely serve God. But due to sin, what the rulers should be and what they are reveals a gap. Some governments, however, America in particular, have

⁶H. Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, trans. John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1962), p. 49.

set out to align themselves with what has been taken to be the will of Almighty God. This is a noble attempt, and is to be commended and continued, for a society which recognizes the providential rule of God provides the freedom wherein the grace of God may be implemented with least resistance.

The difficulty which arises in the search for a biblically based political ethic has been pointed out by Gunnar Hillerdal in his discussion of Luther's concept of the "two kingdoms." He stated that "the Bible should not be read as a lawbook for society,"⁷ and that it is not an easy matter finding clear solutions in the Scriptures to the problem of Church and state. Therefore, this section will deal generally with the matter of Christian conscience and the responsibility of discerning the use of power.

John Calvin believed, in accord with the principle of Acts 5:29, that a Christian's obedience to God supersedes that of the earthly ruler, if in fact the ruler acts out of bounds of his divinely ordered task:

...in that obedience which we have shown to be due the authority of rulers, we are always to make this exception, indeed, to observe it as primary, that such obedience is never to lead us away from obedience to him, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty their scepters ought to be submitted....If they command anything against him, let it go unesteemed.⁸

⁷Gunnar Hillerdal, "Romans 13 and Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," Lutheran World, X (January, 1963), 19.

⁸John Calvin, Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Vol. XXI, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 1520.

Calvin further appealed to the example of Daniel when he refused to obey the edict of the king to worship no other god but Darius himself (Dan. 6:10, 22, 23). There is no question but that the servant of God must, in such circumstances as this, remain captive to the will of his Creator.

Tension between gospel and government. The gospel and the political structures of the world are not mutually exclusive spheres of activity. Rather, a relationship of "tension" exists between them, for in reality both spheres dovetail in the will of God for human life. Primarily, the gospel denies both the supernatural powers, and the earthly authorities, the right to become absolute authorities in themselves, since all authority derives from God (see Chapter 2, p. 50f.). The tendency of the ruler and of the state to be self-exalted must be checked by the commitment of the Church to a role of servanthood of God's will and stewardship of His delegated power. A Christian will thus find that he cannot completely identify himself with any one particular form of human government, for the efforts of sinful men in a fallen world can never fully approximate the kingdom of God. This situation has been aptly described by J. Schoene:

As the gospel proclaims the royal rule of Jesus Christ--not by force but by the Word alone--and announces to man freedom from the power of sin and of Satan and opens to him the way to a life of the future world, it is essentially removed from political structures and it relativizes all secular obligation of man. It claims absolute preeminence over any secular structure of order.⁹

⁹J. Schoene, "Gospel and Political Structures," Concordia Theological Monthly, XL (June, 1969), 508.

The key word in Schoene's thinking is "relativizes." The gospel reveals that all human government is but a passing, temporary phenomenon, and has been instituted in the present age to maintain order and administer justice. Peter and John were "relativizing" the authority of the Council when they proclaimed, "...whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you, rather than to God, you be the judge, for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19; italics not in the original).

Oscar Cullmann outlined in similar fashion the tense relationship between gospel and government:

The believer lives in a world concerning which he knows that it will pass away, but he knows that it still has its divinely willed place in the framework of redemptive history and is ruled by Christ. In so far as he knows that it will pass away, he denies it; in so far as he knows that it is the divinely willed framework of the present stage of redemptive history, he affirms it.¹⁰

This description paints quite accurately the paradoxical attitude of tension which characterizes the political concern of the Christian. Even though he awaits the return of the One upon whose shoulders rests the power of righteous and just government (Is. 9:6, 7), he still must involve himself in the maintenance of order in a world permeated with sin and ungodliness. Most encouraging is the attitude of Robert Recker who wrote that "certainly the 'already' of the result of Christ's coming must not be denied in the process of emphasizing the 'not yet' of the dislocation, tension, enmity

¹⁰Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time, trans. Floyd V. Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 212.

