Saint Paul's doctrine of sin

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ABSTRACT

St.Paul sees sin both as 'prenomic' ("in the world before the law was given" Rom.5.13) and as revealed by the law. The law was meant to "make alive" (Gal.3.21), but Paul came to see that the law reveals man's inability to fulfil God's demand, and, in fact, energises 'prenomic' sin, making it 'transgression'. This realisation does not affect Paul's estimate of the law ; rather, the law's failure to fulfil its function in man is explained by the fact that man, as flesh, is "sold under sin" (Rom.7.14). The flesh is not inherently sinful, but is dominated by the power of sin.

"All have sinned" (Rom.3.23) and sin is essentially one, though three forms of sin are to be found in Paul's thought. 'Prenomic' sin is a dominant feature of human activity or living which distinguishes it as resulting in alienation from God. This conception is made concrete in two directions. Firstly, transgression, which requires the context of the law, has the elements of defiance of God's demand and subjective guilt. Secondly, sin personalised is the hidden power of sin, which holds man in slavery.

St.Paul is not so much concerned with the origin of sin as with its consequences of alienation from God, 'more sin' and death. It is as God reveals himself in the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit that sin is revealed ; it is in the revelation of Christ that God's purpose ~~for man~~ of faith is made known and man's failure to fulfil God's purpose is revealed. The Christian, though Christ has condemned sin in the flesh (Rom.8.3), has to contend with the fact that he is still in the flesh, as he awaits the full outworking of God's action in Christ in the resurrection of the dead.

CONTENTS

PREFATORY NOTE

The Letters : Romans
1 and 2 Corinthians
Galatians
Philippians
Colossians
1 and 2 Thessalonians

are here taken to represent St.Paul's writings. Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles - whether or not they are Pauline judged by other criteria - do not augment or substantially alter what is contained in the letters listed above on the subject of sin. The speeches in Acts and the letter to the Hebrews are not taken as Pauline.

Biblical references are quoted in the R.S.V. translation, the Greek being added where the translation might obscure the point which the quotation is used to illustrate.

I SIN AND FLESH

A. Sin under the Law

In mapping out Paul's thought on the subject of sin we have to give some attention to the background against which he considers the subject. Paul is concerned with sin against two backgrounds, or rather, in two different contexts. There is sin in the context of the dispensation 'under the law'; this context is the situation of the Jew. The other context is that of the common humanity referred to in the phrase πᾶσα σάρξ. This context of flesh includes both Jew and Gentile in its ambit. Sin in this latter context we will categorise as 'prenomic' sin - a phrase suggested by Paul's assertion that "sin indeed was in the world before the law was given" (Rom.5.13), and which avoids the more usual term 'original' sin. The phrase 'original sin' has acquired meanings in the course of the discussion of Christian doctrine which are not Pauline. It seems in the best interests of clarity in the exposition of Paul's thought to coin a fresh term for the present purpose.

It has been suggested that there are two types of sin in Paul's thought [1], but this is misleading. It is more accurate to say that the same phenomenon, sin, is seen in two different contexts. Paul's statement that "all have sinned" (Rom.3.9,23, .11,32) implies that sin is one and the same in essence [2]. This "all have sinned" comprises the sin of the Jew as well as that of the Gentile. Both Jew and Gentile are, in the essential aspects of sin, in the same case ; both are alienated from God. The Jew as well as the Gentile falls short of the glory of God.

We proceed to examine what Paul says about sin, firstly, in the context of the law, and, later, in the context of mankind without reference to an explicit covenant relation with God in the law.

Notes of I.A.

1. E.P.Gould,Baptist Review,1880,p.233,in an article : "Paul's Doctrine of Sin",claims "that in the Apostle's [Paul's] doctrine there is a sin that is guilt,and a sin that is not guilt,and the two are to be carefully distinguished". R.Bultmann,The Theology of the New Testament, Vol.1,p.253 : "in Rom.5.13f. it is perhaps possible to discover a differentiation between sin for which man is responsible and sin for which he is not responsible".

2. A.Nygren,Romans,p.130 (commenting on Rom.2.12) : " "Under the law" and "without the law",that is the difference. All have sinned,therein is the similarity. [between Jew and Gentile who "both belong to the old aeon and stand under the wrath of God"] ".

1. The Knowledge of Sin.

The Jew at the time of Paul saw the law as a bulwark against sin. He was more concerned with the avoidande of sin, sublimating the drives of the יצר [1] by study of the law, than with forgiveness, though the latter interest is present [2]. From the position of faith in Christ, Paul sees the law in a quite new way. His experience leads him to say that "through the law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom.3.20, cp.7.7). He finds that the law, rather than being a bulwark against sin, is, in fact, a revelation of sin.

There are three elements in the law's revelation of sin :

(i) the law's nature as a code of commandments,

(ii) as giving knowledge of God's will,

and (iii) because it blinded the Jew to the revelation of God in Christ.

We will look at these three elements in detail.

(i) The law is to be seen in the context of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, with the wide range of significance of God's gracious action which this implies. At the same time, the law is a code of commandments. The law contains commandments, ordinances, injunctions as an integral feature, and Paul is concerned with these ethical demands in the law. Indeed, W.Gutbrod can say [3] : " νόμος is regarded by Paul chiefly as that which demands action by God man, namely as a definite purpose. Hence the law is 'kept' (Rom.2.25 ; cf. Gal.5.3, 6.13). Hence there are ἔργα νόμου required by the law (Rom.3.28 et passim)". In the same place, Gutbrod quotes the observation of A.W.Slaten, "that Paul often uses νόμος qualitatively, 'that is with special emphasis upon the essential law-quality of law, its "lawness", so to speak'" [4].

In Paul's statement "through the law (διὰ γὰρ νόμου) comes knowledge of sin" (Rom.3.20) νόμος is anarthrous. Such usage is categorised by Sanday and Headlam [5] as referring to "law in general" in contrast with the use of νόμος with the article to refer to the Law of Moses. We would question whether Paul did in fact

think in such a general way in the matter of law. The Mosaic law is present in all his thinking about law, even when he is considering the relation to God of the Gentiles - such are, by definition, outside the dispensation of God's election and the revelation of that ~~whic~~ law which follows on the election as part of the covenant relationship. Though Sanday and Headlam explicitly place Rom.3.20 in the category as referring to "law in general", it is better placed in their further category where "the absence of the article calls attention to it [the Law of Moses] not as proceeding from Moses, but in its quality as law ; non quia Mosis sed quia lex as Gifford expresses it in his comment on Gal.2.19 (p.46)" [6].

Paul does not treat of law as an abstract concept derived from the contemplation of a multiplicity of laws. For Paul, law is 'the Law'. When he says that knowledge of sin comes through law, he is thinking of law as exemplified in the Law of Moses, and is not thinking merely of common jurisprudence. Ulrich Simon has described the biblical tradition of law - and this description portrays Paul's position with clarity - : "The Hebrew - Christian tradition of rib - krisis is not the Roman ius, and its dialectic is not that of jurisprudence..... The law is a "frame of mind". [B.Gemser] which discerns beyond every case an encounter between persons. [But this encounter does not revert to capricious and unstable situation-ethics,] for it is grounded in a context of cosmic order" [7]. The law, while it is a code of commandments, is also God's law, and it is in this aspect that encounter between persons, ~~becomes~~ between God and the man under the law, becomes evident. Moreover, there is a consonance between the law and the created order because both are God's, who is one, and his work and revelation of himself are a unity. Thus when Paul says "διὰ γὰρ νόμου comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom.3.20) we can take it that law means the law of God, of which law that given to Moses is the determinative example. There are, conceivably, other forms of this law of God, such as 'natural law' or the Noachian commandments, which are often adduced in the discussion of Romans 2.12-16 (not

that we ~~would~~ wish to employ them in the exegesis of that passage). Suffice it here to say that it is through the law of God, and in Paul's discussion this means the law given to Moses, that the knowledge of sin comes. Law provides knowledge of sin both in its property as a code of commandments and because it is God's law.

Before we go on to note the importance of the fact that it is God's will that is revealed in the law, we glance at the way in which the law - as a code of commandments - reveals sin.

The law gives knowledge of sin as it makes possible παράπτωμα , παράβασις , παρακοή . A precondition of transgression is that against which we transgress ; sp Paul can say : "where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom.4.15). The παράπτωμα , as a 'falling aside of', needs that aside of which it may fall. The Jew sees the law as binding upon him, and it is as he acts in contravention of the law that he transgresses. In what way does this contravention reveal sin ? Having seen that the law is a precondition of transgression, what is the relation between transgression and sin ?

The denotation of ἁμαρτία is wider than παράπτωμα , while the latter is completely covered in the term ἁμαρτία . Moreover, παράπτωμα is at the heart of ἁμαρτία . If we take ἁμαρτία as a metaphor from the picture of someone 'missing the mark' - and the Septuagint use as ~~a translation~~ the usual translation of חטאה agrees with this [8] - we have to identify the mark which is missed. The law is clearly relevant as the 'mark' which is to be attained in the life of the Jew.

All παράπτωμα is ἁμαρτία , but clearly, as we will see, ἁμαρτία is not, for Paul solely a matter of transgression.[9]

(ii) The law reveals sin in that the law is the declared will of God, so that transgression of the law is action against God.

Whereas Paul can say "where there is no law there is no transgression" (Rom.4.15), he does describe Adam's sin, which antedates the giving of the law, as παράπτωμα (Rom.5.15,17,18), παράβασις (Rom.5.14), παρακοή (Rom.5.19).

Like transgression of the law, Adam's sin is contravention of the declared will of God, and that particular transgression is both a special instance and a paradigm. It is special in being the first of sins and outside the dispensation of the law ; it is typical in being action against the known will of God. Such transgression of the declared will of God, with no possibility for excuses, is sin 'in the raw', is sin as the law reveals it. Without the law, without the declaration of God's will, excuses might be advanced ; in the context of the law, sin as transgression is clear, the heinous nature of man's rebellion against God is revealed. The law, as declaration of God's will, reveals that it is God himself aginst whom man sins.

This situation is clear in the Old Testament. Sin is action against God at Leviticus 6.2 : "If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbour in a matter of deposit or security, through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbour...." (cp. Numb.5.6). Action against one's neighbour is seen pre-eminently as action against God, the knowledge of this situation being given in the law. In Jeremiah, to sin (חטא) is explicitly "against the Lord" [10]. Paul's thought is clearly a reiteration of the Old Testament at this point. Sin is not, for him, the ἀδικία of the Greek world, a failure to live by the rules of social life. Righteousness is righteousness before God, not before one's neighbour. Paul indeed employs the word ἀδικία , but with the Old Testament background meaning of righteousness before God.[11]

The thoroughgoing nature of Paul's insistence that sin is against God is further illustrated in the contrast of his use of the designation ἁμαρτωλός with contemporary Jewish usage. In the Synoptic Gospels, ἁμαρτωλός occurs as largely a term of Jewish social distinction. "Publicans and sinners" were social outcasts [12]. In John 9, Jesus is called ἁμαρτωλός by a group of Pharisees - an ironic touch. Paul only once possibly lapses into this contemporary usage of the word in the phrase "Gentile sinners" (Gal.2.15) [13]. Otherwise he uses ἁμαρτωλός in a strict sense, applying it to "to men outside of Christ,

under God's condemnation" [14]. For Paul, the sinner is not an inconvenience to the religous authorities, nor a social inferior within Jewry, but a man - and, of course, many Pharisees would agree with him here - a man under God's condemnation. Paul saw that it was the law itself that revealed sin as essentially action against God, revealing, at the same time, man's condemnation before God, rather than that sin consisted simply in disregard of the law.

(iii) That the law reveals sin by providing the possibility of transgression, and that this sin is against God is revelation readily available to the Jew as well as to the Christian. (That the Jew does not necessarily read these from the experience of the law is also clear in the attitude, for instance, of Psalm 119.) Paul, however, adduces these facets of the law because he had discovered, in his encounter with Christ, that to follow the path of the law led him to the persecution of the church of God (Gal.1.13f, Phil.3.5f.). The law - which was meant to make explicit the demands of God, so that, in fulfilling these demands, a man might be righteous before God - this law led him to persecute Jesus (Acts 9.5), in whom God was reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor.5.19). The law led to a denial of the Christ, which is clearly sin against God.

Further reflection showed that this situation before God of the man "as to the law a Pharisee" (Phil. 3.5) existed before his encounter with Christ. The righteousness which consisted solely in fulfilling the works of the law is not a genuine righteousness before God. It is a form of self-justification which, in the circumstances of the flesh, just does not work. We will look at this inadequacy of the law in the next section (I.A.2). Suffice it here to say that the law cannot be fulfilled in the flesh, that, where the works of the law are performed in the service of self-justification, the law ministers curse and condemnation rather than righteousness before God. Paul quotes Deuteronomy : "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them" (Gal.3.10). The law,

"carved in letters on stone" is a "dispensation of death" (2 Cor.3.7), a "dispensation of condemnation" which is contrasted with the "dispensation of righteousness" (2 Cor.3.9) in Christ. In Paul's search for righteousness, the law, on its own, was inadequate in the circumstances of the flesh. In these circumstances, the law leads to a spurious righteousness, to the knowledge of sin and to condemnation. Paul had learnt that the goal of the law (τέλος νόμου, Rom.10.4) is Christ[15], that righteousness comes of faith in him, that, in the context of faith, a man may walk in the power of the Spirit. The inadequacy of the law had evaporated in the work of Christ and in receiving the earnest of the Spirit. His former approach to the law, as the sole means of righteousness, had proved to be a curse; in Christ the promise could now come not only to the Jew but to the Gentile as well. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree" – that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal.3.13-14).

The law is, for Paul, indeed a revelation of transgression which is at the heart of sin. The law is a revelation that sin is against God. But it is these, for Paul, because he had seen that, without Christ, the law, which was meant to lead to God, did no such thing. What it did was to reveal man's inability to fulfil the demand of God, made explicit in the law, and the ground of this inability was sin in the flesh.

Notes of I.A.1.

1. N.P.Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin, p.153.

2. A.Büchler, Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century, especially chapter IV in which Büchler gives an account of the prevalent ideas of atonement and forgiveness. I.Abrahams, Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels, First Series, p.59, contrasts Jesus' attitude with that of the Rabbis and their use of the law : "...the Rabbis attacked vice from the preventative side ; they aimed at keeping men and women honest and chaste. Jesus approached it from the curative side ; he aimed at saving the dishonest and the unchaste".

3. H.Kleinknecht and W.Gutbrod, νόμος , in G.Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, E.T., Law, Bible Key Words, p.102.

4. Quoted by Gutbrod, op.cit., p.102n., ~~from~~ from A.W.Slaten, "The Qualitative Use of νόμος in the Pauline Epistles", American Journal of Theology, 23 (1919), p.214.

5. W.Sanday and H.C.Headlam, Romans, p.58.

6. W.Sanday and H.C.Headlam, Romans, p.58.

7. U.Simon, "The Transcendence of Law", Theology, April 1970, pp.166ff.

8. The root meaning of these words, with that of other words for sin, is discussed in C.H.Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, chapter IV. A detailed discussion of their use in the Old Testament and the Septuagint is included in Sin, the Bible Key Words translation of the Kittel T.W.N.T. article ἁμαρτία in chapter I, "Sin in the Old Testament", by G.Quell, section 1, which treats of Septuagint Usage and Hebrew Roots, and chapter IV "Greek Usage" by G.Stählin, pp.46-49.

9. An account of the transformation of ἁμαρτία into παράπτωμα under the law is given in the next section, I.A.2.

10. Jer.2.35 and 32.35 are the only cases, in some 13 instances of the use of the verb in Jeremiah, where it is used absolutely, without reference to the fact that it is

Note of I.A.1.

the Lord against whom men sin.

11. Rom.1.18,~~29~~ 29. The use of the verb (ἀδικέω), however, is concerned with dealings between men (in 6 instances), except at Col.3.25.

12. The origin of the social distinction was, of course, religious. As with the 'people of the Land' (עמי הארץ)[1], it was the lax attitude of the ἁμαρτωλοί to the law, in contrast with the attitude of the Pharisees, which made them religiously and hence, in the circumstances of Jewish life, socially different - and people with whom it was difficult to have satisfactory relationships.

13. W.Sanday and A.C.Headlam, Romans, p.142, however, take this instance as a serious theological assertion.

14. S.J. De Vries, article "Sin, Sinners" in Interpreters' Dictionary, Vol. R-Z, p.371b.

15. The relation of the law to Christ will be looked at more fully in section II.2. The relation is fully discussed in C.E.B.Cranfield "St.Paul and the Law" in New Testament Issues, ed. R.Batey.

2. The Inadequacy of the Law.

Paul contends that a man cannot fulfil the demands of the law because the law energises certain factors in his being, or, more accurately, factors to which his being is subject, namely sin and flesh. All men, in Paul's reading of Scripture, are "under sin". 'Sin' is sometimes conceived as a personalised force, at other times as activity of man in opposition to God "before the law was given". 'Flesh' is often used by Paul to refer to man's existence as dominated by sin. He sees the law, in the context of man in the flesh being dominated by the power of sin, as incapacitating him for a right relationship with God.

This does not mean to say that, for Paul, the law is useless or to be discarded. The law itself is "holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good" (Rom.7.12). The law reveals the nature and the demands of God : it is this holy law that brings sin to light, is the catalyst which provides the knowledge of sin. "If it had not been for the law I should not have known sin" (Rom.7.7). The law, by its nature as holy, by its revelation of God's demand, shows sin to be what it is - contravention of God's will and just demand. At the same time, the law brings sin to life (Rom.7.9,13). By the agency of the law, prenomic sin is transformed into παράπτωμα, παράβασις. Prenomic sin comes, in the context of the law, to be seen in its nature as παράπτωμα. The law is given "in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might be sinful beyond measure" (Rom.7.13). This process is also presented in a more dramatic expression, "when the commandment came sin revived" (Rom.7.9).

"Law came in, to increase the trespass" (ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα, Rom.5.20; also Gal.3.19, taking χάριν in a telic sense [1]). This increase is qualitative, as is suggested in Rom.7.13 where the holy law was given "in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure". It is in this sense of a qualitative increase that we should take Rom.7.7 : "if it had not been for the law,

I should not have known sin". (which we would paraphrase : if it had not been for the law, my prenomic sin would not have been παράπτωμα) and Rom.7.8 : "Apart from the law, sin lies dead" (in other words : apart from the law, sin remains prenomic sin, which can be described as 'dead' sin in contrast with παράπτωμα - sin alive)... .

