

THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOSPEL AND LAW

IN THE APOSTLE PAUL

by

Charles Scott



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University of Edinburgh

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# ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Name of Candidate Charles A. Scott

Address

Degree M. Th. Date June 1/71

Title of Thesis The Relationship of Gospel and Law in the Apostle Paul

For Paul, Christ was not only the centre of his existence He was also the determining factor in his understanding of the law and the Scripture. Paul defined the Gospel as the revelation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ and this was revealed in a definitive manner in the promise made to Abraham. The Jews, on the other hand, held that the law given to Moses was the definitive act of God. The law was for the Jew the expression of God's covenant relationship with His People and the prime revelation of the righteousness of God. Certainly the law did reveal the righteousness of God and consequently it always held a place of honour in Paul's life and thought. But he realized in the light of Christ that the law was powerless to save. Indeed, in connection with sin, the law became the occasion for man to sin even more in his attempt to achieve his own salvation by means of the law. But even in this situation the law did serve the purpose of keeping man under its guardianship until Christ came to free him from the law's bondage.

The Gospel, i.e. the righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ, indicated the true extent of man's sin but also provided him with the way of salvation. By means of this revelation Christ not only fulfilled the righteousness of the law He ended it as a way of salvation. In Christ the condemnation of the law was brought to fruition and men in this new situation in Christ could not only accept the condemnation they deserved but the gift of salvation as well. It is only through faith in Christ that men participate in His righteousness and obedience and thus fulfil the law. In this new situation good works are not an attempt to achieve justification

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but an expression of a justification already accomplished. Thus we are accounted righteous by virtue of faith in Christ in which His righteousness becomes ours. Now the Christian lives in the freedom of the Spirit and fulfills the law of Christ in love of God and neighbour.

Paul substantiates his argument with an appeal to Abraham who was accounted righteous before the giving of the law. Therefore he understood the promise made to Abraham and fulfilled in Christ to be the one definitive act of God in His salvation plan. All divine activity was determined by this particular act. For Paul, the law, the prophets, the Scripture and the whole history of Israel were to be understood in the light of this promise which was fulfilled in Christ.

The Gentiles also existed in a state of slavery under the law. While they did not have the revealed law granted to Israel they did evidence a knowledge of God in their lives in their capacity for moral discernment. The avowed intention of this natural revelation was to make all men blameworthy and without excuse for their rejection of God as they worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.

The proclamation of the church which indicates man's need of salvation, the way of salvation and grants him the capacity to repent is to be found in the preaching of the Gospel and not the law. To proclaim the law is to thrust man back upon himself in order to achieve his salvation and therefore to make the same mistake which was characterized by Israel in their understanding of the law. In the appendix the author suggests that of those studied P.T. Forsyth best exemplifies this relationship of the Gospel and the law in his preaching. Helmut Thielicke's preaching indicates a rather varied stance in this regard while Billy Graham consistently maintains a law and Gospel approach.

## SUMMARY

For Paul, Christ was not only the centre of his existence. He was also the determining factor in his understanding of the law and the Scripture. Paul defined the Gospel as the revelation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ and this was revealed in a definitive manner in the promise made to Abraham. The Jews, on the other hand, held that the law given to Moses was the definitive act of God. The law was for the Jew the expression of God's covenant relationship with His People and the prime revelation of the righteousness of God. Certainly the law did reveal the righteousness of God and consequently it always held a place of honour in Paul's life and thought. But he realized in the light of Christ that the law was powerless to save. Indeed, in connection with sin, the law became the occasion for man to sin even more in his attempt to achieve his own salvation by means of the law. But even in this situation the law did serve the purpose of keeping man under its guardianship until Christ came to free him from the law's bondage.

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ST. PAUL AND THE LAW

I.	I.	The Foundation and Determinative Factor of Paul's Understanding of the Law.	1
	II.	The Old Testament Background of Paul's Understanding of the Law	7
	III.	Paul's Use of Nomos	10
	IV.	The Law as Holy	12
	V	The Law and Sin	14
	VI	The Law and Christ	38
II		LAW AND THE GENTILES	54
	I	INTRODUCTION	54
	II	Paul and the Stoics	55
	III	The Influence of Paul's Judaic Background	57
	IV	Romans 1	64
	V	Romans 2	75
III		THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOSPEL AND LAW	91
	I	The Gospel as Jesus Christ: The Righteousness of God	91
	II	The Relationship of the Gospel, the Law, the Promise and Abraham	93
	III	The Relationship of the Gospel, the Law and Israel	97
	IV	The Gospel and the Law and Jesus Christ	106
	V	The Gospel and the Law in Jesus Christ as it confronts Sinful Man	110
	VI	The Gospel, the Law and the Christian Dispensation	118
	VII	The Gospel, the Law and the Spirit	124
	VIII	Conclusion	133

Appendix

## ST. PAUL AND THE LAW

### Chapter I

#### I THE FOUNDATION AND DETERMINATIVE FACTOR OF PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

"From Paul, servant of Jesus Christ, apostle of God's call, set apart for the service of the Gospel." (Romans 1: 1) Is it not proper that a study of Paul should begin where he begins, at the foot of the Cross? Without the knowledge of the ultimate importance that Christ had for Paul we would end in hopeless confusion in any attempt to discern the genius of his thought. Paul considered himself the slave of Christ and thus he spoke not on his own behalf, nor did he claim a hearing by his own right, but only in the Name of Jesus Christ his Lord. He had been set apart, earmarked from his mother's womb to declare the Gospel. (Gal. 1: 15) Christ was Paul's reason for existence, the content of his proclamation and the goal of his life. Paul's attitude was: it is not I who live but Christ who lives in me. (Gal. 2: 20) Christ had made the decisive difference in his life and this was to be clearly expressed in his understanding of the law.

Schoeps makes the comment that:

the genesis of the whole structure is plain: the Messiah was Son of God - which is the sole un-Jewish point in Paul's thinking which explains all the other doctrines that have no parallel in Jewish writings; if we like, it is the Hellenistic premiss of his thought, though there is not the smallest reason to explain its logical inferences by referring specially to Hellenistic habits of thinking.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>H. J. Schoeps, Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 209.

This is the confusion which results when the living experience of Christ is thought to be an idea adopted from the Hellenistic premiss of the dying and rising gods of Paul's day. Certainly Paul did not feel that Jesus Christ was in any way connected to these religions for the experience of his living Lord proved otherwise. But Schoeps does realize in a negative fashion the extent to which the Fact of Christ determined the thinking of Paul. Both Schoeps and Klausner are critical of what they think is a departure from the strict rabbinic Judaism of Paul's day and here their criticism is valid. But Paul would claim that it was rabbinic Judaism which failed to comprehend what God intended and only in Jesus Christ could the revelation of God in the Old Testament be fully and correctly understood. Therefore when he differs from Judaism it is because it had departed from a true knowledge of the law and the prophets. Schoeps criticizes Paul's use of the Old Testament in its relation to the law remarking that "not the meaning of Scripture, but Christ is the 'a Priori' for his judgment of the Law".<sup>2</sup> But for Paul, "Christus ist von Anfang an Sinn, Ziel und Wirklichkeit der Schrift".<sup>3</sup> Thus Schoeps, although realizing the place of Jesus Christ in Paul's understanding of Scripture, cannot agree that Christ is the interpretative principle and meaning of all Scripture and law. The Gospel had cast a revealing light on the Old Testament and Paul came to realize that the Old Testament was, in truth, 'a pointing to' the person of Jesus Christ who was its fulfillment. "Paulus betont immer wieder, dass gerade die Schrift, das geschriebene Wort da ist, um vom Neuen zu zeugen, das kommen soll."<sup>4</sup> Even here Paul remained a Jew

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>3</sup>P. G. Verweij, "Evangelium und neues Gesetz in der ältesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion," Studia Theologica Rheno-Traiectina, ed. H. W. Obbink, A. A. vanRuler et W. C. vanUnnik, Vol. V, (1960), p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

for his thought was permeated with motifs common to the Judaism of his day but it also exhibits a profound change and vitality not found in the contemporary rabbinic literature of his time.

If Paul used Jewish interpretations, he culled and moulded them to a Christological understanding of the Old Testament; if he was a 'child of his times', they were for Paul the times of the Messiah, His Cross and resurrection, and His revelation of the true meaning of Scripture. Paul was a disciple of Christ not of Gamaliel.<sup>5</sup>

Thus Paul's experience of the resurrected Lord shattered and reshaped any previous notions of the God of Israel and His redemptive activity and set in motion a whole series of radical changes in his thinking and personality.

In addition to this present relationship between Paul and his Master there was the apostolic tradition which lay behind his kerygma and his use of the Old Testament. C. F. Evans suggests that:

when the Old Testament and rabbinic and hellenistic writings have been ransacked for parallels to, and possible sources of influence upon, the gospel tradition, it still remains at least possible, if not probable, that by far the greatest single determinative force with which we have to reckon is the creative originality of Jesus himself,  
...<sup>6</sup>

Evans then goes on to discuss the Marcan account of the passion narrative pointing out the originality of the interpretation of the Old Testament in relation to the events of those days which culminated in the death of the Messiah. It is Evans' contention that Christ Himself instructed His disciples in the proper understanding of the necessity of His death. C. H. Dodd compares the New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament and discovers a common process. He mentions Paul, the author to the Hebrews, the Fourth Evangelist

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<sup>5</sup>E. E. Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>C. F. Evans, "I will Go Before You into Galilee," Journal of Theological Studies, Second Series, Vol. 5, (April 1954), p.3.



and many other unknown geniuses of the early church as using this process to great advantage and as even contributing to its development but as not originating it.

But the New Testament itself avers that it was Jesus Christ Himself who first directed the minds of His followers to certain parts of the scriptures as those in which they might find illumination upon the meaning of His mission and destiny.<sup>7</sup>

He concludes with the thought that since the New Testament offers us Jesus Christ as the source of such original thought, ought not we to accept Him as the source of His own self-understanding?

It is also evident from Paul's direct appeal to the sayings of the Lord (1 Cor. 7: 10, 9: 14) and to those sayings of Christ which he alluded to but did not cite, that there was a common tradition known to both Paul and his readers.<sup>8</sup> Whether this was an oral or written source is difficult to

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<sup>7</sup>C. H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures, (The Substructure of New Testament Theology), (London: Nisbet and Co., 1953), p. 110.

<sup>8</sup>Although linguistic parallels and arguments based on common motifs are not conclusive it is probable that a common tradition did exist. When we consider the evidence of Paul's appeals to the commands of Christ, whether explicit or implicit; his desire to distinguish between his own opinion and the authoritative sayings of Christ in his ethical exhortations (for a discussion of this see; C. H. Dodd, "ΕΝΝΟΜΟΙ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ," Studia Paulina, in Honorem Johannis De Zwaan, ed. J. N. Sevenster and W. C. van Unnik, (Haarlem De Erven F. Bohn N.V., 1953), pp. 96-110) and the common understanding of the life and death of Jesus which generally prevails throughout the New Testament, the foregoing conclusion is indicated. A. W. Argyle has suggested "that the resemblance between material in some of St. Paul's Epistles and material in Q is sufficiently striking to justify the conclusion that Paul was in touch with the oral tradition behind Q ...". (A. W. Argyle, "Parallels Between the Pauline Epistles and Q," The Expository Times, Vol. 60, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), pp. 318 ff.). He refers to the parallels between I Cor. 1: 18-29 and Luke 10: 21-22, Matth. 11: 25-27; I Cor. 9: 13-14 and Luke 10: 7, Matth. 10: 9-11; I Thess. 4: 8 and Luke 10: 16, Matth. 10: 40; Romans 2: 1-3 and Luke 6: 37, 41-42, Matth. 7: 1-5; Romans 2: 13 and 14: 15; Romans 12: 14 and Luke 6: 27-28, Matth. 5: 44. Although the parallels vary somewhat in detail there is sufficient agreement to conclude that Paul was familiar with such an oral tradition.

ascertain but we can assume that there was a common tradition to which both had access. Indeed "Paul's knowledge of Christ's teaching via the apostolic tradition is evident in various places, and it is probable that some parallels with the apostles find their ultimate source in Christ."<sup>9</sup> Even before Paul's conversion he would have occasion to learn what Christ's followers thought concerning Him. As Anderson Scott comments:

In the first place, he could hardly identify the objects of his persecution without some examination of them, in the course of which the persecutor would necessarily learn something concerning the things Jesus had said and done.<sup>10</sup>

He would also have the opportunity to speak to Pharisees who would have been eye-witnesses to Christ's actions and words throughout His earthly ministry.

In Gal. 1 Paul is concerned to emphasize that his basic and shaping understanding of the Gospel stemmed from a 'revelation of Jesus Christ'. (Gal. 1: 2) His Gospel was not the product of early environment and religious education as indicated by Gal. 1: 13-14 nor of a tradition inherited from earlier Christians. Immediately after his Damascus Road experience Paul went off to Arabia where, we can surmise, he considered with the guidance of God his new task. (Gal. 1: 17) It was to emphasize the lack of human influence in his basic understanding of the Gospel that he introduces this fact to the Galatians. Fearing that he would be accused of subjection to the Jerusalem authorities he delayed his trip to them for some years. Rowley suggests that even when he did contact them it was simply out of a desire to meet Peter.<sup>11</sup> (Gal. 1: 18) This is further substantiated

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<sup>9</sup>Ellis, Op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>10</sup>Charles A. Anderson Scott, Christianity According to St. Paul, (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>T. W. Manson, Studies in the Gospels and Epistles, Ed. by M. Black, "with a Memoir of T. W. Manson by H. H. Rowley", (Manchester: University Press, 1962), p. 173.

by Duncan when he indicates: "Paul here purposely employs a word which is frequently used of travellers paying visits: he went to visit Peter, not to receive instruction from him".<sup>12</sup> But need we accept the suggestion that this was simply a social visit? G. D. Kilpatrick assumes a somewhat different stance in regard to this phrase  $\text{ἱστορησαι κηθῶν}$ . He suggests: "For the present we may conclude that provided the meaning of  $\text{εὐαγγέλιον}$  raises no difficulty,  $\text{ἱστορησαι κηθῶν}$  at Gal. 1: 18 is to be taken as meaning 'to get information from Cephas'".<sup>13</sup> The fact that Paul should visit Peter as distinct from James is not answered by the meaning of the phrase if it just means a social call.  $\text{ἱστορεῖν}$  with the accusative of the person as the object also fails to support the meaning of the word as that of a social call.<sup>14</sup> Further, according to Kilpatrick this information from Cephas is qualified by the word  $\text{ὀρθοδοξίαν}$  in Gal. 1: 14 which can be understood as a progression toward the Gospel. In the light of this interconnection between  $\text{ὀρθοδοξίαν, εὐαγγέλιον}$  and  $\text{ἱστορησαι κηθῶν}$  we can hold that Paul received certain information about Jesus's teaching and ministry from Cephas which would not be obtainable from other members of the Jerusalem church. This phrase  $\text{ἱστορησαι κηθῶν}$  means more than a social call but at the same time does not imply the reception of instruction from Peter. After this short visit he departed into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. (Gal. 1: 21) We would suggest that this assertion concerning the revelation of the Gospel from Jesus Christ emphasizes for us the profound and shaping influence of Christ upon Paul's life but it need not be understood as rejecting an awareness of the historical Christ via

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<sup>12</sup>G. S. Duncan, "The Epistle to the Galatians", The Moffatt N.T. Commentary, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), p. 31.