and rebellion still existent in this world."¹¹ The proper approach of the Christian is based on the assurance of the Lordship of Christ, and his optimism concerning the outcome of history stems from the certainty of a joyous and climactic victory for all who remain faithful until the end. The son of God can find peace of heart in the midst of the present age only through the faith that the kingdom is come, and through belief in the fact that Satan and his hosts are defeated enemies.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a man who lived in the reality of this tension. He was a Christian who was committed to a radical discipleship and, being caught in conflict with the demonic exercise of political power in Nazi Germany in the 1940's, lost his life. His words are thus not spun from the imagination of one who sits in a theological tower. He spoke from the depths of his experience. He believed that the role of the Church in the world was two-fold: 1) to proclaim the gospel of Christ, and 2) to remind the state of its God-given task to govern justly.¹² This latter role involved the responsibility of freeing men from the illusion that a political structure could be a substitute for salvation. The Church was to speak to the state a "political word" which would ever set before its sight the

¹¹Robert Recker, "Satan: In Power or Dethroned?", Calvin Theological Journal, VI (November, 1971), 136.

¹²Thomas Ogletree, "The Church's Mission to the World in the Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," Encounter, XXV (Autumn, 1964), 457f.

redemptive purpose of the Almighty. Participants in the kingdom of God were thus to serve as the conscience of the society, and also as its servant. And when the state rejected this role, and refused to heed the political word, the Church was to enter into the witness of suffering for the sake of righteousness.

Bonhoeffer was especially concerned with the living of the Christian life in the modern world.¹³ He was quite critical of weak commitment within the Church to this role of servanthood. When in prison, he penned some suggestions for a creative reform:

As a fresh start she should give away all her endowments to the poor and needy. The clergy should live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations, or possibly engage in some secular calling. She must take part in the social life of the world, not lording it over men, but helping and serving them. She must tell men, whatever their calling, what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others.¹⁴

This concretization of selfless love, for Bonhoeffer, is the witness which must be brought to bear upon the power structures of the world. Ogletree added that though the first task of the Church is the proclamation of the gospel, there must be a redemptive involvement within secular institutions:

Insofar as we have opportunity...we must also be concerned about the character and quality of the social structures themselves and the effect of these structures

¹³Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, trans. R.H. Fuller (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959), p. 47.

¹⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers From Prison, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. R.H. Fuller (London: S.C.M. Press, 1956), p. 166.

upon men. Do they give the people to whom we preach the opportunity to be whole men?¹⁵

This is a good question, and a concern very much needed in the present day. The sincere preacher may proclaim with zeal the gospel of liberation from sin, but if the structures of society do not allow for free expression of the "new life" of divine grace, they also must be called to task. This role of prophetic pronouncement will lead almost inevitably to some form of sacrifice, persecution, or suffering for the Church, simply because the authority of her message presents a major threat to those who would seek to maintain their own self-interest and base of power within the social, economic and political spheres of life.

How, Helmut Thielicke asked, can a social structure involved in demonic abuse of power be summoned to repent? It cannot be, for it is a whole greater than the sum of its individual participants, and its center of will cannot be located. Thielicke therefore changed the focus:

...it is only the men who establish and operate the institutions--not the institutions themselves--that can be summoned to repent and be converted.¹⁶

Reinhold Niebuhr: "the impossible possibility." Reinhold Niebuhr's treatment of personal and social sin in Moral Man and Immoral Society (New York: Scribner, 1932) has had a profound impact in this area of tension between the love ethic

¹⁵Ogletree, p. 467.

¹⁶Helmut Thielicke, Theological Ethics, II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 254.

of the gospel and the sinfulness of the unregenerate world. Sin, for Niebuhr, was the result of man's finiteness and freedom, and stemmed from the attempt to escape existential anxiety apart from seeking God Himself. The treatment for sin on a personal level, love and forgiveness, was seen to extend to the larger social sphere in the form of justice:

Niebuhr argued that the social expression of love was justice. Society cannot live by pure ideals. It must accept the limited possibilities given by political actualities.¹⁷

Because of the ambiguous mixture of good and evil in socio-political life, "society never faces us with simple moral alternatives."¹⁸ On this level, therefore, the inability to apply an absolute ethical ideal may necessitate a Christian realism which is forced to accept a lesser of two evils. Thus, Niebuhr advocated the "relevance of an impossible ethical ideal," based on his conviction that Christian love will serve as the inspirational ideal which motivates persons to strive for a maximum social justice.

This realism caused Niebuhr to hold to a form of the apocalyptic view of history which expected a fulfillment of human society somewhere beyond history itself. Yet he still believed that the Christian could work sincerely for the cause of social reform without falling prey to a pessimistic despair over the gross injustices of fallen men:

¹⁷Kenneth Hamilton, "Reinhold Niebuhr," Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 459.