... Where Paul says that "sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness" (Rom.7.8), it has been suggested that he refers to a quantitative increase of sin. This suggestion is by way of a psychological explanation [2] that the stating of a prohibition makes a person want to commit the prohibited act. True as this explanation may be to St.Augustine's youthful experience [3] and to ours, it gives a quantitative increase in sin which is not Paul's primary meaning. That this is so is quite clear if we take the preceding statement in isolation. "I should have not known what it is to covet if the law had not said "Thou shalt not covet"". (Rom.7.7). With the sense that the psychological explanation gives, this statement should mean : 'there is no such thing as coveting for me until the law comes, creating both the offence and the desire in me to offend the particular commandment'. But it is manifest that I covet, with or without benefit of law. The desire may be more acute in the presence of the law, but coveting itself is present already. The preceding sentence - "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin" - demands that in Rom.7.7 to covet is a sinful desire, to covet is in contravention of the declared will of God. Paul is saying 'I should not have known what it is to sin by coveting if the law had not said "Thou shalt not covet"'. Coveting, under the law, is transgression and is categorised as sin against God.

As an explanation of Paul's primary concern in asserting that the law increased sin, W.D.Davies' explanation is to be preferred [4] : "by confronting man with God's demands, it [the law] excites what lies behind all sin - namely the rejection of God's rightful claims, the refusal to recognise dependence upon him.... While sin is in man before he encounters the law, it is the latter that brings

it to life by presenting the possibility for transgression (Rom.4.15,5.20,7.13,Gal.3.19)". In the example of Rom.7.8 - that of the commandment "Thou shalt not covet" - it can be said that man can covet without a law prohibiting such thoughts. It may also be said,out of our experience, that the very knowledge of a prohibition of coveting makes a person covet. But Paul's point is that when the law and prohibition is present, man knows that the covetous thought is against God,is sin. Coveting without the law is sin in the form of prenomic sin ; coveting with the law is sin in the form of παράπτωμα . This qualitative difference of sin,this difference of form,has already been mentioned as a difference of the context in which sin occurs (vide supra p.1),and will be further discussed in section I.B.4. It is the difference between sin when we are not aware of such a thing as sin because we are not aware,in the explicit manner of the law,of God and his commandments,and sin when we know we are contravening God's holy will and commandment.

The Jew's advantage in knowing that he sins and incurs God's condemnation can be seen as a doubtful advantage. That Paul's thought here has a prima facie ambiguity is admitted in his rhetorical question, "What shall we say ? That the law is sin ?" (Rom.7.7). Paul stoutly replies "By no means !",and goes on to say that the law gives the knowledge of sin and energises prenomic sin to be παράπτωμα . The Jew's advantage is suspect,not because of the nature of the law,but because the man who is 'under law' is also 'under sin' and lives 'according to the flesh'. The purpose of the law - because it is God's law and because this is the purpose of all God's self-revelation - is to "make alive" (Gal.3.21). That the law could not bring life and righteousness to man was not due to any defect in the law itself,but to the fact that man was under the thrall of "the law (or 'principle', ὁ νόμος) of sin and death" and -as a result of this thralldom - "weakened by the flesh" (Rom.8.2,3). The circumstances of man's subjection to sin make it impossible for the law to fulfil its purpose of "making alive". All that Paul says which could be

construed as discrediting the law is said in the circumstances of man under sin, living according to the flesh. This is the background of such phrases as "the law of sin" (Rom.7.23,25) and "the law of sin and death" (Rom.8.2) already cited. It is no matter, here, whether we translate ὁ νόμος as 'regulating principle' or as 'the Law of Moses'. The point is that man's life in dominated by sin, and this means that the advent of the law will involve a fresh quality of sin. If Paul means by νόμος here a regulating principle, there is direct reference to the power of sin in mens' lives. If he means 'the Law of Moses', he is referring to the fact that the efficacy of the power of sin over men is noticed as the law impinges on mens' living. Paul contrasts this 'law' with the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8.2), whereby the man who is living according to the Spirit has the power to fulfil the purpose for which the law was given.

To say that the Christian is "not under law but under grace" (Rom.6,14) does not necessarily imply that the law [5] has become, somehow, not applicable to the Christian. It is clear, from considerations relevent to our present discussion, that the law is not abrogated in Christ, because it is not the law that was the means whereby men rebelled against God, the rebellion clearly stems from prenomic sin in the man under law. It was the inter-relation of the law with sin and flesh which worked the havoc. In Paul's words, "The law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom.7.14).

This situation of spiritual law and carnal man can only be known in the light of the work of Christ, in whom "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do" (Rom.8.3). The man under law does not, in fact, fulfil the works of the law, because, while delighting in the law of God, he is "captive to the law of sin which dwells in [his] members" (Rom.7.23). Besides this, the desire of the flesh is that man should work his own salvation ; through the flesh the law becomes a tool of self-justification.

Paul asks the Galatians : "Are you so foolish ? Having begun with the Spirit, are you ending with the flesh ?"

(Gal.3.3). The Galatians were about to succumb to the persuasion of the 'judaisers'. Rather than merely condemning the opposition, Paul argues by "drawing out the theological implications of a certain course of action" [6], in this instance their being circumcised. He shows the Galatians that their proposed course of action is a virtual slipping back into the ways of the flesh - in his own terms of the flesh-Spirit antithesis - whereas they had set out in Paul's way, knowing the fulfilment of the promises whereby, walking in the Spirit, they could cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal.4.6, Rom.8.14-15). The way of the flesh was to use the law as a means of self-justification. So C.F.D.Moule employs the term 'legalism' to refer to the attitude of a man trying to justify himself by keeping the law rather than allowing the law to be a medium through which God reveals himself [7]. Paul had learnt that this was a denial of the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It was a denial of the core of his gospel, and evinces the remark that "if justification were through the law, then Christ died ~~in vain~~ to no purpose" (Gal.2.21), and the baptismal death of Paul (Gal.2.19) and of the Galatian Christians was in vain.

"A man is not justified by the works of the law" (Gal.2.16, Rom.3.20). Paul had discovered that the 'written code' (Rom.7.6, 2 Cor.3.6) did not make alive in the way the life in the Spirit made alive. He sees the reason for this, not in the nature of the 'written code', but in the presence of sin and flesh in the life of man which incapacitated the law in its purpose of making men alive to God. We have seen how the law brings knowledge of, and energises, sin. We now turn to look at these elements which cause alienation from God - despite the possession of the knowledge of the explicit demands of God - namely sin and flesh.

Notes of I.A.2.

1. E.De W.Burton,Galatians,p.188. Burton's grounds for taking γάμου in this sense are its accordance with Paul's thought in Romans and the immediate context in Galatians. J.B.Lightfoot agrees, on the same grounds,Galatians,p.145.

2. C.H.Dodd,Romans,p.109 ; C.K.Barrett,Romans,p.143.

3. St.Augustine,Confessions, Book 2,quoted by C.H.Dodd, Romans,p.109 in this context.

4. W.D.Davies,"Law in the N.T." in Interpreters' Dictionary,Vol.K-Q,p.99b.

5. νόμος is anarthrous at Rom.6.14;but vide supra pp.3-5.

6. A.E.Harvey,"The Opposition to Paul" in Studia Evangelica,Vol.IV (1965),Part I,p.331.

7. C.F.D.Moule,"Obligation in the Ethic of Paul" in Christian History andd Interpretation : Studies presented to John Knox, ed. W.R.Farmer and others,p.391.

B. PRENOMIC SIN

1. The Flesh.

Paul uses the term σάρξ with a wide range of denotation. This range has, at one end, a strictly physical meaning and at the other end a meaning, which might, by contrast with the physical, be described as a 'moral' sense. σάρξ can mean "the soft, muscular parts of the body" (1 Cor.15.39) and, more often, "the whole material part of a living body" (e.g. Rom.2.28).[1] In the centre of the range of denotation Paul has moved, by metonomy[2], from the flesh as the physical material of human existence to cover man's whole "physico-psychical existence"[3]. Clearly, the "troubles of married life" (θλῖψιν τῇ σαρκὶ) of 1 Cor.7.28 are not confined to physical, biological problems. The flesh is essentially, for Paul, the physico-psychical existence of man untouched by the action of the Spirit of God. But it is the further, 'moral' sense with which Paul uses σάρξ which has significance for our discussion. Here, Paul thinks of flesh primarily as indwelt by sin, "sold under sin".

For Paul, the flesh - as the material ingredient of human existence - is not inherently sinful, there is nothing opposed to God in matter as such. At the same time, it is Paul's experience that the flesh - as man's physico-psychical existence - is dominated by sin. "I am carnal (σάρκινος), sold under sin" (Rom.7.14) and "captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members" (Rom.7.23). Paul exhorts the Christians at Rome : "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies (ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι, Rom.6.12). Here Paul uses not σάρξ but σῶμα, which indicates, for Paul, a man in all aspects of his being. It is the 'mortal body', the whole man as he belongs to the sphere of the influence of corruption and decay. The carnal is sold under sin, the law of sin indwells a man's members ; without Christ and not walking in the Spirit, sin reigns in men. The flesh is, for Paul, because of his conviction that man's existence is dominated by sin, a shorthand expression for the sphere of decay, the transient,

insubstantial nature of ~~tis~~this age,as this impinges upon man's living.

A striking use of the concept of the flesh is Paul's contrast with the Spirit. This contrast,at first sight, can appear to suggest a metaphysical dualism [4]. Paul is not a dualist,~~by~~ if by this we mean someone who looks at the world of men and matter with the preconception that he will find an opposition of two forces,the opposition usually taking the form of a moral conflict between good and evil. Paul - in Christ and the gift of the Spirit - had experienced a new world breaking in on the old world of his religious convictions. It is as he portrays this new order that he is enabled to give a fresh analysis of the old order. The contrast of flesh and Spirit is born of his experience of the foretaste of being alive in Christ,in the Spirit. It is in the light of this new experience of being 'alive to God' that his - and his fellow Christians' - former condition can be described as slavery to sin in the flesh. Paul is a dualist solely in the sense that he has seen that there is an opposition between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit (Gal.5.17),as he witnesses to the way in which men set their minds on the things of the flesh in contrast to setting their minds on the things of the Spirit (Rom.8.5). The contrast and opposition is between two orientations in the lives of men.

Nor is Paul a metaphysician,at this point,if by metaphysician we mean someone who wishes to explain what is seen by what is not seen. A consistent metaphysical system can be deduced from Paul's writing,as is demonstrated by C.H.Dodd in The Meaning of Paul for To-day [5]. At the same time,it is clear that Paul does not proceed by way of speculation,with the set aim of producing a metaphysical map of reality. He is,primarily,concerned with mens' involvement with the situation of their lives and the choices of orientation of their living which are open to them. His contrast of flesh with Spirit derives directly from his observation of God and man in action, from observation of the work of the Spirit and the life of man in the flesh.

Paul's contrast between two ways of living does fit a background of systematic thought, and is more readily seen to stem from a background Jewish and eschatological than Greek and metaphysical. However, his debt to either background is restricted in that his contrast is occasioned simply by the dynamic inbreaking of God into the world of men in the words and work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. Eschatological thought is relevent because Paul sees this inbreaking of God in Christ as the fulfilment of Israel's eschatological hope. Metaphysical thought is relevent in that he is often commending his message in the milieu of Hellenistic culture. /a /a

Paul's contrast is seen at its most acute in the alternative that faces a man as he hears the gospel : he can now walk in the Spirit or he may continue, as he has done hitherto, to walk 'according to the flesh'. This phrase 'according to the flesh' (κατὰ σάρκα) is part of a further distinction which is necessitated by the fact that the man who walks according to the Spirit is still 'in the flesh'. The man who is justified, reconciled to God, though still 'in the flesh', need no longer walk 'according to the flesh'. Paul often employs the phrases ἐν σαρκὶ and κατὰ σάρκα with distinct meanings. The distinction is clear at 2 Cor.10.3 : "For though we live in the world (ἐν σαρκὶ)we are not carrying on a worldly (κατὰ σάρκα)war". The situation of the Christian is here described as living in the environment of the flesh, and yet not living (here, carrying on a warfare) conditioned by the criteria, presuppositions and weapons provided by the flesh.

Paul does not, however, always appear to maintain the distinction between 'in the flesh' and 'according to the flesh'. For instance, at Rom.8.9, he can say : "But you are not ἐν σαρκὶ , you are in the Spirit". Here, ἐν σαρκὶ expresses the idea of living 'according to the flesh' (cp. Rom.7.5, with reference to the past). Manifestly the Christians at Rome are 'in the flesh' ; that they are 'in the Spirit' suggests that they are no longer living 'according to the flesh' – "if the Spirit of God really dwells in you" (Rom.8.9) [6]. But Paul is not

here concerned with the distinction ἐν σαρκὶ - κατὰ σάρκα . The fact is that to live according to the Spirit does not automatically exclude living 'according to the flesh'. While we are in the flesh, temptation will come. "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall". (1 Cor.10.12). To be in the flesh is always to run the risk of living 'according to the flesh'. This interpretation is supported by Paul's desire to flee the flesh (Phil.1.22-23). For Paul, the flesh is a "bridgehead" [7] within the nature of man whereby sin makes entry. The sphere of the working of sin is the body (Rom.6.12).

In Christ and walking according to the Spirit, the domination of sin in the flesh can be overcome. Man 'in the flesh' need no long walk 'according to the flesh'. Paul can say : "the life that I now live ἐν σαρκὶ ,I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal.2.20). E.H.Gifford points out that this statement "is decisive against the notion that "flesh" is something essentially sinful" [8]. The argument behind Gifford's conclusion involves ~~th~~ distinguishing between the flesh as the material ingredient of human existence and flesh as "sold under sin" (in Gifford's words, flesh with a "predominantly sinful propensity"). To live 'in the flesh' is to live with the material ingredient of human existence, to be subject to the sphere of corruption and decay. Even here, ~~th~~ through the work of Christ, it is possible to walk according to the Spirit, though there will be temptation to fall back into sin. By contrast, to live 'according to the flesh' is to be without Christ, alienated from God, and here the flesh is seen as "sold under sin". This is the lot of all men in Adam, without Christ - the lot of Jew as well as Gentile. It is the flesh in this sense that gives occasion for the expression the σὰρξ ἁμαρτίας in Rom.8.3.

Notes of I.B.1.

1. E.De W.Burton,Galatians,pp.492-3 lists seven categories of Paul's meaning in his use of the word σάρξ . Those quoted here are the first two of the seven. E.H.Gifford,Romans, pp.49-51 has five categories.

2. E.De W.Burton,Galatians,p.492.

3. K.Barth's phrase,vide his discussion of Romans 7 in Church Dogmatics,IV/I § 61.3,pp.581-591.

4. C.H.Dodd,The Meaning of Paul for To-day,p.58 qualifies this assertion of metaphysical dualism in Paul when he refers to Paul's "rather tangled metaphysics" and states that "Paul conceived reality in a dualistic way" (my italics - the reason for the 'tangle' in Paul's metaphysics is that he does not set out to be a metaphysician).

5. CH.Dodd,The Meaning of Paul for To-day,p.58.

6. We would also expect κατὰ σάρκα in the previous verse (Rom.8.8) if Paul were consistently maintaining the distinction between the two phrases.

7. W.Barclay,Flesh and Spirit,pp.21-22. A.H.McNeile, St.Paul,pp.280 and 282,describes the flesh as "the handle and instrument of sin".

8. E.H.Gifford,Romans,pp.50a,51a.

2. The Background to Paul's Conception of the Flesh.

"God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do : sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,..." (Rom.8.3). The second half of this statement of St.Paul provides us with a number of clues to the understanding of his thought regarding sin and the flesh. He demonstrates that this area of his thought is dominated by the fact that God has acted in Christ. As we will see in a moment, the concept of the flesh is occasioned as a contrast with God's activity, which, being in the effectual realm of 'spirit', suggests the conception of the weak, ineffectual realm of 'flesh'. In this statement of Rom.8.3 Paul also sees sin and flesh as separate entities or forces in man, and the object of God's condemnation is sin, which is found in the flesh so that the flesh can be described as the σάρξ ἁμαρτίας [1]. The condemnation is not of the flesh as such - apart from sin - but God's action is περὶ ἁμαρτίας, the condemnation of sin in the flesh. It is, however, because of this close relationship between sin and flesh, because sin is seen as being ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ that we have to be quite clear as to what Paul means by the flesh, what is involved in the life in the flesh for Paul.

The sphere of the flesh is, as we have already indicated, a sphere which exists by contrast with the sphere of the activity of God, the sphere of the Spirit. The datum from which all Paul's thought stems is the inbreaking of God's activity into the world in Christ. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor.5.19). The heart of Paul's gospel is that God has acted in a new and effectual way in Christ. God has bestowed the gift of his Spirit upon men; the gift, a fore-taste of the future abundance of the gift, is apprehended by those who are in Christ, in the community of the church, as members in a body. This activity of God is seen as the inbreaking of a new order, and the typical attribute of this order of the Spirit is its nature as effectual. The new order is contrasted with the old [2], while, at the same time, the former dispensation is being reassessed in the light of the new.

In the process of declaring the inbreaking of God's activity into the world in Christ and the Spirit, Paul uses concepts that lay ready to hand. He did not take them as they were, with their attendant implications in the old setting. He takes them - the bare concepts without their implications - ~~in his use~~ and moulds them in his use in accordance with his purpose of presenting Christ. To understand Paul's concept of the flesh it is not sufficient to demonstrate the background of that concept, but also to see the purpose to which Paul puts what already lay at hand.

We may say that it is Paul himself, arrested by God in his conversion, who provides the basic datum of his thought. We may also say that the datum was of such significance for him that all other experience was to be lumped together in one category - the flesh - over against this overwhelming activity of God in Christ. This appears to be the origin, within Paul's understanding of his message, which produces the polarity of flesh and Spirit. The flesh is man untouched by the Spirit of God in this inbreaking of God in Christ and the gift of the Spirit. (Such an idea does not preclude other and previous activity of God in the world, which is evident in Paul's writing, but it is here, in this inbreaking of God into the world in Christ, that all revelation of God ~~if~~ is summed up and fulfilled.) We are trying to say that Paul's experience created within his thought the need for a contrast such as that which he found ready to hand in the contrast of flesh and Spirit, that his conclusions stem from a contemplation of God's activity and the way in which men live.