<sup>13</sup>G. D. Kilpatrick, "Galatians 1: 18", New Testament Studies: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson, Ed. by A. D. B. Higgins, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), p. 149.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

other human sources which would serve to fill out his Gospel. In no way did this influence his basic understanding of the Gospel which he had received, not from the hands of men, but through a revelation of the Christ. It would appear then that there are some indications of the guiding and directing hand of Christ which came primarily through an intimate relationship with Paul's Risen Lord. It also seems probable that his detailed knowledge of the historical Christ would be enlarged by his contact with other Christians after this period of his life in which agreement had been reached that Paul would be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Thus Christ becomes the decisive factor, through His presence and teaching, which determined Paul's conception of the Old Testament and the law. Ignore this factor and Paul becomes a confused and deluded fanatic; but recognize it and he becomes the Apostle to the Gentiles.

## II THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND OF PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

The basis of all Old Testament law is God Himself who reveals Himself in redemptive activity for His people on the stage of history. The Decalogue, which came to be treated as a summary of the whole Law and consequently included this revelation of God, was of vital importance to the Israelite. These laws were, in a real sense, demands based upon God's revelation to and deliverance of the People of Israel. Although there is no one term which was always used to designate the Old Testament law the word Torah did become generally accepted as the primary word. "Among the various terms in the Old Testament which are used from time to time with different shades of meaning for 'law', torah is the expression which acquired the most comprehensive meaning and became dominant."<sup>15</sup> The other terms for law were more specific in

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<sup>15</sup>Hermann Kleinknecht & W. Gutbrod, Law, (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1962), p.43.



their meaning but found their context within the Torah and the Hebraic understanding of the Torah. פְּדוּתָא was an edict or decree issued by a king or person of authority and thus possessed a demand for obedience. ἐντολή is the natural Greek equivalent and was on occasion used by Paul to denote a particular commandment within the law. (Romans 7: 8) Π.Π or

ΠΠΠ is derived from ΠΠΠ to cut, because the statutes were said to be engraved on tablets of stone. The Greek equivalent most often used is δικαίωμα implying that action and result which are declared right by a person or community. ΕΨΨ, meaning the result of a judgment, springs from the root ΕΨΨ which is the verb to judge. On occasion all three words are translated by νόμος in the LXX and none are held to be mutually exclusive nor really very different in their fundamental meaning. The Hebrew was very conscious that all law finds its ultimate source in Yahweh and was a gift granted for the maintenance of the covenant relationship between God and His people.

The most common word that νόμος translated was הַיָּדוּעַ from the root הַיָּדוּעַ in the hiphil, meaning to point out, show, direct or instruct. The Greek equivalent διδάσκω was used of the instruction given by the priests and kings of Israel regarding the will of God as well as the commandments coming from God Himself via these mediators. These requirements were given visible expression in the religious observances of Israel which in turn were integral to the making of the covenant and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. It was through the observance of these ritual laws that Israel was able to maintain the sense of the Presence of God in her midst. The law: was the expression, whether oral or written, of their daily way of life, and was the means of keeping alive their sense of God,

together with the cultic persons and places, especially the Temple at Jerusalem and the sacrifice which was offered there by or on behalf of the King.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately the subsequent development of the law entailed the disregarding of the Reality of which the law was a shadow, i.e. the gracious Presence of Yahweh. In other words, historical realities were given ultimate importance.

Judaism had in the end forgotten that the historical, the immanent, the horizontal was suspended to the eternal, the transcendent, the vertical; it had endowed institutions, the law and circumcision, with an absolute value because it had failed to consider them seriously in the light of election grace and of Israel's vocation as the people of God.<sup>17</sup>

Eventually, in later Judaism, the legalistic conception of the law as a code of religious observances and thus as a way of salvation gained ascendancy over the prophetic type of true religion. It was basically this misconstruing of God's grace in the law and life of Israel that Paul violently attacked. He substantiated his arguments by appeals to the Old Testament, which, as we have already noted, was given new meaning by Jesus Christ. With this key, Paul was once more able to rediscover what the prophets and the law were really concerned about; i.e. the acts and Presence of a merciful God.

The Torah for the prophets was equivalent to the יהוה רב which was concerned with the revelation of the character of God manifested in His redemptive activity in the historical events surrounding the nation Israel. These actions contained both promise and judgment and demanded a response of faith on the part of man. In summary we may say that true Judaism conceived of the Torah as "all that God has made known of his nature, character and purpose and of what he would have man be and do."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 77.

<sup>17</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, The Epistle to the Romans, trans. Harold Knight, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961), p. 91.

<sup>18</sup>W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), p. 149.

### III PAUL'S USE OF NOMOS

First it must be noted that Paul's usage of νόμος is neither systematic nor uniform. Generally it is used to denote the Old Testament law but this is not always the case. Νόμος normally signifies the revelation of the living purpose of God. In this sense "the law is one, the revealed purpose of the one God".<sup>19</sup> Hence law has to do with the revelation of God's character and the demands this makes upon men. This was exemplified in the Old Testament by the decalogue to which Paul refers in Ro. 13: 8ff. On occasion when he desires to refer to a specific law νόμος is used with an appropriate noun in the genitive. (Ro. 7: 2)

"But even if the emphasis in nomos thus lies on its nature as God's demand, it is just in the Mosaic law of the OT that this can be grasped."<sup>20</sup> Thus the law of God which is the revelation of His will for men is embodied in the Mosaic law. The Mosaic law was given an authority and warranted an allegiance by virtue of the fact and in so far as it reflected the revelation of God's righteousness.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>H. Kleinknecht & W. Gutbrod, Op. Cit., p. 104.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>21</sup>It is to be noted that Paul did not conceive of the law of Moses as equivalent to the law of God although it certainly embodied it and was the concrete expression of it. Here what may be said of the Mosaic law is also the case for the Torah since "in later times (Neh. 8: 1) the "law of Moses" became a regular designation for the entire Pentateuch". (W. J. Harrelson, "Law in the Old Testament", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p.80.) Paul found that the prophetic understanding of the law was more commendable to him after his conversion than the priestly legalistic conception. But in so far as the Mosaic law revealed God's righteousness it demanded obedience and was held in the highest esteem by Paul throughout his life. The law of Moses was regarded as an incomplete and veiled expression of God's will. Thus obedience to the Mosaic law was obedience to the law of God but the time would come when this obedience would

In addition to this principal use of νόμος as the manifestation of the nature of God it carries with it the rabbinic meaning of the Torah which in this case is the Pentateuch. Here Paul uses νόμος to indicate a body of written literature rather than being primarily concerned with the nature and purpose of the material. On other occasions Paul uses νόμος to include not only the Pentateuch but the mass of interpretations and traditions added by later Scribes. In 1 Cor. 14: 21 and Ro. 3: 19 Paul uses νόμος to refer to the whole Old Testament thus encompassing the Pentateuch and the later material. Paul also uses νόμος in the figurative sense which perhaps originates more from his Greek background than from his Hebraic one. In Romas 3: 27 διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως; Romans 7: 23 and 25, νόμος ἁμαρτίας and Romas 8: 2, ὁ νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου all suggest an understanding akin to the current Greek usage of νόμος of Paul's day. Dodd comments: "It seems difficult except by a very violent strain upon language to interpret such phrases from the use of νόμος = נֶגֶן, nor have they any parallel in the LXX".<sup>22</sup> He further suggests

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be superseded by the claim of Jesus Christ who was the perfect expression of God's will. But even here, in so far as the Mosaic law continued to reveal God's will as expressed in Jesus Christ, it would still demand obedience, although, as we shall see, it would be on a new foundation. We shall be exploring this relationship more fully in a subsequent chapter of the thesis but for now we may agree with Dodd that the law was:

something wider and more inclusive than the "law" simpliciter in the sense of the Torah. At one stage and at one level this law of God is represented by the Torah, and on that level a man's response to the Torah is, quite genuinely, a response to the law of God; as a man who disobeys the precept μὴ ἐπιθυμήσης is disobeying the law of God. At another stage and upon a different level the law of God may be mediated in some other, perhaps some more adequate, form, in which it may be obeyed by one who is no longer subject to the Torah. (C. H. Dodd, Op, Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 99.)

<sup>22</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), p. 36.



that the better translation of νόμος (Romans 8: 2) in this context would be "principle". Although it is not necessary for us to hold to Dodd's view completely we could agree that Paul's understanding seems to be derived more from Greek sources than from his Hebrew background at this point.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, although Paul uses νόμος in a variety of ways its more general usage and its common understanding is based on the revelation of God's righteousness. Generally speaking all law has its source in God, the origin of all true righteousness and this was designated by the Torah.

#### IV THE LAW AS HOLY

The first thing that must be said of Paul's conception of the law is that he held the law in highest esteem throughout his life.

Noble the law of God had always been, and noble in the Christian dispensation it remained; and the time would never come when the demand on human nature would be anything less than the full, direct, and absolute surrender of itself to the high God of its salvation.<sup>24</sup>

While he was a Pharisee, Paul's adherence to the law was faultless. (Phil.3:

6) When as a Christian he was brought before Rome on the accusation of fostering a new religion he refuted the Jews' lies that he was against Judaism's law.

He has neither profaned the temple nor caused unrest anywhere in the world, and he professes with a good conscience the faith of his fathers as it is set forth in the Old Testament.<sup>25</sup>  
(Acts 25: 8)

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<sup>23</sup>For example, in Romans 7: 23 and 25 the law of sin is not so much the principle of sin but the system or even the claim of sin under which man labours and from which he must be freed.

<sup>24</sup>J. S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, (The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion), (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1935), p. 110.

<sup>25</sup>Johannes Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. F. Clarke, (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 319.

In spite of the difficulties which prevailed in his relation to the law and the dangers inherent in it, for Paul the law remained part of the historic revelation of God and there was never any question of its cancellation.

"...: für Paulus ist das Gesetz die Tora Gottes; seine Autorität ist von Gott gegeben."<sup>26</sup> It was God's law, the expression of His will and nature (Romans 7: 22, 25: 8: 7) and therefore holy, just and good (Romans 7: 12). It belonged to the spiritual realm (Romans 7: 14) and therefore could never be ignored as if it were of no importance. A great privilege rested with Israel in that she had been given the oracles of God. (Romans 9: 4, 3: 1, 2) "In his view, to have been entrusted with the law of God is an altogether real, and in no way illusory, though it is a dangerous privilege."<sup>27</sup> Dangerous indeed, for Paul declares that with this added responsibility judgment will fall heavily upon those who knew the will of God as fully as Israel did, and still did not do it. (Romans 2: 9) The Law was involved in the judgment and destruction of men; first, because it revealed the righteousness of God and secondly, because men misused the Law as a way of salvation.

The law was given that men might be led to life and the fact that the Mosaic law, i.e. the concrete form of the law of God, does not give life, does not annul the law's purpose, nor does it mean that its demands are evil.

"As the revelation of God's will, the law has for its true and proper purpose 'life' for men (Romans 7: 10), whatever other results it may have when met by human sin."<sup>28</sup> This positive function of the law as it reveals the

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<sup>26</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, "St. Paul and the Law", The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 17, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), p. 45.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

righteousness of God will become particularly clear when we discuss more directly the relation of the Gospel to the law, but as has already been indicated the central importance of the law is found in the righteousness which it embodies. That men use the law in a manner contrary to its purpose does not detract from its avowed intention. It is the true Israel as represented by the prophetic strain that recognizes this and to which Paul appeals.

The true Israel, i.e., the Isaianic remnant (Romans 9: 29), the seven thousand in Israel that did not bow the knee to Baal (Romans 11: 4), was obedient to the Law of God in that it held all the other commandments in and with the first one, which means that it received and accepted grace as grace, that it lived by the Word of God, ... that it looked to the hands of God, as the eyes of a servant look to the hands of his master (Ps. 123: 2).<sup>29</sup>

#### V THE LAW AND SIN

Since the law is the revelation of God's will it must necessarily expose men for what they really are. This is the pivot point between the nature of the law and the effect that it has upon man. Sin is clearly revealed as sin, i.e. as disobedience and rebellion against God. Sin and law are interdependent at this point since "evil exists only as contrast to good."<sup>30</sup> The Mosaic law was given that sin might appear exceedingly sinful. (Romans 7: 7) Thus the law has this double-sided aspect which corresponds to God's righteousness. The law was given as an expression of the righteousness of God and consequently reveals man's sin. It has the dual purpose of revealing God's will for man while at the same time indicating man's refusal to obey.

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<sup>29</sup>K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 1, Part II: The Doctrine of the Word of God, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), p. 311.

<sup>30</sup>B. Reicke, "The Law and This World According to Paul," (Some Thoughts Concerning Gal. 1: 4-11), Journal of Biblical Literature, ed. R. C. Dentan, Vol. LXX, (1951), p. 267.

How does the law reveal man's sin? Simply by calling into question man himself, obliging him to choose between following his own way, and thereby attempting salvation on his own, or resting on the grace of God. He may refuse to choose and thereby think that he has achieved a neutral position but this is nothing more than an illusion for no choice is a rejection of God's offer of salvation. Man may choose to establish his own security or submit himself to God and receive it from Him. The law exposes the fact that men choose sin rather than righteousness.