¹⁸William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology (Rev. ed.; London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 161.

...believing that anything he can do will have significance in the ultimate fulfillment of history, the Christian is driven to action and does what he can even if there is no apparent hope of success.¹⁹

Such action necessitates many vocations. There is a place for the pacifist who, though to some degree unrealistic, must be credited for taking Jesus' teachings seriously. There is a place for prophets to awaken social conscience, and a place for Christian statesmen to "stand in the gap" in an attempt to implement divine righteousness. Wherever the Christian finds himself, he is to be a catalyst for the outflow of the grace of God overcoming sin and evil, and transforming human life into the image and likeness of the Son of God.

The thrust of the Christian witness must therefore be aimed at the salvation of individuals. God is concerned with persons, and it is through the establishment of redemptive relationships that His kingdom is built. To the extent that one is committed to love people with the compassionate love of Christ, he is fulfilling the will of the Father. An ultimate hope cannot be placed in the perfectibility of the social order, for the sinfulness of the fallen world will not allow for the maximum success of a human scheme of government. But hope can be placed in the fact that what is redeemed for God will remain so, and will be carried over as everlasting value into the kingdom of heaven, on the day when the seventh angel will sound, and will proclaim:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15).

¹⁹Hordern, p. 166.

THE KINGDOM COMMUNITY

In relationship to the principalities and powers, what is it in the present day that best accomplishes their defeat? What ought to be the Church's responsibility with regard to the unveiling of the deceptive influence they hold? Paul gave a substantial indication of what this responsibility is when he stated the purpose of his calling:

...to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places (Eph. 3:9, 10).

The "mystery" is to be identified in Ephesians 3:6, this being the fact that God had chosen the Gentiles to be "fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." The breaking down of the "barrier of the dividing wall" (Eph. 2:14) between Jew and Gentile, and the formation of a "body" of free and equal men was the glorious mystery which was to be made known to the powers in the heavenly places. But why should this be made known to the powers? One reason is that the "national angels" who had once ruled over specific nations were now being shown that in and through Christ men could no longer be divided by national or racial differences. Another reason would be the revelation that above and beyond the observance of the law of Moses, and the adherence to the pagan mystery religion, there was a way of salvation which no longer depended upon the intermediary function of the angelic beings. Men could now approach God directly through faith

in the merits of Christ. And lastly, the fact of the forgiveness of sins released any grip which the powers could maintain upon those who were now "fellow-members of the body." In short, the Church was to make known to the powers the news that their day of dominion was over, and that their power was rapidly waning. The manifestation of the mystery of God, which may appropriately be called "lived truth," ushered in the dawn of a new day in the life of humanity.

The Redemptive Value of "Lived Truth"

In the light of this mystery, it may be seen that all attacks against the strongholds of the powers will be to no avail unless the Church is actively demonstrating the freedom which Jesus Christ can bring into the lives of people. The witness to what God has wrought must take concrete, visible form. This realization led Berkhof to conclude that:

...we shall only resist social injustice and the disintegration of community if justice and mercy prevail in our own common life....The minimum and at the same time the maximum to which we are called is what Paul himself teaches: to be a church which in word and deed lives from the fact that Christ has overcome the powers, and which holds them at arm's length by virtue of this faith.²⁰

Those among the Body of Christ who exhibit the most effective witness are those who see all of life's activity through the eyes of faith, who allow themselves to be used as vessels for the release of divine love to heal the hurts of humanity, and who genuinely love not only their brethren, but all men.

Those who incarnate in the power of the Spirit the life of the Lord Jesus, and who give themselves unreservedly for the

²⁰Berkhof, Christ and the Powers, pp. 42, 52.

cause of the kingdom, are those who pose the greatest threat to the influence of the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Where the lamp of faith and total trust in God burns brightly, and where the cause of bringing justice to human life is taken seriously, there the darkness will be dispelled, bondages will be broken, and men will walk in newness of life.