To stress that Paul's experience regulates his message is not to deny that concepts by which this experience might be expressed were readily available to him. C.H.Dodd, in a comment on the contrast between flesh and Spirit at Rom.8.1-4, notes : "'spirit' is the supernatural or divine element breaking into human life, over against the powerless, perishable 'flesh' (cf. Isa.31.3 : "The Egyptians are men and not God ; and their horses flesh and not spirit")" [3] . Wheeler Robinson supports the idea of

the Old Testament use of בשר as a background for Paul's concept in saying that בשר "is used of man or man's essential nature in contrast with God or with "Spirit", to emphasise man's frailty, dependence or incapacity (Isa.31.3,40.6,Ps.56.5,78.39,Job 10.4,34.15,Jer.17.5) .... its importance consists in its being the point of departure for the Pauline doctrine of the flesh, with distinct ethical reference" [4]. The "distinct ethical reference" to which Wheeler Robinson refers is the flesh as "sold under sin". The contrast that appears in the Old Testament is, in all prominent aspects, the contrast which Paul makes between the flesh and the Spirit. The flesh is human and weak, the Spirit is divine - or the divine indwelling the human - and powerful. That this contrast is not confined to St.Paul in the New Testament is evident in John 3.6,6.63. The contrast is present at Mark 14.38, "the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is ~~weik~~ weak", where the spirit is usually taken as in the sense of the person dependent upon the Spirit of God. [5]

There is some evidence of a spirit of man in Paul, but it is insignificant beside the prominence he gives to the discussion of flesh, body and mind in human nature, and the Spirit in the account of the divine activity. The characteristic words of Paul in this matter are: "the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom.8.16). This insistence on Spirit capitalised, indwelling the Christian, makes it quite clear that Paul is, at this point, in accord with his Hebrew background, rather than being dependent upon Greek thinking which is concerned with the spirit of man. Paul, however, is not averse to hinting at the consonance that his message has with Greek dualism ; but this is the better to commend his own dualism which involves a contrast quite different from the contrast in Greek ethical dualism. Both Greek and Pauline thought contain a dualism, and Paul, perhaps, found that in commending the gospel - to those who were living in a setting of Hellenistic culture - it helped to point to the dualistic form that aspects of his preaching contained. Whether or not this conjecture has any substance, the content of his

dualism is quite different from any found in Greek thought because Paul's gospel is firmly grounded in the revelation of God in Christ. For Paul, the realm of the Spirit is dependent on the activity of God in Christ and the consequent gift of the Spirit. As to the flesh in Paul and in Greek thought, J.A.T.Robinson remarks : "It is important to understand exactly what this living 'after the flesh' means and why the 'carnal' can thus stand for what is sinful (e.g. Rom.7.14). It cannot be over-emphasised that this is not because, as in Greek thinking, matter or the material part of man is inherently and irremediably evil in contrast with the soul and spirit" [6].

Paul could not be employing 'flesh' in a manner which agrees with Greek thought. We have already seen that, for Paul, the flesh is "sold under sin" and not inherently sinful. A Jew could not say that the flesh is inherently impure in the face of the goodness of creation asserted in Genesis 1. Moreover, Paul does not confine his use of the term 'flesh' to refer to the physical material of human existence in the body, but broadens the reference to include the whole of the physico-psychical existence of man. D.E.H.Whiteley points out : that the portion of the list of the works of the flesh which comprise the twentieth verse of Gal.5 .. "might well be committed by disembodied spirits, though the remainder [in verses 19 and 21] are sins committed in the sphere of the body" [7]. Whiteley concludes : "Thus the 'deeds of the flesh' are not necessarily physical, so that the 'body' is not the cause of all sin, even though it is the sphere of many sins" [8].

There are many points at which Paul uses Greek ideas [9], but his use of them is probably the result of his desire for the acceptance of his message among the Greeks who heard him and is firmly in subjection to the content of his message, which was fashioned outside the background of Hellenistic thought. It cannot be denied that his thought is legitimately presented as involving "two planes of being", the one temporal, visible and with the property of "decay" ("corruption"), the other eternal, invisible and with the property of "splendour" ("glory") [10].

But this - while being readily understood by 'Greeks' - is an expression of another, and eschatological dualism. This other dualism differentiates the old and the new, and includes the element of a passage from one era to another, rather than a dualism with "two planes of being" existing contemporaneously. It is this 'existing contemporaneously' which invites a confusion of Paul's Christian - as distinct from the Jewish - eschatology with Greek dualism.

We may define eschatology with C.K.Barrett : "a view of the world and of history based upon the notion of two ages, This Age and The Age to Come, the latter being thought of as close at hand rather than remote" [11]. This situation of the ages ~~hews~~ changed in Christ. The inbreaking of God's activity in Christ has brought The Age to Come into the present (by contrast with Jewish eschatology)[12]. However, there is still an element of "not yet" in the situation. The Parousia is not here in its abundance, as evidence Paul's assertion that the Christian has the Spirit "as a guarantee (ἀρραβών)" The Christian lives in an overlap of the two Ages. The Spirit is given as a guarantee, but not yet in the abundance of the Parousia. This Age and the flesh are still with us.

It is this schema which fits Paul's concept of the flesh, though Paul does not himself state the relation of the flesh with 'this age'. He does contrast being "conformed τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ " with presenting τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν a sacrifice ...to God" (Rom.12.1-2), but both at Rom.12.2 and at 2 Cor.4.4 the influence of 'this age' is exercised through the mind rather than the flesh. However it is fair to say that Paul's concept of the flesh readily fits the pattern of eschatological thought which we would suggest lies behind his statements regarding the flesh. The flesh shares the characteristics of 'this age'. 'The age to come' has broken in on this age, so that it is possible to walk according to the Spirit rather than according to the flesh. But we are still in the flesh - this age is still with us. To fill out the relationship between the flesh and the underlying eschatological

~~pattern of thought we have to go on to say~~

pattern of thought we have to go on to say that with the Parousia and the full arrival of the age to come, this age and the flesh are done away and we have a fresh 'body' provided for life beyond the Parousia. Though Paul does not write of the age to come and the doing away of the flesh, he does write of the resurrection body, a body different from that of the flesh, when he says that "this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality" (1 Cor.15.53). In the earlier part of 1 Cor.15 Paul has discussed flesh as the material ingredient of human existence and the way in which there are different types of flesh in different circumstances or environments. Here, the word 'flesh' is dropped and the natural body, σῶμα ψυχικόν, is raised a σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor.15.44), and with this change we have the introduction of the other ideas, which Paul elsewhere associates with the word 'flesh', the whole physico-psychical existence of man and the flesh as sold under sin. It is this latter aspect which makes the body of flesh perishable and mortal, in that death is a consequence of sin.

In the overlap of the ages, the Christian is 'in the flesh' though he does not walk 'according to the flesh' but 'according to the Spirit'. Death and temptation remain in this overlap period because this age and the flesh sold under sin remain. However it is now possible, with the inbreaking of the age to come upon this age to walk according to the Spirit, to know the victory over sin in the flesh. It is the fact that the flesh is not inherently sinful that makes the overlap of the ages a possibility. This fact also means that Paul can hint at a Greek dualism in the presentation of his message because the two ages are contemporaneous, a characteristic feature of the Greek dualism.

If the Pauline concept of the flesh fits the background of Jewish eschatology more readily than that of Greek dualism, we may go further to investigate whether there are other aspects of Jewish thought which might assist the understanding of this concept. The Rabbis, dealing with the problem of the manifest sin of man over

against the goodness of creation, developed the exegesis of Old Testament references to the... יצר הרע , an inclination to evil in man. Paul has some phrases which resemble this concept. He writes of τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς (Rom.8.6,7), ἐν τῇ σαρκί , τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (Rom.7.5), ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς (Gal.5.16, cf.Rom. 13.14, Eph.2.3). At Gal.5.17, σάρξ is the subject of the verb ἐπιθυμέω . ~~With~~ In discussion of the יצר הרע the Rabbis often gave physical, fleshly inclinations prominence.

The יצר and Paul's φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς are similar in avoiding the idea that they are necessarily evil in themselves. The יצר is generally regarded by the Rabbis to be created by God, and is thus good. The flesh itself is not categorised as evil by Paul. On the other hand, as W.D.Davies [13] points out, the יצר "was ~~generall~~ located generally in the heart, whereas Paul clearly regards the σάρξ as the base of operations for sin". Similar as the two concepts are in many respects, τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς can hardly be a direct translation of יצר הרע .[14] The similarity is present becuase both Paul and the Rabbis were dealing with the same problem.

Another background, which has a close similarity of terminology, is that of the Qumran sect. The Qumran writings contain a parallel with Paul ~~int~~ in their opposition of flesh and spirit. This contrast, as we have already noted (p.23f.), is also present in the Old Testament, but it reaches a more developed form and is more frequently employed in the Qumran texts. K.G.Kuhn suggests [15] that the 'I-sayings' genre [16] is developed in Qumran further than in the Old Testament Psalms, and that Paul's usage in Romans 7 is developed along the same lines as the Qumran texts. "In the Qumran texts the "I-sayings" appear within the framework of a dualistic power-idea, and are, therefore, essentially different from the Old Testament. In the Qumran setting, the " I " represents the human existence as "flesh" in the sense of man's belonging to the sphere of the power of the ungodly" [17]. The Manual of Discipline proclaims : "But I - I belong to ~~the~~ wicked mankind, to the communion of sinful flesh" [18].

Even more relevant to our present discussion is K.G.Kuhn's comment that some words of R.Bultmann on understanding the phrase 'in the flesh' apply "not only to Paul, but also to the Qumran texts"[19]. The words of Bultmann are these : "in the flesh...,a phrase which can be explained neither from the Old Testament nor from Greek usage. This formula shows that according to Paul a man's nature is not determined by what he may be as to substance (in the way that the Old Testament says that man is flesh) nor by what qualities he may have (as Greek thinking would put it), but his nature is ~~dtere dte~~ determined by the sphere within which he moves, the sphere which marks out the horizon or the possibilities of what he does or experiences"[20]. Bultmann speaks true to Paul in that the flesh has some consonance with the concept of 'this age' (as we have already seen, p.26), in that the flesh is a sphere of limitation, is "mortal flesh" (2.Cor.4.11). It is our "outer Nature" (ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος 2.Cor.4.16), which is ineffectual in spiritual, inward matters. But the predicament of man, in Paul's thought, is more acute than Bultmann here allows in that it is our flesh[20]. The relation is closer than imprisonment in an environment ; the flesh is not merely a force outside a person. Self-evidently, my flesh is me : "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh" (Rom.7.18). Though what Bultmann has to say about the phrase 'in the flesh' may do justice to the Qumran literature, Paul's thought would have to be described as a further development of it.

The conception of the solidarity of mankind in the flesh, evident in our quotation from the Manual of Discipline, can adequately be explained by inference from other aspects of Paul's thought. These can, in turn, be seen as developments of the concept of 'corporate personality' in the Old Testament. 'In the flesh' is a contrast with the distinctively Pauline phrase 'in Christ'. Though Paul expresses this contrast primarily as one between men in Christ and men in Adam, the phrase 'in the flesh' accords, broadly speaking, with the idea of human solidarity in Adam.

Although there are similarities with the Qumran

texts in Paul's conception of the flesh, these similarities need not lead us to suppose that Paul is necessarily here dependent upon the Qumran sect. The relation between them can be explained as independent developments of Old Testament thought.

We see Paul's concept of the flesh as deriving from the contrast with Spirit which he makes, and this contrast derives primarily from the Old Testament background, though Paul can translate it at times - in drawing out the dualism implicit in the contrast - into a presentation which is, prima facie, Greek, for the benefit of his audience. We have already seen that Paul is employing the Old Testament word בשר - σάρξ in the contrast between flesh and Spirit. At the same time Paul concurs with the biblical appraisal of human existence.

Paul has advanced from the Psalmist's position, but along lines which are in accordance with the rest of Scripture. The Psalmist's position is summarised in the statement : "Surely man goes about as a shadow:

Surely for nought are they in turmoil;

man heaps up, and knows not who will gather!"

(Ps.39.6), or in Psalm 49.5-15 with its "trust in wealth" and "foolish confidence". This appraisal of life, with its characteristics of shortness and uncertainty, is also evident in the Wisdom literature. For Qoholeth all is vanity (Paul introduces his word, ματαιότης at Rom.8.20). Paul's analysis of the nature of human existence is much the same as that of Qoholeth, though the Preacher is without hope, without Christ.

Where Qoholeth has the desparate advice "Be not righteous overmuch" (Ecclesiastes 7.16), Jesus says "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Mt.6.33). Paul adds "walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal.5.16). The development here is from despair of life "under the sun" (a phrase atypical in the Old Testament, but growing in the soil of the other Old Testament books, prefiguring the phrase "in the flesh") to a new appraisal in Christ. In Paul the bankruptcy of human existence is seen in contrast with the hope in Christ. This is also evident in the

Synoptic Gospels, as in the conclusion of the parable of the Rich Fool : "But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you ; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be ?""(Lk.12.20). Such a remark is consonant with the Old Testament thought which forms its background. It is the summary-conclusion which illustrates the advance on the Old Testament : "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Lk.12.21). It is the possibility of "riches toward God" which shows the futility of the activity of him who "lays up treasure for himself".....

The possibility of being "rich toward God" has come with the inbreaking of God's activity in Christ, appropriated by the man who walks according to the Spirit. In contrast, Paul sees man, 'in Adam', 'in the flesh'. The 'flesh' is all this life, this side the grave. The concerns of the flesh are the total of the concerns that man has, when he is without the Spirit. These concerns involve the sustenance of 'physico-psychical existence', including self-justification. To live 'according to the flesh' is to live in one's own strength, because the flesh knows only its own strength, and this is seen to be weakness in the light of the experience of the Spirit. The concerns of the flesh, and the means to further these concerns, are circumscribed within the known existence of man, and it is only with the inbreaking of the Spirit that man knows any other mode of living with God and his fellowmen.

It is in the Synoptic Gospels, and particularly in the Sermon on the Mount, that we see the background of the picture of man bound by the concerns of the flesh. We will be looking at this background under the heading "The Consequences of Sin" (I.B.5) because, for Paul, man's preoccupation with the concerns of the flesh is the result of the flesh being 'sold under sin'. This preoccupation with the concerns of the flesh comes between man and God to wreck a true relationship. Man, ἐν ἀδικίᾳ had turned from knowledge of God's eternal power and deity in the things that have been made, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, for which cause God gave them up to all manner

of wickedness (Rom.1.18-32). In other passages, the situation is described as the domination of sin in the flesh. Man knows only this preoccupation with the concerns of the flesh - such is the control that sin in the flesh has over men - until he experiences the activity of the Spirit of Christ and of God in his life...

Before we turn to the consideration of prenomic sin itself, we can take, as a summary of the relation between flesh and sin in Paul, some words of E.H.Gifford [22] given in reply to O.Pfleiderer's interpretation of Rom.8.3 : "On the contrary hold fast throughout, as the same writer [Pfleiderer] frequently insists, that "the flesh" is everywhere "the material substance of the body", and be content to combine with this what the same author calls "the common Hebraic notion of σάρξ, according to which it signifies material substance which is void indeed of the spirit but not contrary to it, which is ... certainly weak and perishable, and so far unclean, but not positively evil," - which in all men except Christ is corrupted and defiled by sin, but is neither sin itself, nor the original source of sin, nor in its essence sinful, - and so we can understand how Christ by taking our flesh in its pure essence without sin, and preserving its sinlessness at every stage of our earthly existence through life and unto death, "condemned sin in the flesh", condemned it as having no rightful place or power there, condemned it as an enemy to be by His help conquered and cast out".

Notes of I.B.2.

1. Rom.8.3,cp. τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας(Rom.6.6). Grammatical considerations do not really help in assessing the significance of these genitives - the sense appears in the discussion of the relation between the flesh and sin.

2. 2 Cor.3.14-18,where the old covenant is contrasted with the new order or dispensation of the Spirit of the Lord. This is also put in the typically Pauline manner - which talks of a man's invovement with an order or dispensation,rather than talking directly of the dispensation itself - in the contrast of the old and the new man (Col.3.9-10,Rom.6.6,cf.2 Cor.5.17,Gal.6.15).

3. C.H.Dodd,Romans,p.117.

4. H.Wheeler Robinson,The Christian Doctrine of Man, p.25,quoted by W.D.Davies,Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp.18-19.

5. A.E.J.Rawlinson,The Gospel according to St.Mark (Westminster Commentaries,London,1936[4]),p.212. V.Taylor,The Gospel according to St.Mark (London,1952), p.555. See also J.A.T.Robinson,The Body,,p.20n. Mt.26.41 retains these words while Lk.22.46 omits them.

6. J.A.T.Robinson,The Body, p.24.

7. D.E.H.Whiteley,The Theology of St.Paul, p.32. See also J.A.T.Robinson,The Body,p.24,who cites 1 Cor.3.3 also : "whereas there is among you jealousy and strife" (par excellence 'sins of the spirit'),"are you not also σαρκικοί ,and walk after the manner of men".

8. D.E.H.Whiteley,loc.cit.

9. Many commentators have found the background of Paul's thought to be Hellenistic. Holtzmann,Morgan,Bousset, Reitzenstein are numbered among such by W.D.Davies, St.Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,p.1.

10. C.H.Dodd,The Meaning of Paul for To-day,pp.58-59.

11. C.K.Barrett,The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, p.4n.

Notes of I.B.2.

12. The thesis of O.Cullmann,Christ and Time. Paul does not make direct reference to 'the age to come' (ὁ αἰὼν μέλλων, ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐρχόμενος),but implies the background of eschatological thought in his use of the phrase 'this age' (ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος).

13. W.D.Davies,St.Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,p.33.

14. Paul's phraseology bears no resemblance to the Septuagint translation at Gen.6.5,8.21 which translates יֵצֶר with διάνοια .

15. K.G.Kuhn,"New Light on Temptation,Sin,and Flesh in the New Testament" in K.Stendahl (editor),The Scrolls and the New Testament,pp.102-3.

16. This genre is evident in Romans 7. Philippians 3 is in many respects similar,while the 2 Cor.11.29 'I-saying' is in a different category.

17. K.G.Kuhn,loc.cit.

18. Manual of Discipline,cols.x-xi,in T.H.Gaster,The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect in English Translation, London 1957,p.128.

19. K.G.Kuhn,op.cit.,p.107.

20. quoted by K.G.Kuhn,op.cit.,p.107 from R.Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament,Vol.1,p.235.

21. 2.Cor.4.11,Gal.6.8. Bultmann acknowledges this later,p.245 of his Theology of the New Testament,Vol.1, quoting Rom.7.14.

22. E.H.Gifford,Romans,p.52b. O.Pfleiderer's discussion of Paul's concept of the flesh is in his Paulinism,Vol.1, pp.48-57,his interpretation of Rom.8.3 at Vol.1,pp. 152-5.