For this reason anyone who, enticed by sin, presumes to fulfill the Law himself by his own efforts, can only learn from the Law (Romans 7: 14) that he is carnal, that he cannot hold his own as a man before God, that he cannot carry out his intention of becoming righteous and justifying himself before God.<sup>31</sup>

Law in this case is the revelation of God's truth over against man's falsehood.

There was never any time in man's existence in which he was not deeply entwined in sin although before the law he sinned ignorantly. Sin was in the world before the law was given but it was not counted as sin until the law appeared. It was an unconscious reality but not a conscious one. (Romans 5: 13, 4: 15) C. K. Barrett suggests that in the period before Moses there was no law and yet death, the consequence of sin, existed. "This means (since death continued) that sin existed in this curious interim period; law is not necessary to the existence but only for the assessment of sin."<sup>32</sup> Whiteley has pointed out that guilt came with the law. Without the law there is no conscious realization of sin but with the law consciousness of sin arises and thus guilt results. "The intention of God in giving the Law of Moses was to turn mere unconscious wrong-doing into conscious sin, by making clear His will: sin is the conscious defiance of the known will of God."<sup>33</sup> (Romans 5: 20f.)

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<sup>31</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, trans. D. H. VanDaalen, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959), p. 84.

<sup>32</sup>C. K. Barrett, From First Adam to Last, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1962), p. 15.

<sup>33</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 80.

Now sin is enhanced since man breaks the law of God knowingly in open defiance of His will whereas before Moses man sinned ignorantly. In this sense man's sin becomes even more sinful. (Romans 7: 13) Of course, without the knowledge of God's will life has no real value since it is only the possibility of choice which grants life its true authenticity. Not only this, but sin and death could not be conquered until they were exposed. Otherwise man would have continued to sin ignorantly without realizing the desperate situation in which he existed. Thus the law brought sin out into the open so that it could be vanquished. This sin which was brought to conscious recognition by the law is a rebellion which even goes so far as to covet or usurp the very throne of God and His sovereignty. As we have already noted it is primarily exhibited in man's desire to save himself, to disregard God's offer of grace and "go it alone".

It is not a question of particular actions; it is a question of an attitude which is decisive of personal being in all its interiority and depth, and endows existence either with the character of obedience and dependence, or with that of negation and revolt.<sup>34</sup>

Paul stresses the inclusion of all men in this sin, including those prior to the law's presence, in his understanding of Adam's sin of disobedience and man's solidarity with Adam. (Romans 5: 14) Those who lived before Moses sinned ignorantly while those who live after him sinned knowingly but in both cases all sinned. Therefore:

The law was added not to hold sin in check, but to increase it, and especially in the form of *παράβασις* (or *παράπτωμα*) - concrete, observable, assessable transgression. Between Adam and Moses this kind of sin had been impossible (Romans v: 14); with Moses, the deficiency was made up in good measure.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>F. J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 187.

<sup>35</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 62.



Anderson Scott suggests that:

The recognition of sin as sin, which was facilitated by marking it as 'transgression' was essential to the discovery of the true value of the gift of God in Jesus Christ. So that the Law had served as an actual guide to bring men to Christ. (Gal. iii: 24).<sup>36</sup>

Scott contends that with this consciousness of sin the possibility of its overthrow becomes evident since the law also exposes the powerlessness of man to fulfill it and thereby reduces him to that state in which he is likely to repent and implore the grace which will deliver him. While we agree that the law served to expose sin (Romans 3: 20) this does not necessarily mean that it will also expose man's powerlessness to obey it, thus reducing him to despair and repentance. Indeed sin in connection with the law enticed man to believe that he could obey the law and thus by his own efforts achieve salvation. The law may restrain man and pronounce him guilty but it does not lead to repentance and in this way prepare for Christ. The law may reveal sin but it is powerless to save.

Chr. Maurer wehrt sich mit Recht gegen das Verständnis, als habe Paulus hier (Ro. 3: 20) eine Radikalisierung des Gesetzes als Bussruf an alle Menschen, Juden und Heiden, im Auge gehabt: "Der usus elencticus ist hier nicht in dem Sinn vertreten, dass das Gesetz den Menschen durch seine Erfahrung für die Gnade reif macht. "Der Paulus gibt hier keine psychologische Darlegung der Wirkung des Gesetzes auf den Einzelmenschen, sondern denkt in grossen heilsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen."<sup>37</sup>

The Mosaic law does not of logical necessity bring man to Christ and freedom through despair and repentance. If there had really been a law (here law is understood in the restricted sense of the Mosaic law) with the power to bestow life then salvation would, in fact, have been given by the law. (Gal. 3:21)

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<sup>36</sup>Charles A. Anderson Scott, Op. Cit., p. 45.

<sup>37</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 54.

Paul's understanding of the law as man's custodian until Christ should arrive also indicates this truth. Galatians 3 is concerned with man's bondage or servitude under the law. This is what it means when Paul says that the law is our custodian until Christ comes. (Gal. 3: 24) The law has dominion over man, he is in prison until released by Christ, but the law does not prepare for Christ as if it brings man to repentance.

Die Tora, die vom Sinai her gegeben wurde (Gal. 4: 24), begründete ja gerade nicht die Freiheit, sondern die Gebundenheit, ja Schützhaft und Knechtschaft (*εις δουλείαν γεννώσα 4,24*). Mit dem "Pädagogen" ist, ja in diesem Zusammenhang nicht der jüdisch-hellenistische *παιδαγωγός* *νόμος* gemeint, sondern der Knabenaufpasser (Luther: Zuchtmeister), der zur Zeit der Unmündigkeit gehört, ehe Christus kam und "den Glauben offenbarte".<sup>38</sup>

This period of tutelage was characterized by the predicament of man under the sway of sin and death. Although what the law required was right since man lived in bondage he was not free to obey it. Indeed he was dead in trespasses and sin. "The law offered life to those who could obey it: it did not offer life to dead men in order that they might obey it."<sup>39</sup> This will be further substantiated when we consider what Paul means by the fulfillment of the law, particularly Paul's relation to the law as a Pharisee. It is the promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ which brings men to repentance, not the law per se. It was Christ who revealed to Paul that the end of the law was failure and despair, not the law itself. Thus before the time of faith, man was locked up (*παιδαγωγός*).

The law did not, as it were educate man up to faith or up to Christ, providing the necessary elementary education before the higher reaches of religious knowledge could be attained. Its effect was to demonstrate that there was only one way, the way of faith, all others being barred in man's face.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>39</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 62.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

Once sin and law collide in man the law becomes the occasion for sin.

Rom. 7.7-11 describe the abuse of the Law and so explain, in how far - while it is entirely different from sin in itself - it was yet able to become the 'law of sin', i.e. the law which fosters, increases and reveals human sin, and from which the Gospel has freed us.<sup>41</sup>

Paul thought of the law as reflecting the righteousness of God and as I have already stated it remained sacred to him throughout his life. And yet Paul also regarded it as hastening man to destruction. (Romans 7: 9) Perhaps Anderson Scott has expressed it best in the distinction he makes "between the Law as a system whereby men could secure, or thought they could secure, 'righteousness' by merit, and the contents of the Law, the Divine requirement as to the character and conduct of men."<sup>42</sup> Thus we must distinguish between the law as God's revealed will and man's use of the law by which he thinks he can achieve his own salvation. The former is a foreshadow of the righteousness revealed in Jesus Christ who is the more excellent way of salvation for man. It is Christ who reveals to man in an unmistakable manner that all righteousness comes from God and man cannot hope to attain this by his own works. This positive aspect of God's righteousness is that which has to do with the primary purpose of the law which was to bring life. Unfortunately man does not recognize this aspect of the law but rather desires to use the law to wrest recognition or righteousness from God. The latter situation reflects man's attitude of sin and results in death. Bultmann indicates that: "The righteousness for which man strives, or rather, which God ascribes to him, is recognition of him, and the honouring of him."<sup>43</sup> Either man may use the law in his attempt to win this recognition from God or he may accept

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<sup>41</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 81.

<sup>42</sup>Charles A. Anderson Scott, Op. Cit., p. 42.

<sup>43</sup>Rudolph Bultmann, Essays, Philosophical and Theological, trans. James C. G. Greig, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), p. 42.

this recognition in Christ as a gift. Paul does not combat the law because of its contents since it is holy and spiritual.

He combats it because, and in so far as, it serves the Jew; in satisfying his need for recognition with its help and in acquiring credit in God's sight, and in earning justification by what he does. That is the great error, the illusion, in which the Jews are involved - that man can gain his recognition in God's sight by what he does.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the idea that the law and sin are identical is completely without foundation.

What is sinful is man's use of the law. (Romans 7: 7)

That the law's result is destruction is not the fault of the law nor its primary intention, but the fault of man.<sup>45</sup> The law is not sinful but man. "This double character, this discrepancy between the law's original purpose and its real effect, Paul expresses clearly when he says, 'The commandment which promised life proved death to me.'<sup>46</sup> (Romans 7: 10)

We must always be careful to maintain this distinction throughout our understanding of Paul's conception of the law. Thus in summary we may conclude that the fault does not lie with the law, but man. The law confronts man with a choice, man's way or God's, and at the same time indicates that man chooses to rely upon himself rather than God's grace. Unfortunately man's pride blinds him to his choice and he continues to act as if he can justify himself. The law is holy because it originates with God; it is

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>45</sup>Romans 5: 20 would seem to suggest otherwise but in the phrase ἡ ἀνομία πολλαπλασιάζει τὴν ἁμαρτίαν the force of ἡ ἀνομία indicates that "the multiplication of transgression is not the first and direct object of law, but its second and contingent object: law only multiplies transgression because it is broken and so converts into deliberate sin acts which would not have had that character if they had not been so expressly forbidden." (Rev. W. Sanday and Rev. A. C. Headlam, "The International Critical Commentary", The Epistle to the Romans, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), p. 143.)

<sup>46</sup>Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 107.

righteous because it expresses the will of God; it is good because its purpose is to serve God. (Romans 7: 12)

These three epithets thus characterized the law in respect to its origin, its nature and its effects. If the law in practice seems to provoke man into sinning, he cannot lay the responsibility at its door, let him blame sin.<sup>47</sup>

Now let us consider more specifically the relationship between the law and sin.<sup>48</sup> Where there is no law sin is impotent but now with the law it

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<sup>47</sup> F. J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 189.

<sup>48</sup> Schoeps comments that:

the peculiarity of Paul's idea of sin has often been seen in the identification of  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  (as contrasted with  $\piνε\upsilon\mu\alpha$ ) with  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$  and in this regard he falls decisively outside the framework of rabbinic thought. (H. J. Schoeps, Op. Cit., p. 187.)

$\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  has as its basic meaning the flesh-substance of man which includes "the whole body, or better the whole person, considered from the point of view of his external, physical existence." (J. A. T. Robinson, "The Body: A Study of Pauline Theology", Studies in Biblical Theology, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1952), pp. 17-18) (Gal. 4: 13; 2 Cor. 12: 7) A logical extension of this meaning is found in Romans 2: 28 where Paul enlarges the concept of  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  to include anything that is external and visible as contrasted with the internal and spiritual. Since man is part of the fallen created order characteristics of this fleshly condition include man's weakness and infirmity (Romans 6: 19, 8: 3) and his mortality. (Gal. 2: 20) It is man's participation in this fallen order of creation that places his flesh in a relationship with sin. Although  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  could not be understood as merely neutral neither can we adopt the stance of Schoeps who accuses Paul of making a complete identification between  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ . As Robinson suggests: "For man as  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$ , as part of the world, stands always in a relation of ambiguity to God, since the world to which he is bound in the flesh is a fallen world under sin and death," (Ibid., p. 22.) The worst that can be said of  $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\acute{\kappa}\acute{\alpha}$  is that it is the scene of sin's destructive control and ambivalent in its relationship to God.

To live according to the flesh ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\alpha$ ) suggests that flesh is not impure but rather that man has given the control of his life over to sin's domination in that now he deludes himself that he can procure life by the use of earthly attainments, by his own strength and accomplishment (R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) Trans. K. Grobel, p. 239). "Though the flesh is not itself evil, sin invades man through it, finding the easiest entry there." (W. D. Stacey, The Pauline View of Man, (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1956), p. 162.) Because flesh is the creation of God it is not basically evil but sin, finding entrance through it soon gains mastery over man as described in Romans 7. "In flesh sin is the active power, while the flesh is passive. Sin aims at subduing the entire man and the flesh is the element most easily corrupted. Sin and the flesh are thus differentiated, the former being dynamic and corrupting, the latter being passive and corrupted." (Ibid., p. 162)



springs to life. (Romans 7: 8-9) Perhaps Paul had Genesis 3: 13 in mind when he comments 'because sin found its opportunity in the commandment, seduced me, and through the commandment killed me'. (Romans 7: 11) The law not only reveals sin, it actually incites man to greater sinfulness. Paul takes the Decalogue and shows that the very prohibition often stirs a desire for the thing prohibited. "Das Gesetz ist also Israel nicht gegeben, damit es der Sunde wehre, sondern damit es die Sunde, die schlummert, zu voller Kraft erwecke (Ro. 7: 7)."<sup>49</sup> Here we are concerned with the secondary purpose of

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When Paul chastizes the Galatians for having begun with the Spirit and now returning to the flesh (Gal. 3) he is not concerned with sensuality but with the return to a reliance upon the law, i.e. salvation by one's own efforts and therefore acquiescing to sin's master. When men live only in terms of the natural order sin has gained entrance into their life and they now live in bondage, which is characteristic of the Mosaic law. Further, Schweizer comments in this regard: "The contrast between Spirit and "flesh" (σάρξ) originally, as in the Old Testament, means the opposition between a force that is alien to man and man's own weakness." (Eduard Schweizer, "Spirit of God", Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Worterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, (Trans. by A. E. Harvey,) (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960) p. 73.) Gal. 3: 3 is indicative of the desire of the Galatians to return to a trust in their own human strength or the flesh for their salvation. But Paul has made it quite clear that their salvation depends not on their own efforts but upon an alien strength which originates from a source outside of man altogether. The Spirit is the alien strength which not only brings man to salvation but also becomes the determining power of a man's life. It is upon this strength that he depends rather than his own. The life of the Spirit is characterized by freedom but the life of the flesh is characterized by bondage. This is not to suggest that the flesh itself is sinful but rather through its weakness sin gains entrance so that man trusts in his own efforts to obtain salvation by the works of the law rather than the grace and Spirit of God.