Gordon Rupp reflected this very same perspective:

There may come a melting away of evil forces and of seemingly immovable obstacles through the works of mercy, through the words of truth, through the deeds of righteousness of innumerable individual Christian men and women who among them have changed and then refashioned a climate of opinion.²¹

In short, the ideal which the Church proclaims must be experienced and practiced in her own community life. All social, economic, racial and political barriers should be overcome in the practice of a common life dedicated to the glory of God. Human relationships which reflect the genuine presence of love will thus serve to make the mystery of God known to the principalities and powers. What a profound move of the Holy Spirit would take place if all believers, in a moment of faith and in an attitude of forgiveness, were to love one another as God has loved them. How the prince of darkness would cringe at the radiance of victory emanating from a united fellowship of the children of light! If only those great enemies of the soul, doubt, fear, and unbelief, could be crushed, the ideal could increasingly become the real.

²¹Gordon Rupp, Principalities and Powers (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 49.

The Body of Christ, then, as a redeemed community of whole persons, has the privileged potential to act in the God-given authority of Christian discipleship to discern where and how the powers are still working to separate men from God:

That Christ is Lord, a proclamation to which only individuals can respond, is nonetheless a social, political, structural fact which constitutes a challenge to the powers.²²

Such a responsibility, and opportunity, presses upon the Church the importance of living faithful to that quality of Christian life to which it is called.

Suffering for the Sake of Righteousness

Bonhoeffer already pointed out that if "the powers that be" put up resistance to the witness which the Christian chooses to bear, then inevitably suffering may result. The remarkable paradox of history is that the suffering and death of one righteous man has brought about the victorious redemption of the race. The mystery of suffering, whereby Jesus did not resist the evil exerted against Him, has manifested in time and in space the supreme power of the universe, divine love. What appeared to be a victory of evil over good was in fact a demonstration of this superior power working to transform all evil into good. Jesus, by showing forth the confidence of His Father's sovereignty (John 19:11), exposed evil for what it really was: apparent and temporary power. His own apparent "powerlessness" turned out to be the way

²²Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, p. 159.

in which love wins its victories; not by force or coercion, not by underhanded means, but by proving itself to be the primary energy and impetus by which the entire creation holds together, and the ultimate purpose for which God created men and angels. The expression of such love, especially in times of persecution and danger, does more to break the power of evil than any amount of force. Thus, a testimony such as that given by Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60) will exert a profound effect upon those who witness the invincible faith of the one who cannot, under any circumstances, be separated from the love of his Redeemer.

The supremacy of love inspired Caird to exclaim that "as 'men in Christ' we must be ready to absorb all that the powers of evil can do to us, and to neutralize it with forgiving love."²³ Yoder spoke of what he believed to be the one realm wherein a Christian is to imitate his Lord, this being the concrete social meaning of the cross as it relates to enmity and power: "...servanthood replaces dominion, forgiveness absorbs hostility. Thus--and only thus--are we bound by New Testament thought to 'be like Jesus.'"²⁴

The prime passion of Paul's life and ministry was to exhibit the very character of Christ:

...we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. 4:9, 10).

²³Caird, Principalities and Powers, p. 100.

²⁴Yoder, p. 134.

Paul then in chapter 5, verse 7, explained that "we walk by faith, not by sight." That, precisely, is the key to the victory of love: to see beyond the veil of time into eternity, where all that is done for the sake of righteousness in a spirit of faith will receive due reward. Peter and the apostles were walking by faith when they left the Council "rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

In this present age, there can be no attachment to the expectation of complete outward victory. There must be a willingness to follow Jesus in His mission of absorbing evil and hostility, perceiving in the depths of faith the victory and supremacy of divine love. Heinrich Schlier expressed so well the call to a life of sacrifice:

If justice, truth, peace and salvation generally, are to wrestle successfully with injustice, falsehood, unrest and havoc--which, since Adam have determined the course of the world because of the alliance between the principalities and sin--this will come about only through sacrifices, and finally through the sacrifice for which the sacrifice of Christ was the model.²⁵

Such sacrifice appears at the moment of suffering to be a defeat, but in the realm of eternity, the powers of darkness who continue to rule for the remainder of this age know full well that the sacrifice of love, which emanates from God, is a sign and seal of their ultimate dethronement and judgment.