3. Sin Prenomic and Personified.

Kittel's Wörterbuch article on ἁμαρτία points out that, in the New Testament, "ἁμαρτία may be said to indicate sin in three principal forms :

(a) a single act (= ἁμάρτημα) ;

(b) a characteristic of human nature ;

(c) a personal power." [1]

Regarding ἁμαρτία as a single act, Paul himself uses the term in this way once.- "Did I commit a sin in abasing myself...." (2 Cor.11.7). This is apart from reference to the work of Christ in the forgiveness of sins which occurs in what are probably quotations of traditional formulae (1 Cor.15.3, Gal.1.4, Col.1.14 and the direct quotation of a Psalm (Rom.4.8)). At Rom.7.5 we have τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν , where we would expect the singular of ἁμαρτία ; the usage is probably influenced by the context of the law with the idea of individual transgressions. Paul does not normally use ἁμαρτία to refer to the single act , preferring παράπτωμα , because his expression of the idea of ~~a single~~ sin as a single act is connected with the discussion of his conviction that contravention of the law is at the heart of sin, that it was in the failure to fulfil the demand of God in the law that sin is revealed (vide supra p.5). It is with the Kittel forms (b) and (c) that we are concerned in this section.

We would question whether what we have termed ~~as~~ prenomic sin in Paul can adequately be described as "a characteristic of human nature". For Paul, sin came into the created order (κόσμος) ; Adam committed παράπτωμα ; death - the result of sin - spread to all men (Rom.5.12). Whatever may be the precise interrelation of these events, it is clear - in that all men are mortal - that all have sinned. This universality of sin is expressed at Rom.3.9 all, both Jews and Greeks, are "under sin", Rom.3.23 "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", Rom.11.32 "God consigned all men to disobedience",

and the assertion has the warrant of Scripture at Gal. 3.22. However, sin was not a characteristic of Adam's nature until he had transgressed - at the least this is implied by Rom.5.12. While we can take it, for all practical purposes, that all men sin following the transgression of Adam, there remain some notable exceptions where we have human nature and an absence of sin. So, without wishing to draw out a doctrine of 'original righteousness', we have Adam, before his transgression. Christ, for Paul, though he is distinguished as being born "in the likeness of men" (Phil.2.7), as "sent..... in the likeness of sinful flesh". (Rom.8.3) still, clearly, shares our human nature, "born of a woman" (Gal.4.4) and yet he "knew no sin" (2 Cor.5.21). The Christian who walks 'according to the Spirit' does not know sin while he so walks, yet he is still in the flesh, his human nature has not been cancelled by his walking according to the Spirit. In the light of these observations it is difficult, unequivocally, to assert that sin is a characteristic of human nature, if we take that nature in the sense of that which man derives from God's endowment upon him in creation. We have already seen how Paul draws back from saying that the flesh is inherently sinful in asserting that the carnal is "sold under sin". In its relation to human nature sin is contingent rather than necessary.

We have, on the one hand, Paul's clear insistence on the universality of sin in man. On the other hand, it is equally clear that man can walk in the Spirit - and not sin in that he does so - while still in the flesh. If sin is held to be a characteristic of human nature this would imply that God in Christ had changed human nature as and when men live "under grace". But Paul does not talk of a change in human nature but of a "condemnation of sin in the flesh" (Rom.8.3). Rather than describe sin as "a characteristic of human nature" [1] it would be more accurate to describe this form of sin in Paul's thought as a dominant feature of human activity or living which distinguishes it as resulting in alienation from God.

We do not wish to suggest any diminution of Paul's clear conception of the power of sin and the plight of man in his estrangement from God. If to say that sin cannot be described as "a characteristic of human nature" does in any way diminish these characteristics of Paul's thought, the fault probably lies with the words 'human nature'. We have taken the Kittel description of prenomic sin to refer to human nature as a static concept, to refer to the endowment given to man in creation. In contrast, Paul works with a dynamic concept of human nature, which underlies his concept of the flesh, seeing men in action, "walking" (περιπατέω). Without Christ, man walks according to the flesh (Rom.8.4, 1 Cor.3.3, 2 Cor.10.2). As "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom.7.14), his whole life and conduct is governed by the concerns of this life, which is a distortion of the proper relation between the creature and the Creator. Paul can say that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom.3.23) not so much as a statement about the stature and status of man as a statement about the action of man, with a tragic intensity, and proclaiming that the tragedy is resolved by the power of God in Christ. Paul had known what it was to walk according to the Spirit while in the flesh. It was this experience that the power of sin in the flesh had been broken which influenced his understanding of his previous condition without Christ, the condition of still of many around him. The dynamism that we have noted in Paul's thought arises because that thought is built upon his experience of the power of God in Christ as it affected peoples' living, and not from any speculation as to the characteristics of human nature, which would necessarily have been stated in static ~~terms.~~ concepts. Yet even if we take 'human nature' in this description of sin in a dynamic sense as referring to men in action, sin can only be a characteristic in terms of a non-Pauline understanding of human nature. The Christian understanding of human nature, shared by Paul, is that it finds its true being under the influence of the Spirit of God. Sin indeed is a characteristic man's nature without Christ and the appropriation of his work, but not of human nature as

~~created by God.~~

created by God. This qualification is of the utmost significance, and is a prominent aspect of Paul's ~~ei~~ conception of the flesh - human nature untouched by the Spirit of God.

The Kittel Wörterbuch descfiption of prenomic sin as a "characteristic of human nature" is, however, primarily concerned to refer to the fact that it is ~~mae~~man who is, through the flesh, under sin. Paul is quite clear that man has individual responsibility for sin (see the next section, I.B.4) and its resultant alienation from God. If it was not Paul's intention to assert man's individual responsibility for sin, he could readily have seen the κόσμος as the base of operation of sin among men. This would be to use the social environment, mankind, as the place where sin enters and from which base it controls the life of man. He does, indeed, say that "sin entered the κόσμος " (Rom.5.12), though here κόσμος has a general reference to mankind, or, possibly to the whole created order of heaven and earth, and not to the world as set over against God - a sense in which he often uses the word (e.g. Rom.3.6). Paul sees the κόσμος as being under the influence, not of sin, but of a galaxy of demonic powers to which he often makes reference, described at Gal.4.3 as τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Or again, Paul might have seen sin as primarily a characteristic of 'this age' so that sin would have a base of operation in 'this age', in the circumstances of man's living without the power of God. ~~But Paul, in the event, sees sin as operating 'in' the flesh'~~ This possibility is suggested by his contrast of the Christian - who is to present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God - with what the Christian is not to do : "Do not be conformed to this world (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ Rom.12.2). Paul continues, "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". As in 1 Cor.1.18-2.16, the influence of 'this age' is primarily through the thought and wisdom, or insight, of man - Paul is using the Greek idea of the rational part of man's being as affecting the whole of his life. Paul, in fact, takes neither the 'world' nor 'this age' as the base of the activity of sin among men, but concentrates the seat of the

operation of sin in 'the flesh',which we have seen, for Paul,includes the whole of man's existence and concerns. The reason for this choice is that 'the flesh' was a category,as developed by Paul,which carried with it the notion of individual responsibility for sin, and the breadth of the influence of sin in man's living so that the whole man was involved in sin. The main reason is that,unlike the world or this age,the flesh conveys the idea of individuality,which is an element in Paul's conception of sin as something for which men are individually responsible. It is important to appreciate ~~that~~ Paul's assumption that men are individually responsible for their sin. The evidence for this assumption on Paul's part will be adduced in the next section,but it is useful here to indicate the background to the assumption in the Old Testament.

The idea of sin as ritual uncleanness is pervasive in Judaism. (Originally this form of sin defiled the person and the land,thereby breaking the wholeness of the relation with the land and with God.).This conception of ritual uncleanness can be categorised as 'primitive' in relation to a later conception of sin,but the idea is carried over into later conceptions,and is evident in the post-exilic life and thought of Judaism. While this conception continues there is the growth of the element of morality in sin. In David we see the development of the moral conception of God as a God of חסד ,and in his encounter with Nathan (2 Sam.12.1-15) the clear indication that the act of taking Bathsheba and causing the death of her husband is sin against the Lord. This moral element in sin flowers in the eighth century prophets. A further element,that of individual responsibility,is added by the prophets at the time of the Exile,as they pondered the theme of punishment for sin. Jeremiah insists on the relationship of the individual with God. He asserts,with Ezekiel,"the soul that sinneth shall die", in contradiction of the dictum "the fathers have eaten sour grapes,and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer.31.29,Ezek.18.4).

The Old Testament distinguishes between acts of

sin done wittingly and unwittingly,"with a high hand" and "in ignorance". As to the elements of ritual and moral sin,Büchler is concerned to differentiate "moral" and "levitical" sin by demonstrating the different modes of atonement employed in first century Judaism [2]. The New Testament in general is concerned with the moral element in sin as distinct from the ritual. Moreover,it is evident in the Old Testament that,whether 'levitical' or 'moral',sin is infraction of the covenant. It is on this view of sin as an infraction of the covenant that it becomes immaterial whether the sin be ritual or moral, done "with a high hand" or "in ignorance". Whatever the form of the sin,it is sin because the covenant has been broken ; uncleanness,profanity,pollution have entered into the situation with a devastating force that can only be overcome by the might of the action of God. In Christ is fully revealed ~~that~~ the fact that God's nature is such that he is prepared to act in this situation,that the material symbolism of pollution and uncleanness portrays a break in personal relation with a heavenly Father,that it is that which proceeds out of a man - willing moral action - which defiles a man (Mk.7.15).

In the Old Testament a man may unknowingly affront the holiness of God so that what is conceived as primarily an impersonal contact is broken,or the person himself has become unacceptable because besmirched. The sacred nature,derived from a man's involvement with the covenant,has been soiled. Although such an idea has to exist by the side of a moral conception of sin,it is still present in first century Judaism,as is seen in the atonement of specifically 'levitical' and unwitting sins. What binds all the elements of sin together is their consequence in breaking the covenant relation with God. This same situation obtains in Paul's thought also, to the extent that sin is there judged to be sin by its consequences,the criterion of sin is in its consequence of alienation from God,whether that sin be under the law or in the form of prenomic sin. Paul is convinced that man has responsibility for prenomic sin,just as man has responsibility in the clear situation of sin under the

law.

Prenomic sin shares with sin under the law both the element of its consequences and the element of individual responsibility. The distinctive feature of prenomic sin, in contrast with transgression of the law, is its 'hiddenness'. This feature is present when Paul talks of the 'principalities and powers'. In his study Principalities and Powers in the New Testament, H.Schlier concludes that "They take possession of the world and of men in such a way that they let these appear in their spirit. Withdrawing and concealing themselves, they reveal themselves through the world and existence, of which they have taken possession, and which they transcend in themselves" [3]. This mode of concealment is also an attribute of prenomic sin, and it is the clue to the understanding of Rom.7.7-11. Here, at first, without the law, sin lies dead and the subject is alive - in a figure, because it is a sham life that takes no account of God's demand and so no account of God. Paul had formerly been 'alive' in the sense that he was 'doubly dead' - in the way in which a double negative makes a positive. He was dead in the alienation from God brought about by his prenomic sin, and he was dead in not being aware of God's demand. The law comes, sin revives - that prenomic sin which was present, hidden as though dead - the prenomic sin is transformed into παράπτωμα and the subject dies to the God who is made known in the law. In terms of the 'double death' that makes a positive, the demand of God is now clearly known, so that the remaining negative of alienation from God produces a death of which the subject is aware. The 'life' and 'death' referred to are quite clearly not physical life and death, but the life and death of the subject's relation with God. Prenomic sin - the precondition of παράπτωμα and physical death - was present all the time, but hidden.

Paul does not in fact say that sin is hidden in the way that he says that the principalities and powers and other demonic forces are hidden for the single reason that, whereas the powers hide themselves, it is man who

makes prenomic sin to be hidden. So Paul says that "men... ἐν ἀδικίᾳ suppress the truth" (Rom.1.18 - 'the truth' being what can be known about God, Rom.1.19). Man knows the truth about God and God's demand in the decree that those who do all the acts of Rom.1.24-32, to which man has been given up by God, deserve to die (Rom.1.32). In not honouring God or giving thanks to him, men become futile in their thinking and their senseless minds are darkened (Rom.1.21). Paul here implies that, by disregarding the knowledge of God and his demand, man has hidden his sin from himself. This self-induced blindness is paralleled... in 2 Cor.4.3-4 : "if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled... to those who are perishing. In their case the god τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ, who is the likeness of God". The parallel breaks down at the point at which, in Romans 1, it is man himself, rather than 'the god of this age', who creates the blindness.

So far in this section we have seen sin in action in the affairs of men, indeed as a characteristic of men's actions, its universality being attested in Scripture (Gal.3.22) and in the fact of the universality of physical death. We have seen that this characteristic of human action is also, by Paul, seen as a force at work in men through the flesh. Paul personifies this force which he sees at work in the flesh. So sin "reigns" (Rom.5.21, 6.12), holds men as "slaves" (Rom.6.14,16,17,20,7.14); sin can be "dead" (Rom.7.8) and "revive" (Rom.7.9); sin "finds opportunity" (Rom.7.8,11) and "deceives" (Rom.7.11). This has been seen as "figurative, rhetorical language" [4], so that it "does not necessarily imply a person" [5]. Paul is quite prepared to talk of Satan and a host of powers in terms of a thoroughgoing and robust mythology. Stählin concludes, in the matter of the personalisation of sin in Paul : "It is difficult to decide how much of this to regard, with Dibelius, as referring to the demon, Sin, playing the part of Satan in Rom.6f., and how much, with Feine, as mere poetic imagery" [6]. T.W.Manson [7] provides a useful answer to this dilemma by pointing to Paul's

motive in personalising sin : "may it not be that Paul is not willing to let moral evil fade away into abstract terms and uses this concrete way of speech [personification] to impress folk with the reality and danger of the spiritual powers of evil".

Paul personalises sin to advance his concept of sin, firstly, to emphasise the power of sin in alienating men from God. So, sin "reigns" and holds men in slavery. This power is evident in that all are under sin. This power is also evident in the second reason for personalising sin, which is to show the wiliness of sin, its capacity for deception and concealment whereby man is not aware that he is in the thrall of sin without the working of the power of God in the revelation of Christ. Sin is personalised to show that sin can deceive a man by lying low, lying dead (Rom.7.8). The power of sin is such that it does not have to act - it can be dead - until the demand of God is revealed to man. It can lie dormant, effortlessly keeping man his slave, until the revelation of God. As God reveals his demand he also reveals sin as man finds that he is not able to fulfil God's demand, however much he might "delight in the law of God in [his] inmost self" (Rom.7.22). Such is this power and wiliness of sin that Paul is quite prepared to personalise his concept to demonstrate these facets of sin.

Prenomic sin, whether personalised or not, besides bearing the characteristic of resulting in alienation from God, is seen by Paul as pre-existent over against God's revelation of himself. It is only known and seen for what it is in the action of God's self-revelation, but sin is in the world and determines the lives of men even while God's demand is unknown to man. In Romans 7, sin is present before ever it is revealed by the law, though it lies dormant, not needing to act because man is already in its grip. In Romans 6, the situation of the 'reign of sin' becomes evident to man as he comes to know the possibility of life "under grace", the possibility of life - by baptism into death with Christ - in contrast with the "wages of sin". In Romans 5, sin is again pre-existent in relation to the revelation of God, is seen

as being in the world both "before the law was given" (Rom.5.13) and as a controlling feature of life 'in Adam' by contrast with life 'in Christ'.

Romans 5.12-21 contrasts the situation of being 'in Adam' with being 'in Christ'. 'In Christ' a man knows righteousness, justification and life, as opposed to the knowledge and experience 'in Adam' of sin, condemnation and death. This passage has traditionally raised the question of the relation between the transgression of Adam and sin in man. As is often noted, St Augustine used the Vulgate translation in quo of ἐφ' ᾧ in the phrase ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον (Rom.5.12). Such a translation leads to the exegesis of Paul's thought as indicating a necessary connection between Adam's sin and that of all men. We have tried to demonstrate how Paul does not see sin as having a necessary connection with the flesh, and would thus argue against a hereditary connection between Adam's transgression and man's sin. N. Turner [8] finds significance in the aorist tense of the verb in the phrase "all men sinned", as referring to a single, past action. But some of the force of this aorist is dissolved if what we have said of the nature of prenomic sin, in distinction from transgression, has relevance. Turner claims that "The reference is not to the multiplicity of sins which men commit continually and which are peculiar to each man, but to that once-and-for-all sin of which men are guilty simply by virtue of being sons of Adam" [9]. But the verb here refers to prenomic sin rather than to transgression under the law, and though this can be thought of as habitual and continuous it is also seen as a unity, in contrast with the multiplicity of transgression which it occasions. (a

When Paul writes "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom.5.19), the relation between Christ's action and the righteous is probably contingent rather than necessary - depending on how we take God's foreknowing and predestination in Rom.8.29-30 and 9-11. If the parallel is to be maintained, it is apparent that the relation between Adam's action and man's sin will be contingent also. Adam's transgression was the first, and

the total of the potentiality of man is in him. So far we may say that all men sinned in Adam. However, each man is responsible for his own sin as he is for his own transgressions. Paul's basis for the assertion of the universality of sin is quite apart from the transgression of Adam, being based on the witness of Scripture, his own experience under the law and the universal fact of physical death. [10]

It remains to note the difference, in Rom.5.14, between Adam's sin (παράπτωμα) and that of men between Adam and Moses (ἁμαρτία). As F.J.Leenhardt [11] points out with reference to this time ~~bewt~~ between Adam and Moses, Paul is here arguing for a logical rather than a chronological perspective, "alluding to categories of men in various situations, rather than to men in historically successive situations. Paul is thinking theologically rather than historically ; he is explaining man to himself, he is not describing man's past". The situation between Adam and Moses is essentially the situation without the the law and without Christ [12]. Adam's sin is clearly the contravention of the declared will of God. Prenomic sin, by contrast, is distinctive in 'not being reckoned'. "Rom.5.13 οὐκ ἐλλογᾶται is not reckoned into the account. The sin is there ; but it did not take the form of transgression and so is not set down" notes J.B.Lightfoot [13]. The difference between the sin that is reckoned and the sin that is not reckoned is the difference we have already noted between παράπτωμα and ἁμαρτία .