While it seems true that in Romans 7 Paul writes as if the flesh and sin were synonymous this is his more extreme usage. Here he suggests that anything in opposition to πνεῦμα might be called sin and since σάρξ represents the creatureliness of man then it too assumes the characteristics of sin. But as we have already indicated, it is because of sin's mastery over the flesh that the close relationship between the two is maintained. Flesh, in and of itself, is not sinful. Therefore to adopt this rather unusual conception of sin and flesh as being normative for Paul's whole view and not to see it in the context of his general understanding of σάρξ is to misrepresent Paul's balanced viewpoint.

<sup>49</sup>P. G. Verweij's, Op. Cit., p. 63.

the law which is related to the shadow side of God's righteousness.<sup>50</sup> But this is not all:

because, by confronting man with God's demand, it (the law) excites what lies behind all sin - namely the rejection of God's rightful claims, the refusal to recognize dependence upon him.<sup>51</sup>

As soon as man's self-centredness is attacked it seeks to assert its independence over against the claim of God. Thus in the relationship

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<sup>50</sup>P. G. Verweij's points out that faith and works stand in irreconcilable opposition to one another because this is the will of God. God granted the law to indicate to man the impracticability of its execution and therefore it is a distortion of the purpose of the law if men use it to gain salvation. (Romans 3: 20, 28; 9: 32)

Wenn Paulus so redet, dann geht es ihm also nicht um die Wirkung des Gesetzes, sondern um seine Aufgabe im göttlichen Heilsplan; und diese ist es nicht, den Menschen zu erlösen, sondern ihn an den Fluch auszuliefern. (P. G. Verweij's, Op. Cit., p. 51.)

While we would agree with this we must be careful to see this in relation to what I have called the primary purpose of the law. Verweij's has placed too much emphasis on God's 'No' embodied in the law. Because the Mosaic law was to reveal the righteousness of God it has this primary concern, i.e. the revelation of His will to man. But in connection with man's sin it becomes that which reveals man's sin and condemns him.

It has this effect by its very nature since it deals with God's righteousness, while at the same time shedding light on man's true condition as a sinner. Thus we must recognize within the Mosaic law a twofold purpose; the revelation of God's righteousness and the condemnation of man, although as Verweij's points out the positive purpose of the revelation of God's righteousness is experienced by sinful man as God's curse or wrath. We shall see that in Jesus Christ what appears to be a twofold purpose is really one and that He reverses man's experience of God's righteousness by making it a saving judgment rather than just a condemning one. But under the law men experience God's righteousness as a 'No' because His 'Yes' to them is blocked by their sin. While men continue to exist in sin under the law, God's righteousness is understood by them only in terms of commands and prohibitions. In this context their obedience is conceived by men as deserving God's favour or salvation. This condition is described by Paul as the bondage or slavery from which men must be freed.

<sup>51</sup>A. C. Davies, "Law in the New Testament", The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 99.

between the law and sin the law becomes closely associated with the law of sin and death lodged in man. (Romans 8: 2) This law expresses itself in man's attempts to gain his own salvation by works of the law. Thus sin finds a foothold in man's nature. "By reason of its relation to sin, the law becomes a destroying power - something which, in its own nature, it is not."<sup>52</sup>

Paul has arrived at a completely unJewish conclusion when he talks about the law being ineffectual in promoting righteousness but actually increasing sin and finally resulting in death. (Romans 7: 11, 1 Cor. 15: 56)

Schoeps comments that:

Every child of the Jews, whether the Diaspora or the Judaism of Palestine is in question, knows that the law had no other purpose than that of being given by God in order to be kept and not transgressed, in order to increase resistance to sin and not augment sin.<sup>53</sup>

In other words how can the law which was given for life bring death? As I have already indicated, Schoeps fails to grasp the distinction between the law as the revelation of God's will and its interaction with sin in which case it is misused by man and results in his death.<sup>54</sup> It is unlikely that Schoeps

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<sup>52</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 283.

<sup>53</sup>H. J. Schoeps, Op. cit., pp. 194-195.

<sup>54</sup>Romans 7: 23 seems to indicate a law (ἐτέρον νόμον) which is integral to man's nature. This law could signify the dominion of sin over man and from which only Christ is able to liberate him. It is closely associated with the Mosaic law since the law of Moses reveals its presence. Whether we may call the law of Moses a law of sin and death is debatable but certainly it does reveal the dominion of sin, or the system of sin, in which man is enmeshed. But there is no doubt that this law of sin cannot be identified with the law which is spiritual and holy, i.e. the law of God which is embodied and revealed in the Mosaic law.

Auch wird aus den ganzen Ausführungen wohl dies deutlich, dass Paulus über den Nomos als der mosaischen Gesetzesordnung, die den Menschen unter das Gebot und der Sünde gefangen hält hinaus, noch zu einem anderen "Nomos" kommen will, den zu kennen, er für viel wichtiger erachtet und der gerade durch und aus diesem Gesetz des Mose erkannt wird. Das ist

would understand this for as he himself admits, Paul's whole understanding was based on the life, work, and death of Jesus Christ. As

Barth comments:

Our presupposition is that at any rate in respect of the Jews, in respect of the killing work of the Law, he (Paul) does not come to his knowledge from a particular experience with the Law as such preceding his conversion and vocation, but on the basis of the conversion in which he was called to the obedience of faith in Jesus Christ and to be its apostle, and in which also the fulfilling of the Law in Jesus Christ, and therefore also the impossibility of any fulfilling of the Law by himself, was revealed.<sup>55</sup>

The most heinous way in which the law incites man to greater sin is in the possibility it presents to man of achieving his own salvation. In man's state of sin under the law he is convinced that he may win recognition or acceptance from God by his obedience of the law. Now when man obeys the law he is continually boasting as if he were responsible for achieving his own righteousness. *καύχησις* 'pride' is a word which describes for us the calculative spirit of a man who sees his relationship with God in terms of strict justice. In this situation he claims recognition and reward for his good works done in fidelity to the law.

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der Nomos - dann in übertragenem Sinne - der Sünde, die in unseren Gliedern herrscht und dieses Elend des Menschen eigentlich verursacht hat. (P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., pp. 63-64)

Thus the law of Moses serves to reveal this law of sin under which man labours because it does reveal God's righteousness. But freedom from the jurisdiction of sin can never come through the Mosaic law but only through the life-giving law of the Spirit. This state of freedom from the bondage of the law of sin and death under the Mosaic law was achieved by the sending of Christ who, assuming our sinful flesh, existed under the law's sway. (Romans 8: 2, 3)

<sup>55</sup> K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, Part I: The Doctrine of God, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957), pp. 119-120.

Of course, he feels that God will ignore his evil deeds and look only at his good ones. This means that one is responsible only for those actions which God approves and not for those He abhors. In the final analysis this makes a mockery of God's grace and righteousness. Under this system grace is not understood as that of which all men stand in need; only those who cannot fulfill the law have need of grace. Bultmann comments:

Judaism, too, speaks of the grace of God. But here God's grace means his indulgence in regard to trespasses against the law, or the gracious guidance which makes it possible for the devout man to fulfill the law or to atone for his trespasses. The devout man, who fulfills the law, or, so far as he fulfills it, does not need grace.<sup>56</sup>

Paul leaves no doubt that whether a man fulfills the law or not he still stands in need of God's grace. Men who would seek to attain their own salvations by means of the law are grasping the inheritance by their own resources rather than receiving it as a gift from the hands of God. (Romans 4: 16)

The very existence of the law is necessarily for sinful man a temptation to try to use it as a means to the establishment of a claim upon God, and so to the defence of his self-centredness and the assertion of a measure of independence over against God. He imagines that he can put God under an obligation to himself, that he will be able so adequately to fulfill the law's demands that he will earn for himself a righteous status before God.<sup>57</sup>

Little does sinful man realize the death that awaits him if he continues on this road to destruction. When men attempt to turn the law into something manageable and achievable they are committing a sin of demonic proportions; they are throwing the grace of God back in His face. This is sin par excellence. No man can be justified by works of the law. (Romans 3: 20) Such a man is concerned with what he can do not with what God can do and has already done in Jesus Christ. "Paul's point of view is that the status of man in the eyes of God is totally the work of God and it is totally God's gift; to it man can add nothing."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>R. K. Bultmann, Op. Cit., p. 46.

<sup>57</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 47.

<sup>58</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 111.



The Israel which understood the law as a means of self-justification was not the true Israel. This Israel wants to be under the law without listening to what the law says, i.e. that man can only be saved by faith. It is those men who listen to the law that are the true Israel, i.e. the free children of God's promise made to Abraham. (Gal. 4: 21ff.) This is that aspect of the law which has to do with its primary purpose of bringing life through its revelation of God's righteousness. Israel did not hear this call to faith but saw the law as being that which revealed sin, primarily the sin of the Gentiles, and as a way of salvation.

The terrible misunderstanding which led Israel to its ruin consists in its having thought of the law as an instrument of salvation. The consequence of this fundamental mistake was that the law, in fact, aggravated its situation instead of enlightening its mind.<sup>59</sup>

When Israel uses the law to establish its own justification it is betraying the primary intention of the law. The people of Israel thought that they were living in a state of obedience in conformity with God's will but when He unambiguously declared His righteousness in Jesus Christ, they rejected it. But here God was able to use even the rejection of Israel to overcome the impasse which their pursuit of legalistic righteousness had caused, to include all men in His work of redemption. This is the Israel that has its heart veiled whenever the law is read. (2 Cor. 3: 15) This is the people who pursue the law of righteousness but fail to attain the real law.

(Romans 9: 31) Thus, although great is the privilege of Israel since it has the oracles of God, great is its responsibility and judgment if it fails in this trust. In defaulting the trust given to them they now become included with the Gentiles under judgment since all have sinned. (Romans 3: 20) The true Israel, on the other hand, understood the law aright and did not misuse it to establish their own righteousness since it was put in their

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 149-150.

hearts and written in their minds. (Jer. 31: 33; Rom. 2: 28) as the 'law of the spirit of life'. (Ro. 8: 2) Thus its iniquity was remembered no more. (Jer. 31: 33; Ro. 4: 6) It is to be remembered that this temptation to use the law as a means of self-justification is a universal appeal to Jew and Gentile alike.

Every man, whether he be faced by the law of Moses, or by the "moral law" or by any other law whatever (ecclesiastical, sociological, etc.) finds in the implied idea of obligation the basis of a "right" and the opportunity to attain "merit", i.e. a claim to divine favour.<sup>60</sup>

Stendahl comments on Phil. 3 that:

Paul speaks most fully about his life before his Christian calling, and there is no indication that he had had any difficulty in fulfilling the law. On the contrary, he can say that he had been "flawless" as to the righteousness required by the Law. (v. 6)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 196.

<sup>61</sup>Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West", The Harvard Theological Review, Vol LVI, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 200.

It is in this regard that Paul indicates that his obedience to the Law was not out of fear or joyless, as Klausner would suggest. (J. Klausner, From Jesus to Paul, Tr. Wm. F. Stinespring, (New York: The MacMillan Comp., 1944), p. 500.) The Law represented the demands of God and therefore there was no question of not being obedient to it.

It has been suggested that Romans 7 is indicative of a basic schism and tension in Paul regarding the law in his pre-Christian life. But as Leenhardt suggests:

The picture here drawn of the struggle of the man who is subject to the law reflects neither what we know of the experience of the Israelite in general nor the view of Paul in particular concerning his religious life before his conversion. The nature of pharisaic piety is expressed more accurately in the parable which depicts a Pharisee giving thanks because he is not a sinner, and enumerating to his satisfaction his various good works; likewise Paul bears witness to his own experience as a Pharisee in similar terms when he declares that he was blameless as regards obedience to the law. (Phil. 3: 6) The drama of inner conflict described in these verses (Ro. 7) is not in harmony with this type of consciousness. The conversion of Paul was not that of a heart devoured by remorse for its acts of disobedience, but rather that of a proud soul exalting itself before God because of its obedience to the law. (Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., pp. 180-181)

Paul indicates that, even though he observed the commandments of the law flawlessly, he still stood in need of salvation. In his faultless observance of the law he had attempted to establish his own righteousness before God, rather than trusting in God's grace.

According to Paul the person who fulfills the law needs grace as much as the one who trespasses against it - indeed it is he most of all who needs it! For in seeking to establish his own righteousness, he is acting fundamentally against God, while the trespasser transgresses against God's demands from time to time. The trespasser may lose confidence in his false security, while the person who fulfills the law simply becomes more deeply implicated in it.<sup>62</sup>

Thus although Paul was able to achieve the demands of the law for legal righteousness it was by virtue of this fact that his need of God's grace became even more paramount. But whether Paul is concerned with an

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Nor does Romans 7 refer to the Christian life. In the Christian's thrust for sanctification he is not left alone in his own weakness but as Romans 8: 2ff. indicate the Christian is one who lives in the freedom and strength of the Spirit and not in the weakness and bondage of the law. Rather what we have in Romans 7 is the ego as it is turned in on itself, and in its anxiety tragically centres its gaze on itself rather than the Christ. This could hardly be the apostle who penned the words: "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me". (Gal. 2: 20) What we have in Romans is not an autobiography but rather a statement concerning the plight of man in general. True the first person is used but this was a common technique of the writers of that and earlier times to personalize the general experience of all. "The 'I' or 'Me' served to make more concrete and living an experience which was quite general and collective. One individual spoke out what all thought; in speaking of himself he spoke of man in general: when he said 'I' he implied 'we'." (Ibid., p. 184)

Paul has just indicated what the disobedience of Adam entails for all humanity. In the light of Paul's use of this figure it is not surprising that he would introduce an imaginary figure again who would speak for all. Thus Paul presents in a dramatic personal way the failure of the law in relation to sin, to bring man to salvation. The law denounces sin, it reveals sin, in relation to sin it even incites man to greater sin, but it is powerless to save. It is only the Christ who can deliver man from the bondage of death into the freedom of the life-giving Spirit. (Romans 7: 24-25)

<sup>62</sup>R. K. Bultmann, Op. Cit., p. 46.

individual's perfect obedience to the law in attaining legal righteousness as in Phil. 3: 6 or with Israel's failure to grant this obedience as in Romans 2: 17-3: 20 the end result and basic misunderstanding is the same. Both had failed to grasp the law's basic demand for reliance on God's grace for their salvation and this led to death. They had attempted to pervert the law and use it to establish their own righteousness over against God. In this context obedience to the law became the occasion for human pride. As Bultmann indicates: "real sin does not consist in individual transgressions of the law at all, but in the basic attitude of man - his striving to establish his own righteousness, and to glorify himself in the presence of God"<sup>63</sup>

Paul makes the distinction between legal righteousness, i.e. his own righteousness, and the righteousness of God. (Phil. 3: 9) The former has to do with man's efforts, the latter with what God gives as a gift through Jesus Christ. Thus in Phil. 3 Paul implies that if perfect obedience to the precepts of the Mosaic law is not enough for salvation, but is nothing more than 'dung' in the light of Christ, so is imperfect obedience. Perfect and imperfect obedience in this sense are but a sign of man's rejection of the basic claim of the law for dependence upon God's grace. In fact the greater condemnation rests on the Jews since they had the law and with it the demand for trust in God's grace. Paul comments in Romans 3 that the advantage rests with the Jews who were entrusted with the oracles of God. But he also concludes the matter by indicating that 'there is no just man, not one'. (Romans 3: 10) and no man can be justified in the sight of God for having kept the law. (Romans 3: 20) All men have sinned because of their failure to rely on God's grace for their salvation, and not because of their failure or even success in observing the law's precepts. Thus whether

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

you obey the law in this regard or you do not, the end result is the same; all men are sinners.