A brief word must be said concerning the question of whether or not pacifism, as a life style and witness characteristic of Jesus, can be lived realistically in a world of

²⁵Heinrich Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961), p. 62.

power politics, military strength, and conflicting ideologies on an international level. This is the problem Niebuhr spent most of his life wrestling with. How, for example, is the Christian to respond to the forward advance of the Communist cause, and the principalities and powers who are operative behind it? Some, in good conscience and feeling called of God, would respond with support of military force to halt these forces. Others, perhaps, would see in the present situation the final outworking of history as allowed by the permissive will of God, and would thus trust in the sovereignty of His will and power to bring victory and goodness out of defeat. Permeating both views must be the awareness that the best the Church can hope for until the coming of her King is to maintain a maximum peace on an international level, and to reach as many persons as possible with the message of the gospel at the grass roots level. How to maintain the peace is the controversial question. In the sphere of the confrontation of conflicting ideologies, each Christian must choose whether it is right to respond with military strength, or to rely in faith upon a witness of non-resistant and forgiving love. The one who would choose to support military force, however, must be careful to do so with the awareness that the real battle is being waged in the realm of spiritual conflict, and that the winning of the war with the powers of evil must be accomplished through the spirit of faith and the perseverance of prayer. In the long run, what will win the greatest victories is not a fleet of warships or a stockpile of nuclear arms, but the revelation of the truth of God,

"as truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21). Until this ideal truth is fully actualized in human life, there will continue to be diverse opinions within the Body of Christ in regard to how the love ethic of Jesus is to be applied to the complexities of life in the global village of the late twentieth century.

The Power of Prayer

In the face of confrontation with rebellious powers of evil, a preparedness and strategy (both offensive and defensive) must be conditioned by a faith in the superior power of the divine Spirit. Zechariah has related the word of the Lord that great things are accomplished "'not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6). The servant of God must be dependent upon the strength of this Spirit, and cannot hope to rely upon his own meagre faculties to win battles waged against "the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4). To attempt to do so is foolish, and will result only in defeat. Satan's power is not to be underestimated.

Following the passage in Ephesians 6 in which Paul described the powers against which the Christian wrestles, he listed the instruments of the "armor of God" with which one may "be able to resist in the evil day...and...to stand firm:"

...in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (Eph. 6:16-18).

The assurance of salvation and a knowledge of the word of God

are essential aspects in the life of the saint. Taking the nourishment of spiritual truth is as vital for the health of the soul as is eating for the health of the body. Further, the constancy of prayer "in the Spirit" and "alertness" are to govern one's walk in the midst of the world. Concerning this matter of praying in the Spirit, James Stewart offered some helpful advice:

The real warfare...lies in the invisible realm where sinister forces stand flaming and fanatic against the rule of Christ. And the only way to meet that demonic mystic passion is with the dunamis and passion of the Lord. Only Spirit can conquer spirit....The thrust of the demonic has to be met with the fire of the divine.²⁶

The source of power for "the fire of the divine" is none other than the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Too often do people shy away from the precious and vital truth that "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22), and without forgiveness no fellowship with God, and without fellowship with God continued bondage to Satan. It is no wonder, therefore, that the "brethren" in Revelation 12:11 overcame Satan "because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony...." The faithful servant of God will not fail to daily appropriate the cleansing and protective power which is his through the sacrifice of Calvary, for he will perceive moment by moment that he walks in the midst of an intense spiritual warfare.

Alertness is a necessary quality in the life of the one who takes seriously the reality of cosmic conflict. The

²⁶James Stewart, "On A Neglected Emphasis In New Testament Theology," Scottish Journal of Theology, IV, No. 3 (1951), 301.

words of Jesus, as recorded in Mark 13:33-37, mention three times, "be on the alert!", in reference to the days prior to His coming. He was recorded in Luke 21:36 to have exhorted His disciples to "keep on the alert at all times." Peter warned his readers, "be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith..." (1 Pet. 5:8. 9). The Apostle John, speaking in reference to the "world system" under the domination of the evil one, shared that "this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (1 John 5:4). The saint simply cannot afford to become lax in his discernment of what God is purposing to do in the world, and what the hosts of evil are doing to hinder the realization of redemption. The soldier of Christ cannot afford to falter in his faith, for on the front lines of battle "the flaming missiles of the evil one" are a constant threat to the one who trusts in God.