Romans 5.13 does point to a difference between prenomic sin and sin under the law, i.e. παράπτωμα . Indeed, this is the difference between the two forms of sin, and it is well to remind ourselves of the fact that it is the only difference. Commentators are generally silent as to who does the reckoning here. Obviously it must be God, for who else could have the reckoning of sin ? Both forms of sin incur the punishment of death. Both forms are elsewhere classified as ἀναπολόγητος (Rom.1.20 referring to the Gentile - without the law - situation and Rom.2.1 covering the Jew - under the law - as well). The difference is ad hominem, a difference not of the sin itself nor of

its consequences, but a difference of the sinner and his situation, the difference between explicit knowledge of God's demand and not fulfilling it and knowledge of God's purpose implicit in creation and a rejection of that purpose. Sin where it has not been reckoned has remained ἁμαρτία, not becoming παράπτωμα through the absence of the law. This 'not reckoning' is no act of mercy on God's part[14] – it is the Jew who has the advantage (Rom.3.2). God's mercy is seen in the not reckoning of the παραπτώματα (2 Cor.5.19), the not reckoning of what should be reckoned.

Notes of I.B.3.

1. G.Quell,G.Bertram,G.Stählin and W.Grundmann, ἁμαρτία , in G.Kittel,Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, E.T.,Sin,Bible Key Words,p.49.

2. A.Büchler,Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century, ch.IV.

3. H.Schlier,op.cit.,p.67.

4. R.Bultmann,Theology of the New Testament, Vol.1,p.245.

5. W.Sanday and H.C.Headlam,Romans, p.146.

6. Sin,op.cit.in note 1,p.52n.

7. T.W.Manson,On Paul and John,p.28.

8. N.Turner,Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, p.118.

9. N.Turner,Loc.cit.

10. For a full discussion of Rom.5.12 see C.E.B. Cranfield,"On some of the Problems in the Interpretation of Romans 5.12",Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol.22,No.3 (September 1969),pp.324-341.

11. F.J.Leenhardt,Romans,p.146.

12. It is tempting here to adduce Rom.2.12,with the seemingly distinctive sinning 'without the law' (ἀνόμως). However,there is an important respect in which this is not another way of referring to prenomic sin in distinction from sin undef the law. Obviously,Paul is talking about prenomic sin,but the point he is making in Rom.2.12 is that this sin ἀνόμως ,as the sin ἐν νόμῳ ,is seen "when God's righteous judgement will be revealed" (Rom.2.6), "on the day when...God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (Rom.2.16). The reference to sin in verse 12 is to sin as revealed by the criteria of that judgement. Here is no distinction between two forms of sin,rather an assertion that sin,in both contexts,for Jew and Gentile, is one in the face of the judgement by Christ Jesus.

13. J.B.Lightfoot,Notes on Epistles of St.Paul,p.289.

14. H.L.Goudge,"The Theology of St.Paul",A New Commentary

Notes of I.B.3.

Commentary, claims ~~that~~, citing Rom.5.13, that St.Paul "thinks of God as taking a lenient view of human transgressions, as far as the time is concerned during which we know little of Him or of His requirements ; 'original', as contrasted with 'actual' sin is an appeal to God's pity rather than to His wrath" (p.438b).

4. Responsibility for Sin.

Prenomic sin and sin under the law are, by some, differentiated in the matter of guilt, which hinges on the question of man's responsibility for sin. We have already noted E.P.Gould's claim that there is in Paul "a sin that is guilt and a sin that is not guilt" and suggested that this is a distinction between two contexts of the sin rather than involving two types of sin.[1] The universality of sin, which was noted in the previous section, demands that sin be one and the same, though it appears in different forms in different contexts. In the matter of the guilt of sin, a matter so near the heart of sin, it is clear that sin is one and the same in all its forms for Paul.

Clearly, for Paul, all men are 'responsible' sinners. He insists on the guilt-bearing quality of sin under the law. In contrast, the guilt of prenomic sin, of "Gentile sinners" (Gal.2.15), is something which was assumed by those who heard Paul's letters read. Paul's concern in Romans 2 is to demonstrate that the Jew also is a sinner. In this situation it is understandable that the guilt of the Jew is stressed, while the guilt of the Gentile can be taken as common ground, and in consequence receive more sparing mention. Those who are not under the law are already categorised as sinners. Paul's argument from Rom.1.18 builds up to a conclusion of the universality of sin in Rom.3.9-20. A.Nygren observes[2]: "It is manifest enough that the Gentiles, who have not the law, are sinners and under the wrath of God. When therefore, the law stops the mouth of those who have the law [Rom.3.19] compelling them to confess that they are the veriest sinners, the result is clear. "The whole world is held accountable to God", and all without exception stand under His wrath".

We can only differentiate between the sin of the Jew under the law and that of the Gentile without the law in the matter of guilt if we employ a conception of guilt which was unknown to Paul. All sin was, for Paul, guilt-bearing, because he saw guilt as objective, rather than

necessarily possessing a subjective element. Paul is not concerned with the fact that a ~~em~~ man knows he is guilty, though this manifestly is the case under the law. Paul is concerned with sin in its nature as missing God's purpose for man, as alienating from God. While this is explicit in the transgression of the law, it is also clearly present in the life of the Gentile, who receives the due punishment of death.

The question remains, for Paul: however is it that the Gentile does not know his situation before God? Paul's answer to this is that men" ἐν ἀδικίᾳ suppress the truth" (Rom.1.18). This means that the subjective element in guilt is not present, but it does not mean that they are not guilty and responsible. "They are without excuse" (Rom.1.20). For St.Paul, God's self-revelation is one, and man's sin is one. The revelation of God's purpose for man and the power to fulfil that purpose in Christ, the revelation of God's demand in the law, God's revelation of his nature in the creation and his wrath against all ungodliness and wickedness of men - these are all one in being the self-revelation of the one God. The unity of God's revelation is demanded by Paul's monotheism and is clear in the attribution of fullness and completeness to the revelation in Christ. God's revelation of himself reveals sin. Paul works this out in detail in the matter of the law, but the same action is evident in the other modes of God's revelation which Paul notices. Christ reveals the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom.8.3). The revelation of God's wrath reveals man's sin in suppressing the truth about God's nature (Rom.1.18). In all revelation of God the objective guilt of man in sin is made manifest.

It is understandable that what Paul has to say about the law regulates his discussion of man's responsibility for sin. Life under the law was an experience which Paul had in common with many of his hearers. C.E.B. Cranfield[3] has demonstrated how Paul advances from the basic datum of the law as God's law, through a discussion of the relation of sin and condemnation to the law, to find that "the ~~innermost~~ ultimate goal and innermost meaning of

of the law are (not the condemnation of sinners, but) Jesus Christ" [4]. Paul indeed uses the law as the regulating concept in his discussion of the relation of all men, not only Jews, with God. This is why the revelation in Christ has to be seen by Paul in relation to the revelation in the law. When Paul considers the relation of those who are not under the law with God, the only way of talking about the relation known to him is by reference to the law - these men are categorised as those who do not have the law (Rom.2.14).

Are they without knowledge of God ? No, says Paul ; "what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them" (Rom.1.19). The God revealed in the law is also the God of creation and "his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom.1.20). The demand, which is made explicit in the law, is yet present in the creation because it is the same God who is revealing himself in the law and in creation. We can safely take it that Paul assumed that what is explicit in the law is implicit in creation, though Paul does not actually say this, has not developed the thought as had Philo of Alexandria [5]. Our basis for thinking that Paul assumes a connection between the law and creation is that the revelation of God is one because God is one. God has made the world in a certain way, which involves a demand on man to live in the way in which he is made. The manner in which men should live is made explicit in the law, the power to live in this way is given in the gift of the Spirit. Man, in the event, suppresses the truth about God, he worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, and was given up by God to all manner of wickedness (Rom.1.18-32). Man is guilty. Having 'read off' the nature of God in the work of creation, he fails to live by that knowledge. [6]

While not having the explicit demand of God, a man still, it is clear in Paul, has knowledge of the good and the bad (ἀγαθός and κακός Rom.7.19) under which those acts that are congruent with or in contravention of the law are subsumed. The good and the bad (ἀγαθός and φαῦλος)

are revealed in the judgement of God (2 Cor.5.10). God's righteous judgement (Rom.2.5) distinguishes κακός and ἀγαθός taking "the Jew first and also the Greek" (Rom.2. 9-10).Though Paul is primarily concerned to assert that Jew as well as Gentile is judged by God in Romans 2,it is clear that the Gentile is judged. The Gentile sins even though he has not the law,even though his sin is not παράπτωμα.

R.Bultmann - with a bewilderment which is prima facie justified by Paul's use of the law as the basis for what he says about responsibility for sin - asks,commenting on Rom.5.13,"What sort of sin was it if it did not originate as contradiction of the Law ?" [7]. In Bultmann's estimation,because death is the consequence of sin,Paul had had to introduce inherited sin to explain why men die. Paul,however,has made it quite clear that "all have sinned",both Jew with the law,and Gentile without benefit of law (Rom.3.9,23),Jew and Gentile are under the power of sin,which is that prenomic sin which consists in avoiding God's purpose for man and is clearly revealed under the law where it becomes παράπτωμα.

The view that Paul can only conceive of sin as contravention of an explicit law of God known to men underlies the search for a law other than that of Moses in the exegesis of Rom.2.14,15. Paul refers to Gentiles who do by nature what the law requires. If a law can be found which co-incides ,at least at some points,with the law of Moses,it provides not only an explanation of Paul's thought at this point,but also a law which reveals the sin of the Gentile. So C.H.Dodd has the "law of nature", which is albeit summed up in the law of Moses [8]. A.Nygren gives us substantially the same,though here the "law of nature" is not so much a body of law as some isolated legal requirements [9]. K.Barth takes these verses to refer,not to Gentiles in general,but to Christian Gentiles,"to them God has given his Holy Spirit and therefore a new heart that recognises God's will in such a manner that they can now do it and carry it out" [10]. W.D.Davies, contra Barth,provides the Rabbinic background of the Noachian commandments to support an interpretation on

the lines of 'natural law' [11].

What Paul is hinting at in Rom.2,14,15 is complex. The point is that Paul is only hinting, and this combined with the complexity of that at which he is hinting, is the reason for the medley of interpretations we have just listed. We can ask the question, what particular Gentiles does Paul have in mind ? We would suggest that here Paul is writing of Gentiles who are attracted to and, in part, keep the Mosaic Law, that is the σεβόμενοι , the φοβούμενοι τὸν Θέον who are met in the Acts of the Apostles [12]. This interpretation is a possibility if we take ἑαυτοῖς νόμος to refer to the law of Moses, which Gutbrod [13] asserts is necessary to maintain the grain of thought in the passage, even though νόμος is here anarthrous [14]. Gutbrod goes on to point out that Paul considers that what the law demands and 'the good' are the same, so that knowledge of what is good is equivalent to acquaintance with the law [15]. Paul is here concerned to point out, over against the Jews' tendency to rest upon their privileges, that there are Gentiles who, in the judgement of God, will fare better than the Jew who hears the law and does not do it. The hinted explanation is that the Gentile, while not having the explicit demand of God in the covenant relation - this relation being subsumed in the ~~phrea~~ phrase 'under the law' - has knowledge of the good, seen as God's purpose for men. In the circumstances of creation by God, this is God's good as much as the law is God's law, and this is borne out in Paul's experience as he sees Gentiles being attracted to the law of Moses as an expression of what they see, without benefit of birth under the law, to be God's purpose for man in the world. Paul goes on to see that this feeling after the law on the part of the Gentile will be acknowledged by God in the judgement ; indeed his gospel involves Christ as judge, Christ who was crucified and thereby "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.... that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith " (Gal.3.13,14). Paul is demonstrating in Rom.2.14,15 that the situation in

Christ - in whom the promise is come so that the privilege is not to the Jew only but ~~the~~ to Jew and Gentile as they appropriate the work of Christ in walking in the Spirit - this situation is seen in a very limited way even when Jew and Gentile were not one in Christ. There were then certain Gentiles who saw the law of Moses as God's law, the law of the Creator. Such an interpretation is in accordance with the idea of the unity of God's revelation, already propounded as an 'assumption' on Paul's part. It does ~~away~~ away with any non-Pauline dichotomy between 'natural' and 'revealed' law and religion.[16]

What it does assert is that Paul thought, ~~et~~ not in terms of some codified 'natural law' but in terms of God's purpose for man, which underlies the discussion in Rom.1.18-32. Because Paul could only think of God's purpose in terms of law, he has to say that the Gentiles of Rom.2.14 are "a law to themselves". Indeed, the "law of nature" which Dodd and Nygren adduce, is not a law in the sense of the law of Moses with its attributes of an explicit demand of God to which men are bound in a [illegible] covenant relation[17]. It is much more a moral discrimination on the part of man which finds in the law of Moses the law of the Creator. It is an approach to the circumstances of life in the world, which seeks the lines upon which men ought to behave to be in accordance with their created nature. It is law as a principle of living, rather than as an explicit demand of God which, however, is, in C.H.Dodd's phrase, "summed up" in the law of Moses, is there made explicit for man.

For Paul, man can sin by transgressing the known, explicit law of God, but he can also sin by missing God's purpose for his living. This is clearly saying the same thing in two ways, in two contexts. The latter - the missing God's purpose for his living * is prenomic sin and it is not seen by men to be sin without the revelation of God in the law or in Christ. However, it is sin in the crucial respects of incurring punishment and alienating from God. It is moreover sin in that men have enough knowledge of God apart from the revelation in the law or in Christ, they have enough knowledge in the creation,

in their constitution as man to know God's purpose for them if they did not suppress this knowledge in themselves. We are saying that the ἀγαθός (Rom.2.10,12.9, 2 Cor.5.10,1 Thes.5.15) that man sees is God's good, even though it is not necessarily acknowledged as such. That men do not see this is attributed to the fact that being under sin they have suppressed the truth. The only way out of this situation is the power of Christ, condemning sin in the flesh, revealing to men the power of sin. The Jew has the law and uses it for self-justification. The Gentile, not having the law, still has the knowledge of the nature of God and, suppressing the truth, worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. In both situations man is responsible for his sin, his failure to fulfil God's purpose for him. These are related to one another as knowledge of the same God with the same purpose for man. The one is explicit demand and the other is implicit demand upon man. The one is embedded in the covenant relation of the Jew with God. The other is part of the reality in which man lives and derives from the relation of the creature with the Creator. Paul mentions a further element in the relationship, the δικαίωμα of Rom.1.32 : "they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die".

The interrelation of law, creation and decree is dependent on the fact that each is a revelation of God's nature. It is somewhat pedantic, in the context of Paul's thought, to ask what is the precise wording of the decree, to try to delineate precisely what ~~are~~ were the plain facts ~~that~~ about God which could be 'read off' from the contemplation of what has been made. These are matters relating to the prolegomena to the preaching of the gospel of Christ, the full revelation of God's nature and the demand of faith through grace. The revelation of God before Christ is partial, unfulfilled, because it is not accompanied by the power of God in the Spirit. Even the knowledge of the law is a privilege which loses much of its significance in face of the fact that the man under the law is weakened by sin in the flesh. Outside the context of the law, men have suppressed the truth, thus

being led away from worship of God to idolatry. Being already idolatrous, they ignore the fact that the punishment for sin is death and even approve the practices which lead to this just punishment (Rom.1.32). Jew (Rom.2.1) and Gentile (Rom.2.20) are "without excuse" under the power of sin.

Previously men were under sin; now, in Christ, they can be under grace. This summation of all previous revelation of God creates a new situation, wherein the difference is not between Jew and Gentile, for both are one in Christ. Because of this, inevitably, for Paul, they were previously one also in their sin, in their alienation from God. As they were one in their sin, they can now be gloriously one in the life of the Spirit, through the work of Christ. The dichotomy of man in Paul's thought is between man "in Christ" and man "in Adam" (Rom.5.12-21), between man "under grace" and man "under sin", between man "walking according to the Spirit" and man "walking according to the flesh". If there be any distinction among men "under sin" it is in the context of their sinning rather than in the sin itself. All, with or without the law, have sinned, and this sin is one both in ~~its~~ man's responsibility for his sin and in the consequences of the sin, with which we are to be concerned in the next section.

Notes of I.B.4.

1. vide supra p.1. E.P.Gould,"Paul's Doctrine of Sin", Baptist Review,1880,p.233,quoted more fully above p.2n.

2. A.Nygren,Romans,p.143.

3. C.E.B.Cranfield,"St.Paul and the Law" in New Testament Issues,ed. R.Batey,pp.148-172.

4. op.cit.,p.152.

5. de Opificio Mundi,3,8 demonstrates that Philo saw a relation between the creation and the law : "It [the beginning ~~books of Moses~~ of the books of Moses,the beginning of the Law,i.e. Genesis] consists of an account of the creation of the world,implying that the world is in harmony with the Law,and the Law with the world,and that the man who observes the Law is constituted thereby a loyal citizen of the world,regulating his doings by the purpose and will of Nature,in accordance with which the entire world itself also is administered...." (quoted in C.K.Barrett,New Testament Background : Selected Documents ,p.178).

? 6. In this paragraph we have stated some 'assumptions' which we are claiming to be Paul's. Such a practise is undoubtedly dangerous,quite apart from being impossible to substantiate. The point ~~is~~ expressed in this foolhardy fashion is made in order to be clear as to the position we are taking with regard to revelation in whatt follows of this section. Whether or not this is what Paul himself thought about God's revelation is not proven. However it does appear to be suggested in providing a coherent picture of the interrelation we believe to exist in Paul's thought between the law,the nature of God as 'read off' from the creation,and the decree of Rom.1.32. It is from this interrelation that man's responsibility for sin,the objective guilt in sin without the law as with it,derives.

7. R.Bultmann,Theology of the New Testament,Vol.1,p.252.

8. C.H.Dodd,Romans,p.36.

9. A.Nygren,Romans,p.122-125,making much of the expression

Notes of I.B.4.

τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου ,Rom.2.14.

10. K.Barth,Shorter Romans, p.36-37.

11. W.D.Davies,Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,p.327.

12. W.Manson,The Epistle to the Hebrews (London,1951), pp.179-183,sees evidence in Romans (apart from this passage) for a"possibly very considerable" Gentile-Christian gfoup (p.180) beside the Jewish-Christians. But here we wish to go one step further and say that this Gentile-Christian group had,at least in a considerable proportion of the group,been 'God-fearers' before the preaching of the gospel.