All this is said in the light of the new avenue of salvation, which has been opened in Christ, an avenue which is equally open to Jews and Gentiles, since it is not based on the Law, in which the very distinction between the two rests.<sup>64</sup>

To suggest as Schoeps does that "we must come to the conclusion that for Paul the Pharisee of Tarsus ... - the law was no longer a living possession," will not do.<sup>65</sup> There is no suggestion that Paul found the law an externally oppressive burden, nor that he suffered from an exaggerated sense of sin. Paul, the Pharisee, was faultless in his obedience to the Mosaic law but now his circumstances had been altered by the recognition of Christ and thus his righteous deed became as 'refuse'. Even when Paul was a Christian he found joy in the law and it held a place of prominence in his life. Paul was not ignorant of the Jewish teaching of the law but he realized that it was a misconstruing of Scripture and a misunderstanding of God's purpose of salvation. The Mosaic law revealed sin but it did not have the power to save nor would the execution of its precepts bring true righteousness. Paul's realization of the failure of the law did not result from his inability to observe it which thus reduced him to despair and repentance, for he was faultless in keeping its precepts.

(21a: Vgl. auch Maurer, Gesetzeslehre, S. 55: "Nicht durch innere Verzweiflung an der Erfüllbarkeit des Gesetzes ist er zur neuen Gerechtigkeit gekommen. Paulus redet hier nicht von seiner Entwicklung, sondern von Christus, der auch in sein Leben eingegriffen hat.")<sup>66</sup>

We have already noted how the Jew was deluded into thinking that by observing the law's precepts he could attain righteousness. This delusion involved him in the pursuit of his own salvation by his own efforts.

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<sup>64</sup>Krister Stendahl, Op. Cit., p. 201.

<sup>65</sup>H. J. Schoeps, Op. Cit., pp. 197-198.

<sup>66</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 71.



From what we have already said concerning the works of the law as a way of salvation we may conclude that Paul radically rejected any suggestion that man could earn his own salvation. It was this legalistic approach which put Judaism on the same level as paganism since all pagan religions are but the reflection of this attempt by man to save himself. No doubt the Jews of Paul's day pointed to circumcision as a sign of the validity of the law. But Paul's answer was that Abraham was accounted righteous by faith and not by works of the law. (Romans 4: 3) Since Abraham was seen as righteous before he was circumcized and before the law came these were not necessary for salvation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>~~Intra~~ footnote 201 and 236 Chapter III for a discussion of the place of the moral and sacrificial laws in the light of Christ's fulfillment of the Law.

An apparent contradiction of this view of circumcision and the law is found in Acts 16: 3 where Timothy is circumcized and also in Acts 21: 26 where it is recorded that Paul underwent the rite of purification. What are we to understand of Paul when he quite readily accepts the observances of the law which, he knew, were fulfilled by Jesus Christ and no longer required for salvation? Legalism meant slavery (Gal. 4: 24-25) and Paul constantly warned those Christians under his charge to beware of those who would woo them back to such observances and bondage. The importance of the law was that it revealed the righteousness of God and therefore foreshadowed or pointed to the One who would come to fulfill this righteousness. Literal observances or circumcision are valuable insofar as they foreshadow this event although of themselves they are empty and have no independent value. Of course the problem arises when man makes these empty observances necessary for salvation when the reality is present. (Gal. 5: 2, 4, 5)

But this means that the Christian who might wish to put himself under the law, forgetting that he is under grace, the Judaizing Christian desirous of completing his salvation through grace by means of works, of perfecting the pardoning of God by the merits of his human obedience, ...; he would be casting himself in this self-contradictory and hopeless situation of realizing himself to be moribund like Abraham, and yet wishing to secure his future by his own resources. (Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 198)

It was this that Paul warned the Galatian Christians against in relation to the Judaizing Party in their midst. On the other hand, Paul himself did observe Jewish practices but in this case he did not feel they were necessary for salvation. He continues in them to achieve his missionary endeavour and thus fulfill the law of Christ. If he no longer observed them he would

be ostracized by Judaism and his love for his countrymen was so great he desired to avoid this. (Romans 9: 1) He was quite willing to limit his freedom in the light of this love. Yet when he was with the Gentiles he behaved as one who was lawless, i.e. as not under the Mosaic law. (I Cor. 9: 19-22). In this regard Paul is accused both by his contemporaries and modern critics of being:

totally unscrupulous in his principles, or rather in his lack of them, and suggesting that he was prepared to trim his sails in accordance with the direction of the wind, and that he was not much concerned about the 'truth' of what he said, but only with 'gaining' his hearers. Whatever their beliefs might be, he was prepared to adjust himself to them. (H. Chadwick, "All things to All Men", New Testament Studies, Vol. I, Ed. M. Black, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955), p. 259.)

Chadwick, to counter critics who accuse Paul of preaching a Gospel to please men, suggests that I Cor. vii on celibacy and marriage are examples of Paul's apologetic approach to the problems experienced in the Corinthian church. In this case Paul affirms something of the truth of their stand but at the same time indicates certain practical and theological ramifications of strict adherence to this stance. In each case Paul is anxious to avoid an irreconcilable break with each party. The same technique is seen in relation to the chapters on 'glossolalia' in which Paul did not deny that it was a genuine supernatural charisma but maintained that it was one of the more inferior expressions of the gifts of the Spirit. As Chadwick suggests:

No stronger assertion of his belief in the validity of this gift of the Spirit could be made; and in the context it is a master-touch which leaves the enthusiasts completely outclassed and outmanoeuvred on their own ground. (Ibid., p. 269.)

This method was characteristic of Paul's approach to Jew and Gentile alike. He attempted to reduce the apparent gulf between himself and his potential convert without the loss of the supernatural nor the fact that man was a sinner. I Cor. 9: 19-22 are evidence of this technique in which under the law of Christ and in obedience to his Lord Paul continued to preach the Gospel.

Thus this did not mean that he was without the law since as we have already observed, Paul still considered himself to be under the law of Christ.

Hier sieht man auch, wie er im lebendigen Handeln Nomos und Nomos unterscheiden kann. Nicht zwischen dem Nomos, der bleibt und dem Nomos, der vergangen ist, sondern zwischen dem Nomos Christi, der als die eigentliche und zentrale Forderung im Pneuma erfasst wird, und dem Nomos als dem den Juden zeitweilig zur Knechtschaft gegebenen Gesetz, dem man im neuen Heilswesen nicht mehr zu dienen hat. (P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 81)

This indicates the more important reason why on occasion Paul obeyed the Mosaic law. He was not lawless but rather under the law of Christ (ἐν νόμῳ Χριστοῦ) which is true freedom. If he chooses to obey the Mosaic law

The law and circumcision are a sign of Abraham's faith, not the guarantee of it. Even faith itself was a gift of God and not the accomplishment of man. Faith came first, not circumcision or the law. (Romans 4: 10, 11)

"Circumcision was the sign, but not the cause, of the imputation of righteousness; it was given to Abraham as a seal, confirming a righteousness which had already been granted to him."<sup>68</sup> Thus Abraham was accounted righteous, not because of his works, nor his circumcision, nor the law, but only because he believed,

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he does so for the sake of the salvation of his neighbour. Thus he exhibits the love of the Spirit in his life and so fulfills the law of Christ. Therefore he can appear as one who is lawless or as one who obeys the Mosaic law and in both cases he fulfills the law of Christ.

The general principle is that he adopts his behaviour (in things indifferent, bien entendu) to the circle to which he desires at the moment to appeal: τοῖς πᾶσιν γέροντα πάντα ἵνα πάντως τινὲς σωθῶσι  
(C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 96.)

Thus Paul may reject legalism and the necessity of circumcision for salvation on the one hand and yet at the same time observe the Mosaic law in order to accomplish his vocation and fulfill the law of Christ.

Davies comments that "with a view both to his prestige within the Church and his relations with Judaism, it was expedient for Paul to maintain his devotion to the Law". (W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 74) Paul's relations with the Jerusalem church were sensitive but Davies' suggestion that Paul was concerned with his prestige is questionable. Perhaps this choice of words by Davies is unfortunate for it does suggest a concern on the part of Paul which is not indicated by his relations with this Church. Paul did attempt to keep his relations with the Church as cordial as possible but he did not hesitate to confront anyone, no matter who they were, who would make the Gospel into another 'works righteousness', in very strong terms. (Gal. 2: 6, 18; 3: 1-3) It must also be remembered with regard to his relations to Judaism that he did not maintain his devotion to the law just for the sake of cordial relations but because he was still an Israelite and by such obedience in the light of his missionary enterprise and his love for his neighbour, he fulfilled the law of Christ.

<sup>68</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 118.

... i.e. that he trusted God's word of promise spoken to him, and that he therefore trusted God's almighty power, faithfulness and constancy. Because he gave God the glory, God himself became his righteousness, and he himself, who was ungodly, was acquitted and justified by God (Romans 4.5)!<sup>69</sup>

We shall explore the relationship of promise and law more fully in Chapter III.

Any claim of the Jew on God's special favour through his natural descent from Abraham was shattered. (Romans 4: 16, 17) Now all men were the sons of Abraham through faith and promise. Abraham was accounted righteous before circumcision and the law. Therefore since the Jew defines his 'Jewishness' in terms of the gift of the law it means that Abraham was not an Israelite in the full sense of the word when he was accounted righteous. He stood in an extra-legal condition or like the Gentile who is outside the pale of the law.

Since Gentiles, who by definition stand outside the legal system, are to be blessed in Abraham, it follows that blessing is not tied up with legal considerations. Abraham, in fact, as we have already seen pointed out in Romans iv.10, was a Gentile when God counted him righteous. It was not his circumcision or his obedience, but his faith that was the ground of his acceptance.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore that which was a sign of separation, for "the religion of the Torah was essentially a national religion", was cancelled in Jesus Christ.<sup>71</sup>

Although the Jew understood Abraham to be the first proselyte to Judaism he would never accept Abraham's justification by faith before the granting of the law. But Paul had experienced the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and he realized that the law was powerless to save because of man's failure to trust in God's grace for his salvation. (Romans 8: 3, 4) Because of this experience Paul's understanding of Scripture was altered from that of the Jew. Paul felt that this was the true content of the law and the prophets

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<sup>69</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 53.

<sup>70</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 34.

<sup>71</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 67.



and thus he interpreted them in the light of Jesus Christ.

We can be sure that St. Paul was not driven to regard circumcision as non-essential for salvation by his exegesis of the Old Testament; it was his rejection of the necessity for circumcision that led him to interpret the Old Testament as he did.<sup>72</sup>

It is the law which pronounces God's condemnation and curse upon all sin (Gal. 3: 10-13) or as Romans 1: 18 has it: 'For we see divine retribution ( $\delta\omicron\rho\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ ) revealed from heaven and falling upon all the godless wickedness of men'. We have already noted the close connection between the law and death when man in his sin uses the law for self-justification. In such circumstances man hears only God's condemnation in the law and experiences God's righteousness as wrath. Under the law, man does not recognize the true purpose of God's wrath and condemnation but hears only God's 'No' to his sin. In this case man severs the law from its divine connection and exalts it as an independent system of religion over against God. Paul in Romans 1: 24ff indicates the consequences of such action when men are left to seek their own way. The Jews were apt to look at the Gentiles described in Romans 1: 18-32 from a superior moral position as a consequence of the law. But as we have already suggested they too were included under the wrath of God, in fact, more so. The very law which was used by the Jew to condemn the Gentile world was turned back on him and exposed his involvement in a greater sin. The Jew used the truth of God to work out his own salvation. God's reaction to this sin is his wrath.

God's reaction to all man's sin revealed by the law is wrath. Thus wrath and law are integral to one another. (Romans 4: 15) In fact, the law by itself is the instrument of God's wrath. Caird suggests that Paul does not describe wrath as a personal attribute of God. "He will never speak of the wrath as though it were a personal attribute of God. It works, rather, as an impersonal principle of retribution."<sup>73</sup> But certainly wrath is the reaction of a personal God who 'hates' sin. "Wrath is the holy revulsion of

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<sup>72</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 83.

<sup>73</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 83.



God's being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness."<sup>74</sup>  
Caird has confused the effects of wrath and its purpose for he maintains that wrath is not true to the purpose of the Creator. He has understood wrath only from the point of view of God's negation of man's sin and not in the light of His affirmation of man. He has construed God's wrath as consisting simply in God's purpose to punish. Thus Caird virtually eliminates wrath as a movement in the mind of God. He has introduced a basic split in God's nature giving Him a schizophrenic personality. Thus when he says, "Like the wrath of God, the law represents God's "strange work", which must be carried out, that he may better effect his "proper work", the work of which the Gospel is the message", we must remember that God's 'strange work' i.e. His judgment, is integral to the Gospel and is, in this sense, quite a 'proper work'.<sup>75</sup>

"God's wrath ought not to be misinterpreted as something foreign and contrary to God's love. But one should understand that God's love is this burning and consuming love."<sup>76</sup> This relation of the Gospel and judgment is revealed in the Cross of Christ where man's sin is condemned at the same time as God in Christ saves man. When man is separated from God and under the law he experiences the love of God as wrath; as negation. The fact that God condemns sin expresses the truth that He takes it seriously. Indeed so seriously that it must be overcome and not allowed to carry His creation to destruction. The demands of the law in this regard must be met and the consequence of sin, which is death, must be overcome. This was gloriously achieved in Jesus Christ who took upon Himself the curse of the law for us and in our stead.<sup>77</sup> (Gal. 3: 13)

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<sup>74</sup>J. Murray, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Vol. 1, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., 1960), p. 35.