Some may be inclined to believe that the whole idea of powers and principalities, and the notion of a cosmic battle, are a mere mythological and imaginative mode of picturing the conflicts of good and evil which reside within the human person, and in the nature of existence. Such an inclination is precisely what the fallen powers would wish to see prevail in the thinking of men, and especially in the minds of Christian men. Avoiding the pitfalls of extremism, taking care lest every wrong is attributed to a "hidden conspiracy," and relying upon the discernment given by the Holy Spirit, agreement may be found with the thought of Schlier:

...watchfulness springs from this fearless knowledge of the reality of the principalities and their effectiveness; it guards against the snares of this spirit; it is calmly aware of what is really happening in this world (italics not in the original).²⁷

A cautious and calm spirit of non-compromise with the schemes of the powers must prevail in the Christian community. The Church must take heed that even as she has "heard that anti-christ is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen" (1 John 2:18). At the present time in history, the extensive misery caused by economic hardship, the increase in religious syncretism, and the radical shifts in political power on an international level may soon provide an opportune moment at which Satan and the rebellious powers will make their final blasphemous move to dominate the world system. It is likely that when "the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3) the powers of darkness will be at peak performance. May the Body of Christ, committed to a life of faith in God, be in readiness to "discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3), and "to resist in the evil day" (Eph. 6:13) the attempts of the enemy to weaken that faith.

SUMMARY AND FINAL CONCLUSION

Anyone who takes seriously the Holy Scriptures, and the testimony of those who have written them, must accept the fact that the dimension which has been identified as principalities and powers is in some sense a real part of existence.

²⁷Schlier, Principalities and Powers in the New Testament, p. 65.

The suggestion has been made in this final chapter that these powers are still active in the present day, and that their influence in all areas of human life must be discerned by the Christian, for in some way (the precise nature of which is not given) these powers serve the sinister scheme of Satan, the devil "who deceives the whole world" (Rev. 12:9).

The Christian community must keep itself pure from the stain of sin and thus from the accusing grasp of the powers, and it must perceive the appearance of false religion and "strange teachings" which may take the form of godliness but deny God Himself. Further, the Christian community must continually remind the governing authorities of their "relativized role" in relationship to the ultimate purposes of the kingdom of God. The Body of Christ must exemplify the very life of her Lord, and should be willing to make a sacrifice of love when confronted with the hostility of alien powers, knowing that the supreme power of "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6) is the best weapon against evil. The high calling of the Church, to make known the "mystery" of the Body of believers in Christ, can only be effectively accomplished "in the Spirit" and with the aid of the full "armor of God." The continued incarnation of the life of Christ in and through the Church will be a witness to the world of the supremacy of the power of the living and true God, and will be a sign and a seal of the mere apparent power of the fallen cosmic rulers, who have already been judged through the victory of the resurrection and who are doomed to a sure defeat.

A final word must be spoken to the reader who perhaps has had difficulty accepting some of the conclusions drawn in the course of this study. The biblical understanding which has been set forth in these pages must compel any serious student to approach the reality of principalities and powers with an open mind. Surely, the limited dualism, the personal embodiment of evil, and the nature of sin and salvation portrayed in the world view set forth by the apocalyptic writers, Jesus, and Paul most adequately fit the realities of human experience. To take seriously the threat of spiritual warfare is simply to believe as Jesus did, and He, if anyone, may be trusted. Spiritually speaking, therefore, the modern age is just as dark and in need of deliverance as was the ancient world at the time of Christ. This biblical understanding of reality compels the rejection of the attempts made by theologians and others to "demythologize" the supernatural framework of the gospel message. Satan, demons, and the principalities and powers were not merely the product of the fearful imaginations of the ancients. They represent a substantial sphere of reality, and are yet to be found quite active in the modern world, threatening still to capture the minds and the wills of men, thereby separating them from the knowledge of God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Even so, it must be allowed that the non-acceptance of the existence of these personal powers of evil need not create barriers between those who do believe and those who do not believe. G.H.C. MacGregor presented an affirmation of faith which may serve as a unifying factor for all who seek

to order their lives according to the truth of God:

Many of us will be disposed to regard such beliefs as simply part of the religious symbolism and ideology of the times in which Paul lived. But whether the beliefs be accepted or not makes no difference to the fundamental Christian affirmation that amidst the worst evils with which the world can confront us it is possible in Christ to have that unimpaired fellowship with God wherein is man's true blessedness and peace.²⁸

The prime source of agreement among Christians must ever be their affirmation of faith in the God who fails not. The promise of Paul stands unshaken, that nothing in all of creation, if it be resisted with unwavering faith, can cut off the creature from the blessed communion with his Creator, "which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39).

²⁸G.H.C. MacGregor, "Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul's Thought," New Testament Studies, I (September, 1954), 28.

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