Though referring to the Galatian Christians, A.E.Harvey's"The Opposition to Paul",Studia Evangelica, Vol.IV part I (1965),(Berlin,1968) p.323) description of the "God-fearers" brings out the relation of such to the law : "Such people were drawn to the synagogues in order to hear more about the celebrated monotheism of the Jews ; and in return,certain moral standards and certain observances were probably required of them. But they do not normally seem to have been under any obligation to take the further (and to the Greek mind thoroughly uncongenial) step of full incorporation into the Jewish community by circumcision". It can,perhaps,be argued that such are Gentiles who do not have the law,yet do the things of the law by nature.

13. H.Kleinknecht and W.Gutbrod,Law,Bible Key Words (from Kittel's T.W.N.T.)p.103.

14. vide supra p.3f. The comment there made regarding νόμος anarthrous,against Sanday and Headlam,applies to Rom.2.12 also. Law is only know to Paul through the Mosaic Law. ἀνόμως in this verse reflects the situation of those who are not only without the law but also rejected God's revelation in the things that have been made (Rom.1.18-32).

15. op.cit.p.108.

16. vide A.Nygren,Romans,p.102-4.

Notes of I.B.4.

17. Indeed, the 'law of nature' which occurs in exposition of Romans 2 is only distantly related to that 'natural law' which some latter-day moral thinkers would wish to codify or discover already present in non-biblical writing and mores. However valid this activity may be, it cannot justifiably claim St.Paul as its patron saint on the basis of Rom.2.14,15, though a case for this position might be made out for Paul on the basis of his assertion regarding God's revelation of himself and his ~~neutre~~ ... nature (and so of his demand) in the things that have been made (Rom.1.19-20).

5. The Consequences of Sin.

Sin occasions God's action in Christ, so that grace abounds (Rom.5.20). This, however, is a consequence of sin which is due to the nature of God rather than to the nature of sin. Sin calls forth the wrath of God (Rom.1.18, Col.3.6), those who sin perish (Rom.2.12), those who do the works of the flesh - sold under sin as it is - do not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal.5.21). The punishment for sin is, notably, death (Rom.6.23), but also more sin in the three-fold παρέδωκεν of Rom.1.24, 26, 28. These are consequences which depend on God's response to sin, and we will be looking at these more fully.

The consequence of sin which is inherent in its own nature as sin is alienation from God. Sin is what, in the action of men, alienates from God, is the principle of man's alienation. Where sin is personalised, it is the agent whereby man is alienated from God. Thus inherent in sin is this alienation which sin works, and which calls forth from God his wrath, but also his grace to overcome sin.

(i) A consequence of sin is more sin. Man "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom.1.25). As a consequence all manner of evil in man is unleashed. C.K.Barrett [1] observes that, as in Hellenistic Judaism, it is the basic sin of idolatry (Rom.1.23) from which flows all manner of sins. This consequence of sin is more sin in a quantitative sense. We have already seen that prenomic sin produces qualitatively more sin as it is transformed into παράπτωμα under the law (p.12).

We have suggested (p.31) that the consequence in producing quantitatively more sin gives a picture of man bound by the concerns of the flesh in Paul, which has a similarity with the picture given in the Sermon on the Mount, so that that picture of man can be seen as providing a constituent in the background of Paul's conception of the flesh. The actual influence on Paul

is, of course, the oral tradition of the teaching of Jesus, which was subsequently crystallised, after it had had its influence on Paul's thought, in the Synoptic Gospels.

Paul sees man as "walking according to the flesh" (Rom.8.4), "setting the mind on earthly things" (Phil. 3.19, Col.3.2), and says that "to set the mind on the things of the flesh is death" (Rom.8.6). "The mind that is set in the flesh is hostile to God" (Rom.8.7). This is a distortion of the relation between the creature and the Creator, the living for this life, having the whole of one's conduct orientated towards one's own well-being, and thereby 'serving the belly' which involves dissensions and difficulties between men and hostility in the Church (Rom.16.18, Phil.3.19). The concerns of the flesh - the need to preserve oneself in the face of threats to the well-being of one's 'physico-psychical existence' - have a domination in the life of man who walks according to the flesh, from which he is released only as he walks according to the Spirit, sets his mind on the things that are above (Col.3.2), on the affairs of the Lord (1 Cor.7.32), on the things of the Spirit which brings life and peace (Rom.8.5).

This position of man is evident in the Synoptic Gospels and in Paul's account of man as he walks according to the flesh. Jesus teaches his hearers that they are ~~not~~ not to be anxious, about their physical needs (Mt.6.25-33, Lk.12.22-31) [2]. As to the hostility between these concerns of the flesh and God's purpose for man, there are the parables ~~of the~~ portraying the Kingdom as a feast. In Mt.22.1-10, the guests who are invited were not worthy because "they made light of it [the invitation] and went off, one to his farm, another to his business". Here the flesh is in action alienating from God. The preoccupation with the concerns of the flesh means that man misses the purpose of God. The Lukan version of the parable (Lk.14.15-24) includes recent marriage as one of the excuses for not accepting the invitation to the fulfillment of God's purpose in the life of the Kingdom, and marriage, for St.Paul, involves θλῖψιν τῇ σαρκὶ (1 Cor.7.28). Preoccupation with the £

flesh in the form of achieving financial security is what makes it so hard for the rich man to enter into the Kingdom (Mk.10.23-27,Mt.19.23-26,Lk.18.24-27). This is a position of misplaced trust; some texts of Mark describe such men as "those who have trusted in riches" (Mk.10.24).

The Synoptic Gospels portray the idea that concentration on the concerns of this life - with its manifold demands which are, for Paul, subsumed under the term σάρξ - comes between man and God. Pungent expression of this is given in the description of the days of Noah and Lot (Lk.17.26-29,Mt.24.37-39). The point is put succinctly in the saying "Whosoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whosoever loses his life will preserve it" (Lk.17.33) [3]. Here life is ψυχή, which generally refers to the soul as feeling and thinking in a material body, to soul as responding to its material, created existence. This Synoptic saying is paradoxical. Paul opens out the paradox so that it is life according to the Spirit which is gained, while the loss is life according to the flesh (Rom 8.13).

Paul can write of natural, unspiritual man (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος), who is unable to receive the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor.2.14). H.B.Swete [4] observes, in comment on 1 Cor.2.14 : "Men from this point of view consist of two classes ; those in whom the lower rational life (ψυχή) predominates, and those who are guided by the higher. The man who belongs to the former class has no conception of spiritual realities ; he is incapable of apprehending them or even examining their claims, since they can be investigated only by spiritual faculties which he never possessed, or which through long disuse and atrophy can no longer fulfil their functions". But Paul does not normally think of man in this way. For Paul man's weakness, his failure to live according to God's purpose, derives not from any congenital disability or any facet of his constitution as man, but from the fact that the flesh is sold under sin. Man is in a certain case. Paul's explanation of this is that sin has found a base of operations in the flesh. The Synoptic Gospels portray this same situation of man without venturing an explanation of why man is preoccupied with

the concerns of the flesh. Certainly, the word 'flesh' is not used in the way Paul uses it, except, perhaps, at Gethsemane (vide p.24). However, there are words which Paul uses in association with σάρξ which are also found in the Synoptic Gospels. R.Bultmann [5] discusses some words which are a characteristic expression in Paul of the human stance of setting the mind on the things of the flesh. These are : ἐπιθυμεῖν, μεριμνᾶν, καυχᾶσθαι, φόβος.

ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἐπιθυμία: ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος says Paul (Gal.5.17). The previous verse contains the imperative that "the desire[s] of the flesh (ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς)" are not to be gratified (Gal.5.16). In Mk.4.19 it is αἱ περὶ τὰ λοιπὰ ἐπιθυμίαι which choke the sown word.

μεριμνᾶν : In the same Markan verse we have αἱ μέριμναι τοῦ αἰῶνος in the same role as "the desire for other things" (Mk.4.19 ; Mt.13.22 has the singular). The verb μεριμνᾶν dominates the passage Mt.6.25-33, Lk.12.22-31 : "Do not be anxious (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε)about your life, what you shall ~~put on~~ eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body what you shall put on....and which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Therefore do not be anxious....". Matthew adds," Therefore do not be anxious for to-morrow, for to-morrow will be anxious for itself" (Mt.6.34). Luke employs the noun, μέριμνα , twice, to refer to the cares of this life (using βίος and βιωτικός , rather than ψυχή or αἰών , Lk.8.14, 21.34). Paul takes up this word and wishes the Corinthians to be free from anxieties (ἀμερίμνους) - the anxieties of married life , which bring θλῖψιν τῇ σαρκὶ (1 Cor.7.28) - but to be anxious about the affairs of the Lord(1 Cor.7.32). In Philippians, Paul prescribes a "carefree" approach (μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε , Phil.4.6) which might be placed beside his statement in Phil.3.3 : we "glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh".

καυχᾶσθαι : Placing confidence in the flesh is a quieter form of the brash boasting which Paul often mentions, and which he had probabply observed among Jews, boasting of the law and their special relation with God.

This is categorised as boasting κατὰ τὴν σάρκα (2 Cor. 11.28). καυχᾶσθαι does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels.

φόβος : For Paul, life according to the flesh is characterised by the presence of fear. Christians have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby they cry "Abba, Father", not "the spirit of slavery to fall back again into fear (Rom.8.15). Fear is concern for well-being in this life, is μέριμνα invested with a greater emotional force. Fear, in the Synoptic Gospels, arises in the confrontation with Jesus and to which his response is : "Fear not, only have faith" (Mk.5.36). This μὴ φοβοῦ, μὴ φοβεῖσθε is reiterated again and again. The situation of fear is, at once, revealed and resolved by faith in Christ.

These similarities of the Synoptic Gospels with Paul's terminology are not far-reaching enough to suggest a complete dependence of Paul on the tradition which is preserved in these Gospels. On the other hand, there is some similarity in the terms used, there is a consonance of the portrayal of man's condition, though we have to say that Paul has a developed appraisal of this condition with the explanation of the condition in terms of the domination of sin in the flesh. Preoccupation with the concerns of the flesh as apostacy from God is common to both the parables of the Kingdom and Paul. Whereas in the parables it is simply posited as the condition of men faced with the demands of the Kingdom, in Paul it is a consequence of sin in the flesh.

(ii) Death is a consequence of sin. Paul accepted the clear Old Testament view that death was God's punishment for sin. God gives life, and only he has the right to take it away. His grounds for taking it away are the sin, the disobedience and apostasy, of man. Man is given life, but worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator in that life. Man is preoccupied with his own self as the result of sin in the flesh, and this is idolatry - the idol being one's own self - a case of misplaced trust so that the purpose of God for man is not fulfilled. The Old Testament averrs that "The soul

that sins shall die" (Ezek.18.4,20,Jer.31.30). This text is primarily concerned to say that it is the individual who will be punished for his own sins, and not for those of another generation, but the text assumes that death is the punishment for, or, at least, the result of, sinning. Indeed, C.H.Dodd claims that Genesis 3 was, in St.Paul's day, understood as saying that death (Gen.3.19) is the result of Adam's disobedience (Gen.3.18), and that in this incident we see the type of death as a punishment which comes to all men. Dodd adduces Wisdom 2.23-24 and 2 Esdras 3.7 as evidence that the idea was being reiterated by Jewish writers at the time of Paul [6]. Clearer evidence of the idea of death as the punishment for sin in the Old Testament is contained in the record of such incidents as the death of Ahaziah in 2 Kings 1.6. The matter is summed up in Ps.73.27 : "For lo they that forsake thee shall perish : thou destroyest all them that break their troth with thee" [7].

For Paul "death spread to all men because all sinned" (Rom5.12) [8]. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom.6.23, cp.7.5). "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor.15.56), the terror of death is derived from the fact that it is punishment for sin. Death, for Paul, is the consequence that all flesh bears because it is sold under sin. It is this condition of the flesh that underlies the statement, "he who sows to the flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption" (Gal.6.8).

Death is, for Paul, not only a physical event but also a personalised force. What we have said about sin personalised (pp.42-43) applies equally to the personification of death. Death no longer <u>has dominion</u> over Christ" (Rom.6.9) - sin is the subject of the same verb, κυριεύω, at Rom.6.14. At 1 Cor.15.26, death is an enemy of Christ, an enemy who is defeated but is not yet destroyed. Here death is still a power over those who believe, but a power without its sting, so that the acceptance of death is Paul's personal preference in Col.1.21-23. As a personalised force, death's dominion is dependent upon the fact that all men are "slaves of sin".

Death as the consequence of sin is not only a physical event, but also a present reality. Paul describes the Colossians, before their appropriation of the work of Christ, as being "dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh" (Col.2.13, cp.Eph.2.1). The contrast is with eternal life which can be entered this side the grave. Death as a present reality is a consequence of sin for Paul, though he is more often concerned with the grave as a physical event in the future, rather than the present moribund state of man in his sin.

Death is the 'type' ~~of~~ of man's alienation from God by his sin. Because man fails to fulfil God's purpose for him, because, through sin, he is preoccupied with the concerns of the flesh, he is already dead in his sin, and he receives the due punishment of death. However, death is not God's final word on the sin that alienates from him. Paul states that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom5.8). It is in this dispensation of the grace of God, in the death of Christ - cursed that the blessing of Abraham might be available for all men (Gal. 3.13-14) - that it becomes possible for man to walk according to the Spirit and so fulfil God's purpose for man. It is to a consideration of sin in the light of this dispensation that we now ~~tru~~turn to confirm our findings on the nature of sin in Paul's thought ~~which~~ which have emerged in a consideration of the context of man in the flesh.

Notes of I.B.5.

1. C.K.Barrett,From First Adam to Last,p.18.

2. μεριμνᾶτε . Lk.12.29 has the vivid μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε.

3. There is a parallel in Mt.10.39,where the context of taking up the cross is influenced by the other record of the saying in Mk.8.35,Mt.16.25,Lk.9.24 ; cf. Jn.12.25.

4. H.B.Swete,The Holy Spirit in the New Testament,p.179.

5. R.Bultmann,Theology of the New Testament,Vol.1, pp.241-246.

6. C.H.Dodd,Romans,p.81. On Genesis 3.17-19 as it stands, G. von Rad comments,Genesis,p.92,"it is not easy to establish unambiguously the sense of the passage".

7. Translation of The Revised Psalter,S.P.C.K.,London, 1963.

8. vide supra,pp.44-45.

II SIN AND SPIRIT

1. Life in the Spirit.

The πνεῦμα most prominent in Paul is the Spirit of God, of Christ. The evidence of Paul's experience of the Spirit as the regulating factor in the life of the Christian is pervasive in his letters. Together with the concepts of righteousness and life, the Spirit is a mark of Paul's description of the Christian life, and is contrasted with the marks of the life without Christ - flesh, sin and death.

Paul sees the Christian dispensation as inaugurated in the work of Christ. In relation to his thought regarding sin, this is the action of God "sending his own Son....he condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom.8.3). Paul refers to Christ's death ὑπερ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (1 Cor. 15.3, Gal.1.4), and this is reiteration of a formula in the Christian tradition, as we may judge from the use of ἁμαρτία to refer to individual sins, which is not Paul's customary usage (<u>vide supra</u> p.35). A distinctively Pauline statement is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν against them" (2 Cor.5.19), where the individual sin is seen as παράπτωμα (and see Rom.3.25, τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων). More clearly stated is Paul's insight that in the work of Christ man is delivered from the slavery to sin. So Paul writes : "For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor.5.21). The imagery of slavery under the power of sin is the setting of his words : "The death ~~that~~ Christ died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom.6.10-11). The action of God in Christ is seem as being "for sins" and as defeating the power of sin in the flesh.

The relation of the work of Christ to the gift of ~~the Spirit is evident at Gal.~~

the Spirit is evident at Gal.3.14. Christ became a curse for us "that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith". Here the gift of the Spirit is made possible by the work of Christ. Paul goes further than this, almost to identify the Spirit with the Lord Christ : "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom". (2 Cor.3.17). We say, 'almost to identify', because the general impression from Paul's writing is that he uses the phrases 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' interchangeably, as he conceives of the indwelling both of Christ and of the Spirit in the Christian. The point is that 'the Spirit', for Paul, is the Spirit of Christ. This is how the Spirit is made a firm and personal concept in his thinking. "You are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you..." (Rom.8.9-10). The work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, though distinct and identifiable actions of God, are seen as all of a piece in the inbreaking of God into the world of men - of man sold under sin in the flesh - with power, for righteousness and life.

..... We receive some insight into Paul's thinking at this point when we notice the significance of the trap into which he falls in Romans 6. Here he is talking about the deliverance from the power of sin, the slavery to sin in which man is held in the flesh. He wants to make the contrast between the former life in the flesh, as slaves of sin, and the new life in Christ, appropriated in the baptismal death and resurrection of the Christian. Significantly, Paul has not in this chapter the aid of the concept of the Spirit in describing the new life in Christ. He begins to talk of the new life as slavery to righteousness - "Having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom.6.18), but quickly qualifies this - "I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations" (Rom.6.19) [1]. He has written of the newness of life without mention of the Spirit, so that the newness - the freedom from sin - has created a vacuum, in relation

to the orientation of a man's living. This may seem a strong word,'vacuum',for the newness of life in Christ, the being alive to God,the righteousness,the grace,that eternal life to which the chapter makes reference at its close. But in terms of Paul's thought,in terms of the analysis in Romans 8,we have here what can,comparatively speaking,be described as something of a 'vacuum'. Rooms Romans 6 leaves us with the contrast slavery to sin - slavery to God. But Paul's more searching analysis along the lines of a man's orientation in his living,on the lines of the flesh-Spirit contrast,give a picture,by the side of which Paul justifiably has reservations about describing Christians as 'slaves of righteousness'. The situation might well be described in this way; ~~whiel~~ while the work of Christ gives liberty ,the work of the Spirit,indwelling the Christian man,gives direction and purpose for that life of liberty. It is in some such way as this that we can see the relation which,for Paul,exists between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. However, the roles are so often exchanged that we could provide texts to show the Spirit as closely involved with the liberty of the Christian and Christ as providing direction and purpose for men (e.g.Rom.10.4). The work of Christ and the Spirit is so closely interrelated that Paul can write of the Spirit of Christ (Rom.8.9,Phil.1.19;cp. 2 Cor.3.17).