<sup>75</sup>G. B. Caird, Op. Cit., p. 46.

<sup>76</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 26.

<sup>77</sup>In this regard Schoeps suggests that:

VI THE LAW AND CHRIST

"The ultimate goal and the innermost meaning of the law are not the condemnation of sinners, but Jesus Christ."<sup>78</sup> We have already noted how the prime purpose of the law was to bring life but in its relation to man in the flesh, sin used it to bring death. The prime purpose of the law was to reveal the righteousness of God and it is in this sense that Jesus Christ fulfills the law. Whereas, in its use by man as a way of salvation as well as its accompanying condemnation, Christ ends the law. Romans 10: 4 may

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It is clear that previously Saul must have taken offence in this Jewish way at the manner of Jesus' death, for which reason he cannot utter the word curse in connexion with the law without immediately thinking of the curse which the law specifically lays on him who suffers death by hanging on a tree. Hence the associations of the LXX key-word ἐπι καταράταις compel him to drop the train of new thought just begun, in order to give quite a new interpretation of Deut. 21: 23, intended to dispel the Jewish scandal of the mode of Jesus' death by crucifixion. (H. J. Schoeps, Op. Cit., pp. 178-179)

We are quite aware that Paul took what seemed to be liberties with the Scriptures as far as the Jews were concerned but this was because of his experience of Jesus Christ who he believed was the key to Scripture. Here Paul is not concerned to dispel the Jewish scandal over the mode of Jesus' death by crucifixion but to indicate that Jesus was cursed by existing under the Law as all men were under the Law. (Gal. 4: 4) It was in this manner that Jesus fulfilled Deut. 21: 23. Therefore it is by agreement that Paul hoped to convince the Jews, not by an attempt to dispel the Jews' distaste over the manner of Jesus' death. Indeed Paul did not conceive the scandal of the Cross only in terms of Jesus' manner of death but rather the scandal centred on the fact that salvation could only be achieved by a participation in this death and its benefits by faith and not by means of the Law. Thus Schoeps' misunderstands Paul's use and meaning of the curse of the Law in this context.

<sup>78</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 48.

suggest the latter interpretation of Christ as the end of the law, i.e. He reveals unambiguously that the law can never be a way of attaining righteousness and also that in subjecting Himself to existence under the law He ends its condemnation and bondage. (Gal. 4: 4, 5) But it may also imply that Christ is the *τέλος* or goal of the law. *τέλος* as well as comprehending the connotation of termination may also mean "the goal toward which a movement is being directed."<sup>79</sup> In the light of Romans 7: 12, 14a; 8: 4; 13: 8-10 and 3: 31 we may accept the understanding of Jesus Christ as the goal toward which the law was striving; as the essence and sum total of the law. Arndt and Gingrich suggest that, "perhaps this is the place for Rom. 10: 4, in the sense that Christ is the goal and the termination of the law at the same time, somewhat in the sense of Gal. 3: 24."<sup>80</sup>

"The law has Christ for its goal, is aimed at, directed towards, Him, bears witness to Him (cf. Rom. 3: 21), by virtue of the promises which it contains."<sup>81</sup> At this point we must part company with Cranfield for the law did not contain the promise but rather "the law was added to the promise (this in itself implies that the law was an extra, not a fundamental religious datum), 'on account of transgression'. (*τῶν παραβάσεων χάριν*)"<sup>82</sup> (Gal. 3: 19) The law was fulfilled in Jesus Christ not because it contained the promise made to Abraham but rather because it revealed the righteousness of God.

In Christ, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, yet at the same time attested by the law (Rom. iii.21) ... It is not merely that the law is good as law; it also bears witness to that which is not law at all.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Wm. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), p. 819.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 819.

<sup>81</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 50.

<sup>82</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 62.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

The law was to indicate to man, by virtue of the fact that it revealed the righteousness of God, that to obtain this righteousness it must be granted as a gift from God to man. Thus the law not only revealed God's righteousness, it also indicated the folly of man's righteousness and his use of the law to obtain what only God could give. Israel chose to ignore this revelation of God's righteousness in the law and go its own way. (Romans 10: 3, 4) They sought to achieve their own righteousness rather than accept it from the hands of God. In Christ the righteousness of God revealed in the law is attained as well as man's sinful use of the law as a way of salvation terminated.

The law as the expression of the righteous will of God points to the One who, by his absolute obedience, fulfills it and thereby makes many righteous. (Romans 5: 19) Jesus is the goal of the law by virtue of the fact that He was perfectly obedient even unto the death of the Cross. As we have already indicated it is not obedience to the precepts which is so important, but rather complete dependence upon God's grace. Christ's love for His Father and the neighbour are indicative of this utter dependence on and obedience to His Father. Thus He achieves the goal of the law by fulfilling its demand for this dependence and obedience. "He suffered the punishment of death due to us and in that way rendered to God the obedience which we deny him, in that way he accepted in our stead God's grace which we always want to decline."<sup>84</sup> In such a manner Jesus reveals the primary contents of the law, i.e. the invitation of God's grace, but men choose to ignore this offer of dependence for independence. But men are able to recognize this aspect of the law only from the standpoint of faith, i.e. trust in the grace of God. Without this perspective they experience the law only as condemnation and do not see its offer of grace. It is from this aspect of condemnation and death under which men live in bondage, that they must be freed by Jesus Christ.

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<sup>84</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 90.

Christ as the expression of God's righteous will and thus the revealer of men's sins, sheds light on men's darkness. In the light of the Cross which is the climactic exposé of God's righteousness men see themselves as they really are; their desperate condition is revealed in their crucifixion of the Son of God. The law brought to men consciousness of their sin but in Jesus Christ an unambiguous declaration is made. Before Jesus Christ came, men used the law to establish their own goodness but when we are confronted by the Cross we are no longer left in doubt as to the verdict of the just judgment upon our lives. At our best, none of us are good, no not one. (Romans 3: 10) Christ is the goal of the law since He exposes men's predicament and then redeems them from their bondage. (Gal. 3: 22-24) The Word of God uttered in Jesus Christ is the 'judging-saving' Word of redemption. "So God's mercy is the only thing that confronts man: its accusation but also its hope, as surely as this mercy is the righteousness of man's Judge."<sup>85</sup> But Paul is also concerned to make clear that God's verdict on man, as justification for those who accept it, is not a new revelation but has been witnessed to by the law and the prophets (Romans 3: 21) and therefore it is a confirmation of the Old Testament.

... Christ is the goal of the law, in that the justification which He achieves for us is no mere amnesty or indulgence, no caprice or sentimentality on the part of God, but acquittal 'in God's severe and true judgment which searches the hearts and is no respecter of persons.'<sup>86</sup>

Christ's sacrifice on our behalf in answer to the law's righteous demands indicates the extent to which God went for man's salvation. Our justification through Christ was achieved without overlooking God's righteousness and holiness nor the extent of man's estrangement. It is complete pardon which involves

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>86</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 52.



living a new life for man. In this way God remains faithful to Himself while taking His creature and his sin seriously. (Romans 3: 3, 4).

Since the law is integral to the religious observances of Israel it is also indicative of the manner in which this salvation of man must be achieved. It is in the light of the Old Testament sacrifices that Jesus' death on the Cross is to be understood. Christ is the Passover sacrifice (I Cor. 5: 7ff.); the New Covenant is established by the sacrifice of His blood (I Cor. 11: 25) and the means of expiating our sin is by his sacrificial death. (Romans 3: 25) All these phrases are to be understood in terms of Christ's obedience unto the death of the Cross, by which men are restored to their Creator.

We have noted how Christ is the goal of the Law, the fulfillment of the law, but how is He the One who ends the Law? Cranfield suggests that, since the Greeks had no special word for legalism as English does, when Paul disparages the law or talks of its abolition he means the law as a way of self-justification.

In view of this, we should, I think, be ready to reckon with the possibility that sometimes, when he appears to be disparaging the law, what he really has in mind may not be the law itself but the misunderstanding and the misuse of it for which we have a convenient term.<sup>87</sup>

Certainly Paul felt that in Christ the law as a way of salvation had been abolished. We are left in no doubt that we cannot attain righteousness by the works of the law but must receive it as a gift from God through Christ. Thus in Christ the law, as man's way of achieving salvation, receives a shattering blow.

Romans 6 and 7: 1-6 express Paul's belief that in Christ the Christian had died to the condemnation, the curse and the bondage of the law. Man no

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

longer dwells under the law of sin and death but is liberated by the death and resurrection of Christ. No longer is the law our master but Jesus Christ has assumed the central authority in our lives and this means true freedom. In the parable of the husband and wife relationship Paul indicates how the death of the husband frees the woman from the marriage-law so that she may marry another without committing adultery. The law applies to the living, i.e. the Mosaic order of law which is characterized by bondage, but since the Christian has died with Christ through his baptism he shares in His victory over sin and death and is freed from the law.

The meaning is that Christians have through Christ's death died to, and been discharged from the law's condemnation and also all legalistic misunderstanding and misuse of the law - or, to put it otherwise, they have died to, and been discharged from, the law in so far as it condemns them and the law in <sup>88</sup>so far as, by men's perversion of it, it has become a bondage.

Romans 8: 1f. continues the thought that there is no condemnation in Jesus Christ but now we dwell under the 'life-giving law of the Spirit' which is true freedom.<sup>89</sup>

Now let us turn to Gal. 3: 15-25 which indicates the temporary function of the law. Cranfield holds that Paul is here concerned with the law in the 'narrow sense'.

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>89</sup>We have noted how the law reveals the righteousness of God but at the same time, although the law embodies this righteousness, the two are not identical or synonymous. By this very fact, the Mosaic law, of necessity, must expose man's sin as it reveals the righteousness of God. Man on the other hand does not accept this exposure but uses the Mosaic order of law in an attempt to gain his own salvation. In so doing he severs the Mosaic law from its divine basis. At this point the Mosaic order of law is characterized as bondage since it serves to lead man deeper into his sin of self-assertion over against God, which finally results in death. But since the Mosaic law has to do with God's righteousness, man experiences this righteousness as wrath and understands it only as commands and prohibitions. It is from these interrelated aspects of man's situation under the law that he must be freed. Both these aspects of the law are also indicated in Paul's understanding of the temporary role of the Mosaic law.

This 'bare law' (nuda lex) understood 'in a narrow sense' (praecise) is not the law in the fulness and wholeness of its true character, but the law as seen apart from Christ. It is the law-apart-from-Christ, this law that is less than its true self, which is temporary.<sup>90</sup>

This is the law in its legalistic conception by which men attempt to attain their own salvation; the Mosaic law in the restricted sense by which men hope to achieve their own salvation. But this also includes the dominion of the law which it has in the form of a curse over men. The curse here is God's judgment on man's sin which is revealed and enhanced by the law. From both these aspects, i.e. the law's curse and the law of sin, man must be freed by Christ. Cranfield sums up the section: "We conclude that in Gal. 4: 3 and 9 Paul is referring not to the law itself, but to the legalistic misunderstanding and misuse of it".<sup>91</sup> Although we can agree with this as far as Cranfield goes we must be careful to broaden the emphasis to include the Mosaic law itself as the task-master under which men labour. Men live under its curse and condemnation and this is characterized by Paul as slavery. In Christ we are redeemed from this curse. (Gal. 3: 13) Thus the law fulfills a temporary duty of condemning man and keeping him in this state until the coming of Christ who is his release. (Gal. 3: 24f) "Das Gesetz hat demnach eine Zeitliche, durch Gott bestellte Aufgabe zu erfüllen".<sup>92</sup> In this context man, as we have noted, understands the law only as prohibitions and commands. He is bound in a tutelage and also bound to observe certain rules, the law. The law in this situation only has power to bind; it has no power to save.

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>92</sup>Op. Cit., P. G. Verweij, p. 54.

Cranfield further contends that those who identify the στοιχεῖα (elemental spirits) of Gal. 4: 3, 9 with the angels of 3: 19 disparage not just the legalistic view of the law but the law itself.<sup>93</sup> Although I do not feel that Cranfield goes far enough I also think that neither Caird nor Reicke

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<sup>93</sup>B. Reicke contends that ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (Gal. 4: 3) is synonymous with ὑπὸ νόμον (v. 4 & 5 (p. 259f.)) The Galatian Christians were eager to follow the Jewish law and Paul is here accusing them of a desire to return to the 'elemental spirits'. "To come in any way under the Torah is to submit to the bondage of those very powers from which Christianity had set them free." (G. B. Caird, Op. Cit., p. 48) Paul points out like a child under a trustee we were slaves to the 'elemental spirits' of the universe but now Christ has freed us from this bondage, i.e. the bondage of the law. The text indicates the equation of the 'elemental spirits' of the universe and the law. Paul also indicates in Gal. 4: 2 that the minor is under the guardians and trustees until freed by his father. This reminds us of the law as our custodian in 3:24f. Although we may accept the identification of the στοιχεῖα and the law in that both bring man into bondage we need not maintain the identification of the στοιχεῖα with the angels of Gal. 3: 19. Reicke's argument at this point rests on the premise that 'elemental spirits' is a personal form rather than a principle and therefore can be equated with the angels. But this, it seems to me, is a rather weak argument. I do not think that we must accept the necessity of the identification on this basis. Here Paul is talking of two separate entities, the angels who are the agents involved in giving the Law, and the Law itself, Since man is under the Law he is therefore under the power of the angels.