At the same time,Paul does write of the spirit of man. Here Paul usually has in mind the spirit of man as energised by the Spirit of God,of Christ,as the Spirit indwells the Christian man. Christians are recreated by the Spirit as sons of God : "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God...it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God". (Rom.8.14,16). It is important for our ~~purpose~~ purposes to see what Paul means by the spirit of man, because it illuminates the difference in man under sin and man in the Spirit. Man in the flesh has a spirit,if we can argue from Paul's scant reference to the matter.[2] But the spirit of man is dominated by the fact that he is sold under sin in the flesh. In the setting,without

Christ and the gift of the Spirit, it is irrelevant whether man has a spirit or not. The spirit of man is only energised by the Spirit of God, it is man as he 'sets his mind on the things of the Spirit'. Without the Spirit of God there is no spirit in man worth speaking of, except it be that 'spirit of bondage' (Rom.8.15) which is at work among men as they are bound under sin in the flesh and under the law (Gal.4.5,7,24) - that law which they cannot fulfil through the weakness of the flesh, which they misuse because they are flesh. This 'bondage' is not through any lack of spirit in man, but because of the force of sin, which ennervates any capacity in man for fulfilling the good purpose of God. By contrast, the spirit in the man whose faith calls forth the indwelling of the Spirit of God (Gal.3.14) is the whole man orientated in righteousness, endued with the power of the Spirit to fulfil the purpose of God for man, so that the man has life in himself.

With Christ, there is freedom from the slavery to sin, and also the indwelling of the Spirit. Without Christ, a man knows only the slavery to sin. Thus it is that Paul contrasts the flesh with the Spirit as dispensations under which men can live. If it were not for the revelation of God in the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, man would know nothing of the power whereby he is delivered from the power of sin, would not even know that he was under sin. The knowledge of sin in the flesh is dependent on the experience of God's power in the work of the Spirit. Paul's concern, we may say at this point, is not so much with the effervescent, spectacular manifestations of the Spirit (such as 'speaking with tongues', 1 Cor.14.5), but with the steady, life-giving work of the Spirit in the depths of man's being. It is this experience of the Spirit which enabled him to see that very weakness of the flesh in which he had previously toiled, and which was particularly apparent in his former life under the law.

There are other ways in which this contrast of life in the power of God and life without that power have been described. We have already referred to the points at which Paul's description of life without Christ and

life with Christ suggest a background of eschatological thought (pp.26-27). The eschatological contrast of 'this Age' and the Age to Come' is "a view of the world and of history" [3], the significance of the Ages is stated in a linear concept of ~~tiem~~ time. O.Cullmann, who has drawn attention to the time element in eschatological thought, claims, contra R.Bultmann, that "all philosophical ... reinterpretation and dissolution into timeless metaphysics is foreign to it" [4]. What Paul draws out in his thinking is the qualitative difference as to the sort of life man can live in each of the Ages, without in any way abrogating the linear time aspect of the eschatological thinking. It is with this qualitative difference between the Ages that Paul is primarily concerned as he typifiest the contrast between this Age and the Age to Come in the contrast of life 'according to the flesh' with life 'according to the Spirit'. We have to draw on this eschatological thought, in order that, appreciating the relation of the Ages, we may understand the possibility of living 'according to the Spirit' while 'in the flesh'. This situation, in Cullmann's exposition of New Testament eschatology, in described as being between' the Christ-deed at the mid-point' and the Parousia ; it is the situation of being at one and the same time in 'this Age' and - because of the Christ-deed - in 'the Age to Come'. In Pauline terms, the power of sin in the - 'sold under sin' but not inherently sinful - flesh is defeated, so that the flesh can sustain life 'according to the Spirit' as the Spirit indwells the man 'in the flesh'.

Paul describes the gift of the Spirit as an ἀρραβών , an earnest, pledge or first instalment (2.Cor.1.22, 5.5, cp.Eph.1.14). The full abundance of the gift is not yet received, but enough is given to assure the full gift at the Parousia, enough is at the disposal of the Christian 'in the flesh' effectually to walk 'according to the Spirit'. Paul further describes the situation of the Christian : "we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος), groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom.8.23). He has already stated that "all who

are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom.8.14), but it appears that fullness of sonship involves the redemption of the body. The Christian can already cry "Abba, Father", has already the fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5.22f.), but has not yet a 'redeemed body'. As to an explanation of what Paul envisages by the redemption of the body we can look at 1 Cor.15.44, with its reference to a body "sown ψυχικόν and raised πνευματικόν ". This refers to what happens to the body at the Parousia, when we shall be changed ἀλλαγησόμεθα [5], when the perishable-mortal nature shall put on the imperishable-immortal (1 Cor.15.51-53). And while, no reference is made to 'flesh' as such and in contrast with Spirit, but to 'body', we may take it that the σῶμα ψυχικόν (1 Cor.15.44) is part of what Paul elsewhere refers to as flesh, and that when the body is changed there is a redemption of the body which involves the loss of the flesh, which was once 'under sin', though it has become no longer so for the Christian as he walks according to the Spirit.

In these terms, what happens in the redemption of the body is that the Christian is no longer 'in the flesh' - the significance of this point for the flesh is that, while the Christian is in the flesh, temptation will come. Paul usually expresses this in terms of the principalities and powers - defeated as they are by Christ (Col.2.15, Gal.4.3-7), but trying to win back the Christian to be again under their control. The Christian has to be guarded from evil, or "the evil one" (2 Thes.3.3), and Satan needs to be kept from "gaining the advantage over us [Christians]" (2 Cor.2.11). Satan tempts the Christian through lack of self-control (1 Cor.7.5). The "end of the ages has indeed come (1 Cor.10.11), though the Christian is still in the flesh. "Therefore let everyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10.12-13).

We have drawn on the eschatological thought in

and underlying Paul's writings, to reiterate points made under the heading "Sin and Flesh". Firstly, the eschatological framework within Paul's thought makes it abundantly clear that Jew and Gentile are one in their sin, though Paul usually makes this point in describing both Jew and Gentile as being 'in the flesh'. Both Jew and Gentile are living in 'this age'. The distinction between having and not having the law is important, but pales into relative unimportance before the fact of Christ. It is Christ in whom dawns 'the Age to Come', who creates the line of demarcation between the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit. Paul puts the eschatological framework in terse and vivid - because apocalyptic - language when he writes : "the night is far gone, the day is at hand" and goes on to contrast the "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" with "making no provision for the flesh" (Rom.13.12-14). The night is indeed far gone, but not yet burnt up in the radiance of the day, though there is sufficient light of dawn whereby Christians may 'conduct themselves' (περιπατέω). In this situation moral exhortation is relevant : "he who sows to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption ; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal.6.8). This is written to Christians - Christians of whom Paul has had to ask the question : "Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" (Gal.3.3). We will look at the sense in which the Christian is freed from sin, at what this implies for life according to the flesh, in Adam, which is dominated by sin, in the next section.

The first of the reasons for noting the underlying eschatological thought in Paul is to show that it is Christ who creates the line between the life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit. The second reason is to demonstrate that, for Paul, only in the revelation of God in Christ can man know of the power of sin in the flesh. What once appeared as life, with whatever admixture of anxiety and fear, is now seen to be slavery to sin. The eschatological framework provides an historical, linear schema against which this action of God is seen. What is now known about God, and man's standing before him, is the result not

of human enquiry but of the divine revelation in the Christ-event. The knowledge is not anthropological so much as theological ; knowledge not so much of man as of God. It is the power of God,evidenced in the experience of the Spirit,which is indeed the Spirit of Christ who has freed men from the bondage of sin and death,who reveals to man that bondage to sin of which he is not otherwise aware. Man was aware of the fact of sin,in the law,and to some extent in the things that have been made as conveying something of the purpose of God for man. What is revealed in Christ is knowledge of the bondage to sin,the power of sin in the flesh. It is the inbreaking of the power of God in the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit that reveals this power of sin. What Paul says about sin is spoken in 'this age' from the vantage point of one who is already in 'the age to come',who is walking according to the Spirit. The time factor is clearly laid before his hearers in Gal.4.1-7. Paul's understanding of sin is derived from the fact that,.... "when the time had fully come,God sent forth his Son..." (Gal.4.4).

Sin cannot be said to be a characteristic of the Christian life,lived in the power of the inbreaking of God into the world in the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. The Christian does not "continue in sin that grace may abound. By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Rom.6.1-2). It is to this rhetorical question of Paul that we now turn. The answer to his question is clear at Romans 6 - the Christian is no .... longer enslaved to sin. But still,and even at the heart of Romans 6,the exhortation occurs : "Let not sin therefore reign...". If the answer to Paul's rhetorical question at the beginning of the chapter were to be entirely unequivocal,there would be no reason for the exhortation. It is the eschatological framework underlying Paul's thought which makes it possible for us to find a way of understanding this apparent contradiction,without losing anything of what Paul wishes to say on either side in what may be described as an eschatological tension. This tension involves alternations of emphasis in what

Paul has to say about sin and the Christian life. In the words of A.Nygren [6] : "Generally the stress has been laid on the fact that the Christian still lives in the old aeon, even though he belongs to the new. But it is now [i.e. in Rom.8.28–30, in which the Christian is predestined, justified and also glorified] necessary to stress the other side too. Even though the Christian still lives in the old aeon, nevertheless the new aeon is present in his life as a mighty reality". In the next section, we look firstly at ~~the new aeon as it deals with the power of sin~~ an aspect of the transition from the old to the new aeon, the defeat of the power of sin, and, secondly, at the place the flesh still holds in the life of the Christian man.

Notes of II.1.

1. Paul later in the chapter confidently describes Christians as "slaves of God" (Rom.6.22), but presumably considers this in order in view of the proviso regarding his terms in verse 19.

2. We take it that Paul's use of πνεῦμα is usually to be capitalised, unless it clearly cannot be, e.g. as at Rom.8.16, 1 Cor.2.11, 7.34, 16.18, 2 Cor.7.1, 1 Thes.5.23.

3. C.K.Barrett, The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition, p.4n., quoted more fully supra p.26, being the sense in which 'eschatology' is used throughout this thesis.

4. O.Cullmann, Christ and Time, p.53.

5. It is significant that Paul uses what are, perhaps, stronger words to refer to the change in this life in the flesh which occurs in a person ~~ews~~ as a result of his incorporation in Christ and his living with the gift of the Spirit than when he refers to the change at the Parousia. For the latter change Paul employs ἀλλάσσω, μετασχηματίζω (Phil.3.21), for the former μεταμορφοῦμαι (Rom.12.2, 2 Cor.3.18). For Paul, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a καινὴ κτίσις (2 Cor.5.17).

6. A.Nygren, Romans, p.344.

2. No Longer Enslaved to Sin.

We have seen how the experience of God's power - by the Spirit indwelling the Christian - had occasioned in St.Paul's writing an analysis of the Christian's former condition - that of living according to the flesh - which is also the condition of all who have not ~~the~~ experienced the power of the Spirit of Christ. This condition of man is summed up in the word σάρξ, in the range of meanings in which Paul uses the term. Having glanced at the life in the Spirit, we now look at the further analysis of how the transition from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit has been accomplished. Paul makes this analysis, in relation to sin, in Romans 6. In that chapter, Paul portrays the deliverance from the power of sin, from prenomic sin personalised.

. . . It is important to appreciate that it is with sin as a power that Paul is concerned in Romans 6. What he says in that chapter is complementary to his reference to the gospel that he had received, that Christ's death was "for our sins" [1]. As we have seen, sins are related to prenomic sin as prenomic sin energised by the law, which produces παραπτώματα, which may be referred to as ἁμαρτίαι (though Paul in fact only does so at Rom.7.5; vide supra p.35). The power of sin in the flesh is the root of 'sins'. Paul demonstrates the full import of Christ's work as deliverance from this power. By dealing with the hidden root of the matter, he also covers the open manifestations of sin in the context under the law.

This breadth of his conception of sin is carried in its fullness to his elucidation of the Christian's release from sin. Christ's death is for our sins. This forgiveness of sins is pictured in the New Testament as the cancelling of a debt, and refers primarily to the release from the alienation that contravention of God's demand incurrs. As such, its primary reference is to individual παραπτώματα (~~This~~ in terms of Paul's forms of sin). This ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν, in addition to the

figure of cancelling a debt, presupposes a disposition on the part of God (if the anthropomorphism be allowed), certainly involves action on God's part, expressed by Paul in the words: "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom.5.8). This is conveyed in Paul's use of the verb χαρίζομαι in Colossians (2.13, 3.13) [2], which makes clear that the forgiveness of sins is part of the total action of God in justification. It is not an isolated act of God towards an individual transgression of an individual man, as the cancelling of an individual debt might be, but stems from God's nature as gracious and forgiving. The ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν, further, presupposes the power of God to release not only from the alienation incurred in the παραπτώματα but also from the other consequences of sin which are 'more sin' and death.

But Paul wishes to say more about God's way with sin than the phrase 'the forgiveness of sins' can carry. In Romans 6 he expounds Christ's work as freeing from the power of sin. This chapter moves on from cancelling a debt, with the attendant idea that God's nature is gracious, that the release is from all the consequences of sin. In Romans 6, Paul is concerned to demonstrate the freeing from the power of sin, the release from the domination of sin in the flesh, the release from prenomic sin, which underlies the sin under the law. Here Paul subsumes the cancellation of the debt in the positive idea of baptism as incorporation into Christ's death and resurrection (Rom.6.4). As at 2 Cor.5.19, Paul is putting the idea of forgiveness of sins in a context of God's total action in Christ, within which context this activity of forgiveness is indeed worthy of mention, is indeed the characteristic of God's mode of operation towards man, but is not in itself, for Paul, a complete account of that action of God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them..," (2 Cor.5.19). The rider is necessary, the forgiveness of the trespasses reveals God's nature, is both necessary and crucial in the understanding and experiencing of God's way with man. But Paul wishes to say more, to talk of total reconciliation and to talk of freedom from the power of sin in

the flesh, in Adam, which underlies all trespass, all sins. God's action in Christ is a unity which comprises more than the death for sins : it evinces faith "in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification" (Rom.4.24-25).

We have described Romans 6 as an analysis of the Christian's translation from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit(p.78). This looks like a description determined by a doctrinaire intention to bring the flesh-Spirit contrast to even greater prominence than Paul himself gives it - the flesh is mentioned only once (Rom.6.19) in an attempt to salvage an argument which seems to be about to run into the ground through the absence of mention of the Spirit (<u>vide supra</u> p.69-70). The virtual absence of mention of the flesh and the Spirit in this chapter, however, has an explanation. Paul is not ready to launch the theme of the Spirit until he has spoken of the weakness of the flesh in the face of the law in Romans 7. As to the absence of the flesh in this chapter, it is readily appreciated that he cannot, unequivocally, say of the flesh what he says when he writes of the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος and the σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας (Rom.6.6). These are crucified and destroyed ; and they are virtual paraphrases of the flesh under sin. Christians, by participation in the baptismal death in Christ (Rom.6.3-4), are no longer enslaved to sin (Rom.6.6). In this, the flesh, in any of the meanings Paul gives to the term, is unaffected in that, as we have already learnt, it is not inherently sinful. It is the domination of the flesh by the power of sin that is destroyed. The difference that the inbreaking of God in Christ and the gift of the Spirit makes to the flesh ~~as-see~~ in itself - as the material substance of bodily existence - is seen in other contexts. The flesh is, in burial, sown a σῶμα ψυχικόν and, at the resurrection of the dead, raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15.44). The flesh - as man's whole physico-psychical existence - is re-orientated by the influence of the Spirit as a man is empowered to live out God's purpose ~~for him. Men are free to set~~

for him. Men are free to set their minds on the things of the Spirit, and this works life and peace (Rom.8.5-7, cf. Col.3.2-4). But when this has been said, it remains ~~is~~ that the Christian is still in the flesh, ~~even though the flesh is no longer under the power of sin.~~ "He who has died is free from sin" (Rom.6.7). He who has died is also free from the flesh - but Paul does not say this. His reference is to the baptismal death whereby the Christian participates in Christ's defeat of sin. The Christian continues in the flesh. The needs and desires of man's physico-psychical existence continue for the Christian. He no longer has to pursue them in a self-interest dictated by the power of sin, but, freed from slavery to this power, can proceed, knowing the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom.8.2), to have the old needs and desires transformed by being re-orientated in the ~~se~~ service and worship of God, and also to know the power of the Spirit to fulfil what ~~are~~ is now seen to be the purpose of God for man, namely, faith. The physico-psychical existence continues, but it is now no longer orientated towards death, but towards life.

The radical break with sin in the power of the work of Christ issues in newness of life for the Christian (Rom.6.4). This new life is expounded more fully in Romans 8 in terms of the indwelling of the Spirit. However, the transition to Romans 8 is by way of the vivid description of the post-baptismal [3] struggle in Romans 7. Romans 7 also brings us back to the theme of the law, which is never far away in Paul's discussion of sin because it was in the law that Paul found the revelation of sin. Whereas Paul can speak of the work of Christ as freeing man from slavery to ~~sin~~ prenomic sin, there is no doubt that this is in addition to the forgiveness of the trespasses which are under the law. This is where sin is seen for what it is. This law - in that it transforms prenomic sin into trespass, in that is is ~~used~~ misused for self-justification - is the power of sin (1 Cor.15.56) and the point at which sin is revealed.

We see that Paul has more to say than that the

trespasses under the law are forgiven again at Rom.6.14 : "sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace". In Christ, the law [4] has been transformed. The law, as we have seen is the revelation of God's demand. In Christ, we have a full revealtion of God's nature and demand, by comparison with which the revelation of the law to Moses was partial and veiled (2 Cor.3.4-4.6). Christ is the revealtion of the goal (τέλος. Rom.10.4) of the law in the sense of a full declaration of the demand of God. Further, the purpose of the law was, in revealing God's demand, to prevent and do away with sin. In this respect God has done what the law could not do (Rom.8.3), he is the τέλος of the law in the sense of its fulfilment. Man was powerless in the face of God's demand in the law because of the reign of the power of sin in the flesh (Rom.8.3). This power of sin is broken, man is no longer enslaved to sin (Rom.6.6). The Christian, walking in the Spirit, is no longer powerless in the face of God's demand. The Christian knows the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom.8.21) - for the law was a significant part of the 'bondage to decay' - who can cheerfully fulfil his demand, not that the fulfilment of the demand is the ground of their justification, rather a by-product of that justification.

But we must be clear that the "glorious liberty" of Rom.8.21 is something of which we have the fullness, yet this is qualified by the circumstances of the freedom. There is, for instance, still suffering in this life, but it is suffering with Christ, whose suffering issued in triumph (Rom.8.17). Paul puts this vividly in Romans 7, where he describes the struggle of the Christian. Here Paul describes the dormant prenomic sin energised in the presence of the law in verses 7-13. That was his experience as a Jew. But with verse 14, he changes to the present tense to give the position which has already been outlined in verse 6 : "now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit". Also in the ~~the~~ background is the statement from

Romans 6 that we are no longer enslaved to sin. With verse 14, Paul describes the position of the Christian : "We know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin". It has been held that this just cannot be said of the Christian, not least because it contradicts what Paul has just been saying about that which Christ has won for the Christian. But what is said here can legitimately be said both of the man under the law without Christ, as indeed we have used it in the discussion of sin under the law, and of the man who is justified in Christ and no longer enslaved to sin. Paul does not say that the law is abrogated in the work of Christ, rather that it finds its goal and fulfilment in him. The law is spiritual, as revelation of God's demand and purpose for man. This is true of the law of Moses as of its fulfilment in Christ. The Christian is "discharged from the law" (Rom.7.6) as a principle which holds men in its power so that he seeks to derive his justification from the fulfilment of it. But God has still a purpose for man, only now man can fulfil that purpose of faith in Christ. Similarly, to say that man is carnal, sold under sin, applies equally to the man without Christ and the man in Christ. The former knows only the slavery to sin, or rather, he is so firmly bound in that slavery that he does not even know he is a slave, having suppressed the truth (Rom.1.18). But also the Christian is 'carnal, sold under sin'.

We were careful to point out that in Romans 6 there is no mention of the deliverance from the flesh. And this flesh is still the basis of man's existence. We are now suggesting that "no longer enslaved to sin" (Rom.6.6) and "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom.7.14) both ~~describe~~ describe the same person, the Christian. These appear, at first sight, to be a flat contradiction of each other, so that we would be forced to withdraw the suggestion that they describe the same personal situation. Here it is appropriate to point out that we are taking this passage, Rom.7.14-25, ~~as~~ as referring to Paul's experience as a Christian, but this does not exclude reference to pre-Christian experience, as it says nothing that contradicts that experience seen in the light of the knowledge

of Christ. We take this passage as referring to Christian experience because it is in line with the argument we have advanced as to what Paul has to say about sin, though that argument does not stand or fall on the soundness or aptness of the exposition of Rom.7.14-25 which is given. It is to be noticed that C.H.Dodd, The Epistle to the Romans, with the view that the passage refers to Paul's experience immediately preceding his encounter with Christ (p.108), makes the suggestion of textual re-arrangement, placing verse 25b before verse 24, in accordance with Moffatt's translation (pp.114-5). The reason for the re-arrangement is not, we believe, inherent in the immediate context, but stems from an assessment of Paul's statements elsewhere regarding the Christian life. It appears that any interpretation of Rom.7.14-25 will and should lean, at some point, on what Paul says elsewhere. At the same time, we must be clear that when Paul makes statements that are also made by non-Christian writers, this does not necessarily imply that his statements at that point refer exclusively to non-Christian experience. As we have already stated, what Paul says in Rom.7.14-25 can refer to his life without Christ, under the law. And those who take the view that it is this experience to which Paul here refers would say that he is saying it from the viewpoint of one who is in Christ.

The main argument against the reference of this passage to Christian experience, in terms of Paul's thought on sin, is that when Paul says "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom.7.15) there is an element of compulsion which is most clearly expressed in the statement that he is "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom.7.14). A.Nygren[5] makes it quite clear that the eschatological background of Paul's thought makes it possible to accept this as no contradiction of the statement that the Christian is 'free from sin'. While we believe this hypothesis to be near the truth of the matter, it still requires a caveat. Paul's language here is strong ; its statement of the power that the flesh still has in the Christian life is more strongly expressed than many would expect from what has been said in Romans 6. On the other

hand it is in accord with Paul's expressed desire to flee the flesh (Phil.1.21-23), in accord with the exhortations to Christians not to "gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal.5.16) which would be unneccessary if "no longer enslaved to sin" were to be taken as meaning no longer tempted, no longer in an environment in which sin had a foothold in the flesh. "No longer enslaved to sin" (Rom.6.6) can mean 'having the power to withstand temptation, having knowledge of, and a desire for, true life, rather than being conditioned for death'.

To turn to this apparent contradiction between 'no longer enslaved to sin' and 'carnal, sold under sin', as it is resolved by reference to Paul's thought on sin, the argument is as follows. There is indeed an element of compulsion still in the flesh for the Christian. Rom.7.14-25 is to be taken as Christian experience. The flesh is sold under sin still. The work of Christ has not, in this life, affected the flesh as such, but has effected the ..... Christian's deliverance from the power of sin in the flesh, has made it possible for the Christian to have a re-orientation of his life in the flesh, so that he lives by faith for God rather than by the concerns of the flesh for sin. The flesh - as man's whole physico-psychical .... existence - is still present, and is still sold under sin. It is the man before God who is freed in Christ and not the flesh, as we saw earlier in exposition of Romans 6 (on p.80). It may indeed be true that Paul writes of the 'old man' and the 'body of sin' (Rom.6.6), but Paul avoids saying that the 'flesh' is destroyed. He is confronted with the same difficulty of expression when he says "it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me" (Rom.7.17,20), and when he distinguishes the 'inmost self' and 'his members' (Rom.7.22-23). Though 'my flesh is me' there is more to 'me' than the flesh. This 'more' is expressed as the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος at Rom.7.22. This 'more', this inmost self, was enslaved to sin in the flesh, and it is this inmost self that is freed from the slavery to sin.

The flesh, still sold under sin, despite the freedom of the inmost self, still exercises ~~ea~~ a compulsion upon

the Christian to live for the flesh. However, this compulsion is no longer his only raison d'etre. The victory of Christ is a victory over the slavery to sin, a victory over sin personified which held men captive. The slavery is done away, that is the message of Romans 6, and to have this message clearly we have to appreciate that it is sin personalised - and not some other form of sin - which is present in Romans 6.

This victory means that there is now, which there was not before, the choice, disclosed in Rom.8.5, of setting the mind on the things of the flesh or on the things of the Spirit. This victorious action of God makes possible the struggle of Rom.7.14-25. This victory is related to the forgiveness of sins in the way that the form of sin personified is related to the form of prenomic sin in Paul. Having personified sin, Paul has to demonstrate that the personified sin is defeated, and this he does in Romans 6. This picture that Paul has of sin personified and its defeat is quite over and above what is elsewhere covered by the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. It is only really after Paul has talked about the defeat of Sin, that he can talk of that struggle, the resolution of which is found in the cancelling of the debt, the power of God in releasing men from the consequences of more sin and death that follow upon their prenomic sin. What is often missed here is ~~this very~~ the significance of the fact that Paul personifies sin, and because he does so, it is required that he provide more than the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins to deal with a situation which he himself has - justifiably, we believe, - created. If Paul had not personalised sin, Christian thought on the subject would have been much impoverished. That he did personalise sin has meant, where the fact has not been appreciated, considerable confusion in the exposition of his thought.

So we conclude that Romans 6 with its "no longer enslaved to sin" and Romans 7 with the Christian as "carnal, sold under sin" are not contradictory. Romans 6 conveys the message that Sin personalised is defeated in Christ so that the whole struggle of the Christian life is now on. Romans 7 describes the struggle, how prenomic

sin is energised in the presence of God's revelation, whether it be in the law or in Christ ~~the~~ elsewhere described as the τέλος νόμου (Rom.10.4). It is at this point that the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins becomes relevant. It is at this point, indeed right back in Romans 6.12, that Paul engages with exhortation, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies". The possibility of 'by the Spirit putting to death the deeds of the body' (Rom.8.13) is now present. As K.Barth [6] expresses the matter, writing of Paul and the Christian, with reference to Rom.7.14-25 : "Every morning and every evening his situation is one of departure in the very midst of sin". Indeed, the slavery to sin personalised is ended, so that the struggle with prenomic sin can begin, though that struggle is known, by the Christian, to be a struggle engaged in the strength of Christ's work in the forgiveness of sins. Not only has the slavery of personalised sin been defeated, but the power of prenomic sin is vanquished for those who walk in the Spirit. Christians may "glorify God in their bodies" (1 Cor.6.20) which are now seen as temples of the Spifit (1 Cor.6.19). And while this is not without struggle, yet all power is available in the struggle. This fight is one for which the Christian is fully armed and which he will win. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord !" (Rom.7.25).

What we have explained of Paul's thought, with the aid of the distinction we believe to be present between sin personalised and prenomic sin, can also be explained in terms of Paul's background of eschatological thought. "Dead to sin" (Rom.6.11) is thus explained both as being free from the slavery to sin personified and also no longer conditioned by 'this age'. But just as it is a death to the slavery of sin, which heralds the struggle with prenomic sin, so being no longer conditioned by 'this age' does not mean taken out of the circumstances of 'this age'. So A.Nygren points out that it is because of the indicative declarations that Paul can make the imperative admonitions. It is "just because Paul can say to the Christians "you are dead to sin" (Rom.6.11), and

only because he can say that he can also say,"Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies,to make you obey their passions" (Rom.6.12)"[7]. C.K.Barrett comments on Rom.6.12 : "'In Christ' men are dead to sin and alive to God. This is....eschatologically true ; but....the fact [remains] that men in this world have mortal bodies,conditioned by this present age,not the Age to Come ; and in these bodies sin is ever at hand"[8].

The Christian's freedom from sin means,then,firstly, that he is no longer in the thrall of sin,as personalised. This means that he is free to know that he was enslaved to sin,knowledge that comes as he experienced the gift of the Spirit. This freedom,however,means no more and no less than that ~~the~~ he is thrown into a struggle. Before there was no struggle,only the power of sin. The Christian is,secondly,free from sin,this time from prenomic sin,in that he knows and experiences,in the life of the Spirit,that sin does not have the ultimate victory,its power is broken. He can 'delight in the law of God' (Rom.7.22),can cry "Abba,Father!" (Rom.8.15, Gal.4.6) because he is justified before God. Thirdly, his trespasses are forgiven,the known cause of his alienation,the power of sin in the law (1 Cor.15.56) is broken.

In all this,with all the experience of the Spirit in his life,the possibility remains for him to be drawn back to the ways of the flesh (Gal.3.3) this side of the grave. The 'elemental spirits' (Gal.4.9) are out to gain back the Christian. But he has known that they are defeated,that he is no longer under sin,for its power is broken,and he has found his security,not in any form of self-justification,but in the gracious nature of God. All this is expressed in Paul's autobiographical passage in Romans 7. The ejaculation of thankfulness is indeed to be seen not, in the setting of as a cry of despair over a former period of his life,but, set in a cry of anguish in the present.

Notes of II.2.

1. 1 Cor.15.3,cf.Gal.1.4. ἀφίημι, ἄφεσις ,the usual New Testament word,occurs,in referance to sin,only at Col.1.14 τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ,cf.Eph.1.7.

2. This is in so far as ~~the~~ χαρίζεσθαι is not taken as a technical term of freeing from a financial debt,but as associated with Paul's conception of the χάρις Θεοῦ .

3. The debate regarding Romans 7 - whether it describes Paul's personal experience ,and whether it refers to the life of its subject in Christ or in his pre-Christian days - is probably still to be considered open. We here take the chapter as referring to the personal experience of Paul,and,as such,not atypical of Christian experience generally,included because the experience is integral to Paul's argument in Romans and not merely of autobiographical interest.

We would suggest,as far as considerations of what Paul says here and elsewhere regarding sin prompt us :

that,while Romans 7.7-25 can refer to the pre-Christian experience seen through Christian eyes,it can also refer to the post-baptismal struggle of the Christian ;

that it probably has this latter reference in that this accords with its position in the Epistle,and explains the exhortations to Christians to engage in the moral struggle which abound in Paul's letters.

If it is taken that the struggle in Romans 7.14-25 cannot refer to the Christian life and that this struggle is over for the Christian (or that the Christian has, somehow,been transferred from the fray),it is somewhat difficult to see the reason for the exhortations to Christians regarding their manner of life.

On these lines,a useful commentary on Romans 7 is Philippians 3. Two points of the comparison must suffice here. In Philippians 3.6,Paul claims that he was 'blameless' in regard to the righteousness under the law. Clearly this does not imply that the subject in Romans 7 cannot be Paul (pace J.L.Houlden,Paul's Letters from Prison,p.107),as the criterion by which Paul judges himself 'blameless' in this context is that of the Pharisee's

Notes of II.2.

approach to the law (Phil.3.4) and not on Christian criteria. All that judgement of Paul's former life is categorised as 'confidence in the flesh', and is subsequently counted loss for the sake of Christ (Phil.3.7-8). But Paul here also speaks of his life as a Christian in terms of not having attained to the resurrection of the dead, of not being perfect, and he avers "I press on to make it my own because Jesus Christ has made me his own" (Phil.3.12). Philippians 3 does not dwell on the anguish of the moral struggle as does Romans 7.14-25 ; the mention of sharing in Christ's sufferings is sufficient there (Phil.3.10). What is stressed in Philippians 3, especially verses 12-16, is that the knowledge of Christ, or, rather, its appropriation, and the power of his resurrection is partial as yet. (The view that Paul is writing against an early form of Gnostic thought does not affect the issue in hand, in that Paul is concerned with the partial nature of his apprehension of the newness of life which will be fully his the other side of the grave. His motive for mentioning the experience may be to reply to Gnostic claims, but the experience to which he refers is Christian experience.) This is not to deny that God has done all that is necessary, or that faith makes all things possible, but to say that the Christian experience reaches its fullness only in the resurrection of the dead. In eschatological terms, this is at the Parousia, when the Age to Come has fully come. In these terms this Age is still with us, "Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling" (2 Cor.5.2). In Romans 7.14-25, we hear, loud and clear, the groan of anguish of one who knows the Spirit 'as a guarantee', but not yet the complete swallowing up of his mortal being by life (2 Cor.5.4-5).

4. Rom.6.14 has νόμος anarthrous, but see comment supra pp.3-5.

5. A.Nygren, Romans, pp.284-303.

6. K.Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/I, §61.3, p.583.

7. A.Nygren, Romans, p.241.

Notes of II.2.

8. C.K.Barrett,Romans,pp.127-8.

3. Conclusion.

It is clear from the foregoing that Paul's thought on the subject of sin is totally dependent on the experience of the action of God in Christ. Sin is revealed to man only in the self-revealation of God. It is as God reconciles that man knows his alienation. It is as the power of God is operative in salvation that the power of sin is known - in its defeat. It is as life is offered that the death "in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh" (Col.2.13,cp.Eph.2.1) becomes apparent. It is as men experience the freedom in Christ that they know their bondage under the law and under sin. All that Paul has to say about sin stems from the revelation in Christ. He is not concerned with sin except in so far as the revelation in Christ has completely affected his view of his former condition, and he sees that, for the elucidation of this newness of life, an analysis of his former condition - the condition of all who are without Christ - is necessary.

In Christ, man's situation before God is fully revealed. This was made known to Paul in the matter that was at the very heart of his former confidence before God - the works of the law. That this is not the way to authentic justification is evident in the pages of the Old Testament, which Paul quotes: "He who through faith is righteous shall live" (Gal.3.11, quoting Hab.2.4; cf. Rom.1.17,4.3, Phil.3.9). This principle of justification is in fact distinct from justification by the law (Gal.3.12). This is revealed in the fact that, judged by the law, Christ, in his crucifixion, was accursed - "for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree"" (Gal.3.13). Paul, however, had learnt that the case was quite different, that Christ on the tree "became a curse for us", "redeeming us from the curse of the law.... that in him the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal.3.13-14). It was this re-appraisal,

~~complete re-appraisal, of the~~

complete re-appraisal, of the event of the crucifixion, after the experience of his conversion, that led Paul to see the revelation of God in Christ. The curse lay quite otherwise than he had previously believed. The curse of the Cross was not upon Christ but upon man.

In Christ, God's purpose for man is fully revealed, a purpose of faith, righteousness and hope. Sin holds man back from the fulfilment of that purpose. By the mighty act of God in Christ, reconciliation, redemption and justification are offered to man, and in this radical break with the past life of sin, with its alienation and its striving after self-justification, man may fulfil God's purpose for him. This analysis of the purpose which may now be achieved in Christ through the power of God helps in a final summary of what Paul says about sin under the three forms of sin which are found in his writings.

(a) Sin as an individual act, which presupposes the explicit demand of God, is present in Paul in the term παράπτωμα. Whereas God's purpose for man is righteousness (cf. Rom. 5.19), man, under the law, transgresses. This may be contrasted with that love which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13.10, Gal. 5.14).

(b) What we have called 'prenomic sin' underlies this παράπτωμα, and so is revealed by the law. This sin which is evident under the law as παράπτωμα is present "before the law was given" (Rom. 5.13), and may be described as a refusal on the part of man to live out God's purpose for him. It is clearly seen in the self-centred, idolatrous worship and service of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1.25).

Paul's statement that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Rom. 14.23) points to an opposition between faith and sin, though the statement does not necessarily imply that sin is simply absence of faith. Faith and sin are opposites in that ~~one~~ the one is the fulfilment of God's purpose and the other is failure to fulfil that purpose.

(c) Behind prenomic sin stands the third form of sin which is found in Paul's writings - sin personified.

This is sin as a hidden power influencing men's lives and holding them in a grip analogous to slavery. It is difficult to draw a clear line between sin personalised and prenomic sin, because the personification is a device whereby the power of sin is conveyed. Sin is a power which is only overcome by the power of God. Sin as a power lies dead - though when Paul actually uses these words at Rom.7.8 he is referring to prenomic sin - holding men in its grip, until the revelation of God brings it out into the open, occasioning defiant rebellion.

This power of sin may be contrasted with the Christian hope in the power of God for the full adoption of his sons and the resurrection of the dead. Both are hidden; both are powerful, the one for death, the other for fullness of life.

As to the relation between these three forms of sin in Paul, we may say that sin personified 'produces' prenomic sin, and prenomic sin 'produces' transgression. In terms of knowing sin, prenomic sin is revealed in transgression as prenomic sin 'reveals' the personified sin. In this highly schematised way of stating the relationships, prenomic sin holds the middle position, and can be seen, as is the overall impression given in Paul's writing, as the basic form of sin in Paul's thought. However, this sin cannot be known until there is the opportunity for transgression, as God reveals his nature and demand. Sin is personalised for effect, to bring home to the sinner the dynamics of the situation.

At the same time we must be clear that Paul is not concerned with a systematised doctrine of sin which delineates the forms as we have done. For Paul, sin is one. It is one, primarily, in that it is defined by its consequences. Paul is concerned with the situation of alienation that sin occasions, rather than the origin or the nature of sin in itself. His gospel is concerned with God's resolving the situation of alienation that sin has brought about. What he says about sin serves his proclamation of this gospel.

We may thus define sin, in Paul's thought, as that which alienates from the life of God, that which produces 'more sin' and death.

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