Caird suggests that "either Paul regarded the law itself as one of the powers, or behind the law he perceived the existence of angelic beings who were responsible for the law's enforcement." (Ibid., p. 44) In reference to Caird's first suggestion, although Paul understood the Law to be demonic in the light of man's use of the Law through sin, this is not to infer that the Law in itself had become one of these powers as if it had an independent existence. Its demonic character is achieved through man's use of the Law. Secondly, Caird points out that the Jews conceived of pagan gods as angels who had been given the power of enforcement of the law but who had been corrupted by man's idolatrous worship. (p. 48f) These angels were analogous to the angels of mediation who are the guardians of a temporary revelation; a revelation that the Jews elevated to an absolute reality. Although we can accept the fact of the law's demonic character in the light of man's misuse of the law, in this instance it is not necessary to conclude that the angels of mediation share in this elevation to absolute status. The demonic is that which properly used was for the glory of God but which was perverted by evil to accomplish its own ends. It is used against God and in this case the law is used by men against God to achieve their own salvation. Thus we need not assume the identification of the angels of mediation and those fallen ones who are the objects of pagan worship nor that they were responsible for the law's enforcement. Linguistic and other arguments do not force us to assume the identification of these angels with the 'elemental spirits' although the law itself may be numbered with these powers of the universe which have brought men into bondage. When we see the law in this light then its demonic character and its close connection with man's sin becomes more evident.

have proven conclusively that this identification is necessary. Paul felt that the Mosaic law which was characterized by bondage was intended to have a limited dominion and was a necessary corollary of God's righteousness and man's sin. By speaking of the angels as mediators Paul wishes to emphasize the inferiority of the law as a way of salvation over against the Jews who saw the presence of the angels as a sign of its importance.

Paulus will also sagen, dass hier nicht Gott selbst gekommen ist, sondern durch Mose und durch Engel gehandelt hat. Er selbst ist erst wirklich da, wenn er nicht im Gesetz, sondern im Sohn kommt, zur Erfüllung der Verheissung.<sup>94</sup>

"The law belonged strictly to the interim period between the time when it was given and the coming of the seed. (*ἄχρις ἵν' ἔλθῃ τὸ σπέρμα* , Gal. iii.19)"<sup>95</sup> Since the promise also lapses as soon as it is fulfilled and is therefore an interim arrangement we can see that Paul does not mean to disparage the law simply because it is an interim measure. It too served a purpose by keeping men in a tutelage until Christ should come.

When the seed comes, both promise and law cease, in their old meaning. Law and promise, however, terminate in different ways, and the arrival of the seed who was to be both agent and recipient of the promise was the signal for the abrogation of the law.<sup>96</sup>

The law was given to a people, not to an individual as the promise was given to Abraham; it was also given through angels and not directly by God Himself. This indicates the law's inferiority to the promise. Thus Paul uses the conception of the angels as mediators of the law to indicate its inferiority to the promise because it could never be a way of salvation whereas the fulfilled promise in Christ was the only way.

We have noted how Paul can hold that the law is holy and just and good in so far as it reflects the righteousness of God and yet at the same time recognize

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<sup>94</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 57.

<sup>95</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 60.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.



the close connection of the Mosaic order of law to sin and death. It is the latter aspect with which we are particularly concerned in this section of Galatians. The law in the former sense finds its fulfillment, its goal and perfect expression in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God revealed to us men. The law in the latter sense, with which Paul is concerned here, is abolished in and by Christ. Thus Paul may understand the law as the great privilege of Israel since it expresses the righteousness of God and foreshadows Christ Himself, while at the same time he despairs of the law as a way of salvation and points to the abolition of its temporary tutelage and bondage by Christ. Men could not attain righteousness by means of obedience to the law's precepts although they were wooed into thinking they could by sin. In this manner the law's true purpose was reversed; it resulted in death rather than life. In other words men severed the law from its divine source and established it as a religion over against God. It becomes demonic and thus can be associated with the 'elemental spirits' of this present age. The mediation of the law through angels indicates the inferiority of the law in this sense as a way of salvation as well as its temporary function as our custodian until Christ comes.

Thus Paul viewed the Mosaic order of law as a bondage from which men must be freed. But on the other hand, the fact that it was mediated by angels does not mean that it does not originate in God.<sup>97</sup> (Gal. 3: 20)

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<sup>97</sup>It is interesting to note that Schoeps is critical of Paul at this point when he suggests that in order to support his claim that the law was provisional he does not criticize the content of the law but offers a theory in which angels were present at the time of the giving of the law to Moses. As far as he is concerned Paul has derived his proof from folklore and given it an importance which is all out of proportion to its source. He concludes that: "But in this curious passage, Gal. 3: 19, Paul goes a step farther and seriously declares that no one other than Moses functioned as the mediatory (*μεσότης*) of the angels. "In the last analysis this means that the law springs not from God but from the angels." (H. J. Schoeps, Op. Cit., pp. 182-183). But in the light of what we have said concerning Paul's understanding of the Law as holy, as revealing the righteousness of God we cannot

Therefore this passage points to the law as a temporary bondage but even here it has a part in God's plan of salvation. It kept men in prison until Christ should come to free them. It judged man and revealed his sin and, in fact, it even enhanced his sin. Subsequently we shall note the place of the necessity of judgment in God's work of salvation: this is the temporary function that the Mosaic order of the law fulfills. In the law's identification with the 'elemental spirits' it also indicates its misuse as a way of righteousness. Christ is the only One who can free man from the bondage of the law, i.e. its curse as well as its misuse.

The law as bondage has a temporary role in history since it was to be fulfilled and abolished in Jesus Christ. This also entails man's misuse of the law as a way of salvation.<sup>98</sup> It is the Mosaic order of law which has this

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conclude from this text that the ultimate source of the Law was not God. The meaning of the presence of angels was to indicate that the Law's subsequent role in the plan of salvation, i.e. as a custodian until Christ comes, is temporary but Paul certainly did not deny the law's origins in God. Even at this point he saw that the law served the ultimate purpose of God. Again Paul recognized this not from the proof of the presence of angels but because of his experience of Jesus Christ. The Jews of Paul's day used this doctrine of the presence of the angels at the giving of the law as an indication of its glory but Paul realized in Christ that this indicated its provisional role.

<sup>98</sup>Both Schoeps and Klausner are critical of Paul's understanding of Christ as the end of the law. We have already noted that both fail to see the distinction that Paul makes between the law as the expression of the righteous will of God and the law which holds men in bondage and by its perversion results in sin and death. They recognize that Paul conceived of Jesus Christ as the end of the law but cannot accept this fact, simply, because, they lack the experience of the Risen Christ and regard His resurrection as superstition. But no Jew could accept the annulment of the law since they thought that every letter contained divine wisdom.

So how could those believing in all these things accept the annulment of the Torah because of a strange superstition which claimed that the Torah, the source of life and light, brought about sin and death?  
(Joseph Klausner, *Op. Cit.*, p. 503)

Yet it is in the light of Christ's resurrection that Paul sought to re-interpret the Old Testament in a new and revealing way. Klausner criticizes Paul, claiming that Jesus Himself maintained that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. (p. 503f.) Paul on the other hand taught that the law was abolished. Klausner finds it difficult to see how the persecutor of the Church set aside the law and claimed that circumcision was nothing. He further claims that Paul rejected the law to gain Gentile converts. "For him, the end that was good in his eyes justified the means, if they were not too bad." (Ibid., p. 506) The law was an expression of Jewish nationalism and helped to maintain the Jews' distinctiveness from the surrounding pagan environment. It was only as this interpretation and misuse of the law was abolished that salvation could be offered to the Gentiles. Paul achieves this by claiming that salvation is offered to all men through faith in Jesus Christ. But Paul does not abolish the law as a way of salvation so as to appeal to the Gentiles but rather because he realized from his experience of Christ that salvation could not be achieved by works but only through faith. Thus all men are included both in sin and in grace. Not only this, but as we shall note later, although Paul considered the Mosaic law to be abolished in Christ there was also a sense in which it was established. Repeatedly we have noted the prime reason for this line of demarcation between Judaism and Paul. Klausner concludes by commenting that:

The doctrine of the abolition of the Torah which Paul was forced to preach in order to win many Gentiles to faith in the Jewish Messiah and in order to prevent the new religion from being confined to the small circle of Nazarene Jews of the type of James the brother of Jesus - this doctrine carried with it the danger that the new believers from among the Gentiles would, along with their nullification of the ceremonial laws, also nullify the ethical laws. (Ibid., p. 549)

Certainly this was a danger with which Paul had to contend but now Paul lived under the freedom of the law of the Spirit rather than the bondage of the law of sin and death. Paul was no antinomian but rather continually exhorted his converts to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to the brothers of Christ. He conceived of himself as being under the law of Christ and not lawless as some would accuse him.

Schoeps sees Paul's doctrine of justification by faith as a result of his emphasis on a partial aspect of the law isolated from the law as a whole, i.e. from its saving significance. (p. 196f.) The law had ceased to be a living possession for him but rather he saw it from an essentially legalistic point of view. Again we may point to Paul's understanding of Christ, as the goal and fulfiller of the law and thus establishing it. This shows that the law continued to be important for Paul. It was not a matter of indifference for him nor did he regard it purely from a legalistic point of view. Over against Schoeps' understanding of Paul's rejection of the law as a way of salvation (p. 175f.) we see that Paul recognized the inadequacy of the law not from his despair at being unable to fulfill the law but rather from his experience of Christ. This led him to see clearly that he could in no wise gain salvation by means of the law since while he was without Christ he was a slave to sin and death and therefore not free to obey the law's basic demand for faith. Thus Paul saw that Abraham was justified by faith and not works as the Talmud held.

transitory role and not the righteousness of God therein revealed. But it must also be clear that the Mosaic law can have this role of condemnation and can only provide the opportunity for man to misuse it because it is concerned with the righteousness of God. That man does come under God's condemnation and that he does misuse the law is because of his sin and not the fault of the law. In II Cor. 3 we have the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, the former written on stone and the latter on flesh. The discussion also includes the contrast between the letter of the law which is death, and the Spirit which is life.

The transient glory of the law has been superseded by a greater glory, the glory of Christ (the ὑπερβάλλουσα δόξα of II Cor. iii.10), and the old covenant (Verse 14) by the new. The new covenant is based, not upon a written law, but upon the work of the Spirit; its issue is not condemnation and death, but justification and life.<sup>99</sup>

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Judaism also knows redemption from death - but only by the Torah: For when the serpent came upon Eve he injected lust into her: as for the Israelites who stood at Mount Sinai (i.e., who received the Torah), their lustfulness departed; as for the idolatrous nations of the world (who did not receive the Torah), their lustfulness did not depart. (Shabb, 145b and 146a; Yebamoth 103b; Abodah Zarah 22b) (J. Klausner, Op. Cit., p. 518)

This is further qualified by the fact that from Paul's point of view the Jew held faith as a work but Paul understood it as a gift of God. "The centre of gravity in Paul's argument is that righteousness can be attained apart from the law and as a pure gift of grace; just as it was promised to Abraham." (H. J. Schoeps, Op. Cit., p. 201) Thus although both Klausner and Schoeps recognize in a negative manner something of the importance of Christ in Paul's thinking on the law they cannot accept the radical reassessment that was then necessary. Schoeps calls it a 'messianic dogmatism' (p. 201) and Klausner a 'superstition'. (p. 503) Both maintain that the new interpretations of the law which Paul advocates are completely unrabbinical and a travesty of the Old Testament understanding of God's redemptive activity. Paul on the other hand realized from his experience of Christ that it was Judaism that had misunderstood God's intention from the beginning.

<sup>99</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 52.



Thus Paul provides for us the two opposites; the Old Covenant given through Moses which was written letter by letter on stone and which is abolished, and the New Covenant written on the heart and established by the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ. The former is transitory while the latter is made perfect in Christ. Moses administered the former which resulted in condemnation and death while those who live in the Christian dispensation are ministers of the law of the Spirit which is life. "If Moses' service was glorious, Paul's service which was so much higher (Spirit instead of letter, stability instead of destruction, justification instead of condemnation) will attain much greater glory."<sup>100</sup> Thus the law, as a way of salvation and as our custodian, ceases when Christ fulfills the righteousness it demands. Moses lived in the time of expectation but now after Christ all men exist in the time of consummation and fulfillment. But in so far as the Mosaic law revealed the righteousness of God it was glorious indeed but now not only does Jesus Christ reveal this righteousness but in Him man is able to attain this gift by faith. Even with this unambiguous revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ a veil still remains over the minds of the Jews so that they do not recognize this manifestation of God.

The law, which should have revealed God to his people, has in fact hidden him from them, and has hidden him so effectively that they were unable to recognize the greater manifestation of his glory in Jesus Christ.<sup>101</sup>

It must be emphasized that the inability of the Jews to recognize God's righteousness in the law is not the fault of the law but themselves.

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<sup>100</sup>Johannes Munck, Op. Cit., p. 58.

<sup>101</sup>G. B. Caird, Op. Cit., p. 52.





But the veil that obscures the true meaning of the law is now described as lying not upon the face of Moses, but upon the heart of his (Jewish) hearers (Verse 15); that is, the fault, the failure of the mission, the obscurity or veiledness, lies not with the law itself - which is good; c.f. Rom. vii. 12, 14 - but in the circumstances of a fallen race, dominated by sin.<sup>102</sup>

What was revealed in the Mosaic law, i.e. the righteousness of God, has now been fulfilled and visibly expressed in the life of Christ. Christians still live under the righteousness of God but now it is expressed in a new way as the law of Christ. Therefore there is a sense in which the New Covenant is not new but maintains a continuity with the Old, a continuity of expectation and fulfillment. But we shall leave this now and return to it in Chapter III.

Throughout the body of this chapter I have attempted to draw the distinction between the law as an expression of God's righteousness whose purpose is life and the law as it interacts with man in the flesh which results in death. This is why Paul appealed to the Old Testament for the confirmation of his teaching. The law in this wider sense, that is the revelation of God's righteousness, was revealed in the Old Testament and attested to by the Mosaic law and the prophets. We have noted how Jesus Christ fulfils and establishes the former, since He is the righteousness of God in human flesh, and abolishes the latter as a way of salvation as well as the condemnation it announces. As men participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ through baptism and repentance they also come to achieve the purpose of the law, i.e. they become righteous in the eyes of God. "When we are "in Christ" the law's positive purpose, its  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\mu\alpha$  is fulfilled in us, not by our keeping of the law but through Christ, and by the fact that we "are in Him".<sup>103</sup> In this manner God's righteousness is given to us by faith and as such we

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<sup>102</sup> C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 53.

<sup>103</sup> Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 319.

uphold the law. (Romans 3: 31) This does not mean that we become ethically righteous but rather we are established in a right relationship with God by virtue of which we become sanctified. Thus there is no question of annulling the law but establishing it through faith, nor is there any thought of living a lawless life as a Christian for now we serve the law of Christ.

CHAPTER II

LAW AND THE GENTILES

I INTRODUCTION

Our primary concern until now has been with the Mosaic law, which embodied for the nation of Israel the will of God.

The Biblical conception of the Law of God, then, is primarily that of a 'special revelation', by virtue of which the knowledge of God and of His will is given to a particular community while the rest of mankind remains in ignorance.<sup>104</sup>

We have noted Israel's failure to understand this law aright for they used it for their own purposes to achieve their own salvation. But we have also suggested that the 'law of God' proper cannot be equated with the law of Moses, although it is embodied in it, but that it has a much wider context. This can be seen by the fact that although the New Testament indicates a sharp distinction between the Old and New Covenants, the Old and New Torah, i.e. the Mosaic law and the law of Christ, we have noted that it is with the one law of God that we are concerned and it is the law of God which gives continuity between these orders of law. The 'History of Religion's school' has pointed out affinities between the ethics of this special revelation and the other ethical systems of our world. Although at their centre they differ radically, since of all the ethics Biblical ethics only makes sense when related to the Scripture's understanding of God, there are enough similarities to suggest the existence of some sort of knowledge of God outside of Israel.

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<sup>104</sup>C. H. Dodd, "Natural Law in the New Testament", New Testament Studies, (Manchester: University Press, 1953), p. 131.

"In some sense and in some degree there appears to be knowledge of God which is not directly derived from His covenant with Israel"<sup>105</sup> This knowledge is not separate or essentially different from the revealed knowledge as if its source was another god nor is it that God had another side of His nature which He showed only to the Gentiles. Rather it is an expression of the law of God expressed in the Torah but at a different level. It is this law of God in its wider sense to which we shall now turn our attention to consider its relation to the Gentiles and the form it assumes in this context.

## II PAUL AND THE STOICS

It has been suggested that Paul was greatly influenced by Stoic conceptions of natural law in his understanding of the law and the Gentiles. Paul, although a Jew by birth and education, lived in a Greek world, wrote Greek and thought himself called to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. Quite naturally he would use phrases and modes of expression which were familiar and intelligible to his hearers. Since Stoicism was offered in the market place by its orators Paul would not only be familiar with its concepts but would adapt some of its phrases to express his message. Dodd remarks that:

in the New Testament, the 'forms' in which the ethical teaching is conveyed are often demonstrably based upon models provided by Stoicism, and their 'contents' often show so close a similarity to Stoic teaching that it seems artificial to claim that they have no relation to one another.<sup>106</sup>

Depending on this observation, i.e. that some of the moral laws of Judaism appear in a philosophy outside the Mosaic law, Dodd further suggests that we have here an example of elements of the revealed law existing outside of the historical revelation to Israel. But although we have an adaptation of the listener's phraseology, that does not overshadow the specific Jewish-Christian content of Paul's message. Paul was quite free to choose where he would use

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., pp. 131-132.

the phrases and concepts which would best serve his missionary endeavour. He felt no compunction about using phrases and verses out of context even from the Old Testament and this could be said much more of his use of Stoic teaching. By the time of Paul, Stoic phrases were the stock in trade of itinerant preachers everywhere and this no doubt explains the approach to the ideas of Stoicism. Therefore, although Paul uses Stoic phrases, he adapted them to suit his purpose and gave them a Christian content in the process. He baptized them, as it were, into Christian usage. Thus, although similarities between Paul and the Stoics exist as evidenced by some of their common moral attitudes, they are not sufficient to force us to conclude that Stoicism had a very great or direct influence on him in any of his fundamental purposes or motives.

In any case the theories of dependence must fall to the ground before the fact that Stoicism itself, for all its nobility and earnestness, was in certain fundamental and essential aspects the direct antithesis of the Gospel which Paul was charged to preach.<sup>107</sup>

Stoicism held that man's guiding principle in the world was his reason since it was a portion of the Divine Logos. It was to this reason that man looked to discover knowledge of God. Indeed the very structure of man himself already bore the seeds of this knowledge, which was thus gained by a form of self-examination. The Stoics called upon man to cultivate his reasoning powers since they were an expression of his divinity. The very existence of God may be postulated from observing nature and man since they are but the manifestations of the Rational Principle which lies behind all things.

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<sup>107</sup>J. S. Stewart, Op. Cit., p. 60



The orderly working of Nature was its (the fiery ether) operation: organic beings grew according to regular types, because the Divine Reason was in them as a *logos spermikos*, a formula of life developing from a germ. Even upon earth some of the divine fire retained its pure essence - the reasonable souls, each one a particle of fiery ether, which dwelt in the hearts of men.<sup>108</sup>

Thus in Stoicism man begins with himself and nature to ascertain divinity whereas for Paul God is the beginning and source of His self-revelation. A personal relationship between man and God is entirely lacking in Stoicism since it would essentially be nothing more than communion with oneself. In the end Stoicism conceived of men, the world and God as essentially one. Thus, although Paul may have used some of the Stoic phraseology and although the ethical similarities between Paul and the Stoics are evidence of some sort of knowledge of God outside of the special revelation to Israel, we need not conclude any sort of wholesale adoption by Paul of Stoic concepts. His primary source of influence is to be found in his own Judaic background. In the subsequent discussion of natural revelation and natural law we shall see more clearly the difference between Stoic conceptions of the knowledge of God and Paul's understanding in this area.

### III THE INFLUENCE OF PAUL'S JUDAIC BACKGROUND

If we are going to gain a correct understanding of Paul on natural revelation and natural law we must turn, not to Stoicism as if it were the directing source of his thought in this regard, but to his own Judaic background. Early in Israel's history the relationship between the Israelite and the *gêr* (translated by *πρόικος* in the Septuagint, also *ξένος* carries with it the same meaning) i.e. a foreigner living as a resident alien, was of great importance. This foreigner was protected by law and treated with

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<sup>108</sup>Edwyn Bevan, Stoics and Sceptics, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 43.

kindness, but on his part he was expected to obey certain laws. If he was to dwell in Israel's midst he must refrain from worshipping strange gods, (Lev. 17: 7-9), obey certain marriage laws (Lev. 18: 6-28), keep the Sabbath laws (Ex. 10: 20ff.), refrain from blood (Lev. 17: 10ff.), as well as from eating leavened bread during the Passover week (Ex. 12: 18ff.). Subsequently Judaism came to recognize that there were certain laws that were applicable to both Jew and non-Jew alike. These laws were given to man before the special revelation on Mount Sinai.

It was, perhaps, too much to expect the non-Jews to recognize the relevance of all the Torah of Judaism, but on the other hand there were certain elementary ethical precepts which all mankind should instinctively recognize.<sup>109</sup>

These laws finally came to be formulated into what was known as the Noachian commandments.

At first these commandments were known as the Adamic laws but later they were subsumed under the title of Noachian commands. These laws, given in the act of creation, were concerned with the structure of human relations on the natural level. They mirrored the Creator's design for human life. Although the specific content of these Adamic laws was developed later there was a general acceptance by the Rabbis of the idea of their presence at creation. As to the specific content of this code, some Rabbis held that there were six given to Adam but there was no universal agreement.<sup>110</sup> A seventh was understood to have been added later after the flood, and subsequently they became known as the Noachian commandments since they were given to Noah and his posterity.<sup>111</sup> "The coupling of the laws with Noah is an

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<sup>109</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 114.

<sup>110</sup>These six were thought to be; not to worship idols, not to blaspheme the name of God, to establish courts of justice, not to kill, not to commit adultery, and not to rob.

<sup>111</sup>The seventh was not to eat flesh cut from a living animal.

index of their universal validity, since all mankind was said to be descended from Noah's three sons."<sup>112</sup> The content of these laws was seen as concerned with human relations on the natural level which included those with God and nature. It suggests that God made a covenant with all mankind before the one offered through the Mosaic law. (Gen. 9: 8-17) While God offered to man the stability of the order of nature (Gen. 9: 11, 8: 22) He in turn lays upon man the obligation of the Noachian commandments. Whether or not Paul was fully aware of the code itself, it appears that he may have been familiar with the underlying concept of these commandments. The exact age of the conception is not clear but Jub. 7: 20ff. indicates that it was already known during the First Century before Christ. Also Hanino ben Gamliel (120 A.D.) speaks of this code. In the light of this Davies comments:

Now, that Paul was familiar with the Noachian commandments cannot be doubted; we can quite definitely trace the conceptions underlying those commandments in his Epistle to the Romans.<sup>113</sup>

We need not agree completely with Davies in this regard since Paul never specifically alludes to the Noachian commandments but surely with his knowledge of both the Stoic and Rabbinic thought of his day he must have been familiar with the idea in one manner or another.

Throughout the Old Testament God was understood as revealing Himself through nature, history and the destinies of nations. In the cult festivals Yahweh was portrayed as the One who upholds the world order by establishing the seasons, who deals with the nations in judgment and mercy, and who acts because He is a living God and not an idol. All this was an expression of His covenant made with the People of Israel.

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<sup>112</sup>Bertil Gärtner, "The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation", trans. Carolyn Hannay King, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis, Vol. XXI, (Almqvist and Wiksells, Uppsala, 1955), p. 78.

<sup>113</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 115.

Yahweh reveals Himself in creation and in His annual re-creation and preservation of all created things, thereby imparting to mankind a knowledge of Himself and His power (Ps. 29, 33: 6ff., 65: 10ff., 19: 3, Isa. 40: 21, 26, Jer. 10: 10ff.)<sup>114</sup>

Throughout their theological understanding in this context the existence of God was assumed, for the Hebrew did not think of reversing the process as if man could argue from these manifestations of divinity to the existence of the deity. No, what was important for him was his response of worship and obedience in the light of God's self-revelation. Nor was the Israelite particularly concerned whether or not the Gentile recognized this revelation of God in creation. "A Universal revelation outside the poles of Israel and the activity of Yahweh simply did not exist for the Old Testament, though it is to be found in the literature of later Judaism."<sup>115</sup>

During the post-exilic period Judaism was forced to reconsider its conception of God. Now God came to be conceived of as Lord, not only over the small geographical area which Israel occupied, but over the entire world. The question of God's relation to the creation had to be expanded to incorporate the whole of creation. The concept of Wisdom played an important part in this development. Job 28, 23-27 conceived of Wisdom as being the ground plan of creation, and God's self-revelation in the occurrence of nature was understood as nothing more than the manifestation of Wisdom or the purpose of God. Here the glory of God was set in creation and not the law. Eventually Wisdom was held to have an objective existence in itself. (Pro. 8: 22)

We may briefly state that in the Old Testament Wisdom is a means of expressing the Divine Immanence in Creation and also the Divine Activity in morality and knowledge, in short in what we may call the Redemptive activity of God: for whoso finds me finds life, ... All who hate me love death.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 86.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>116</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 168.

We see in Job and Ecclesiastes that this concept was made broadly human rather than specifically Israelite. Wisdom had to do with the morality of all men as well as the knowledge of God which this implied. Subsequently Wisdom became identified with the Torah in that it was embodied in the Mosaic law. But this Wisdom was not confined to the Torah only but was operative throughout the world among all mankind. Wisdom in this sense may also be called the law of God which, as we have already noted, was contained in the Mosaic law. Thus we may note in Paul's Judaic background the existence of a conception of natural law which arose primarily from the concept of Wisdom and which may have been nurtured to a small degree by the initial development or of the notion of the Noachian commandments. Both of these were involved in the act of creation and, indeed, built into the very structure of creation itself. In the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Rabbinic literature a conception of nature as a means of the revelation of God's power and wisdom was evident. (Sirach 43, Ep. Jer. 59ff., Wisd. 13; Prayer of Manasses 1ff.) Nature primarily reveals that God is an acting and living God (I Enoch 2ff.) and this was used in the polemics against idolatry. We shall see this being used in Romans 1 in our subsequent discussion in this chapter. "This knowledge of God revealed in nature has universal validity. It is a self-evident truth and calls for no further discussion."<sup>117</sup> This natural revelation also entailed a knowledge of God's will. (Sirach 17: 7ff.) Throughout this understanding the Hebrew always assumed the existence of God and saw His action as characterizing His 'livingness'.

Finally, in Paul's mind, some of the characteristics of the Old Torah and Wisdom came to be descriptive of the redemptive activity of Jesus Christ and the new law of Christ in which Paul was to discover true freedom. Jesus

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<sup>117</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 97.



Christ revealed the purpose of creation and manifested God's redemptive activity in history, not only for men but for the whole of creation as well. Throughout this discussion we must realize that creation as a means of God's self-revelation is a means only and God and creation can in no way be identified in deistic fashion. Davies comments that since nature was patterned after the Torah this "was to declare that Nature and Revelation belong together, that in theological terms there was a continuity not a discontinuity between Nature and Grace."<sup>118</sup> While we would agree with this to a certain extent we must qualify what Davies says for Nature and Grace are also characterized by discontinuity.

We have noted how Wisdom and the idea of the Noachian Commandments were involved in the act of creation. In this manner God gave some direction to the pattern of primary relationships on the natural level. Thus there is the suggestion that the relationship of parent and child, for example, was given some guidance in the act of creation itself. This continuity is further emphasized by what God does in and through creation in His continuous redemptive activity in order to reveal himself to man and although only the man with eyes of faith may recognize God's activity for what it is, nevertheless it still exists. Finally this continuity indicates that this is God's creation, regardless of its fallen state. Just as God does not reject Israel because of their unfaithfulness but will still fulfill His promise to them, so He will not reject His creation although it has rebelled against Him. Thus this continuity between God and His creation is basically a relational matter. There is never any sense in which some part of His being is involved in creation itself. The stamp of God upon creation is the mark of ownership. Thus, although it is a fallen creation, it is still God's world and as such will continue to manifest His ownership. This sign of possession is signified by the moral capacity of man which operates in the area of relations

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<sup>118</sup> W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 174.

on the natural level which he attains from existing as God's creation. Thus we would disagree with the radical disjuncture advocated by Karl Barth.

On the other hand Barth's position does indicate the radical nature of man's sin which involves the whole of creation in a 'falling away' from God. As we shall see in our later discussion of the pertinent passages in Romans, man turns God's revelation in creation into that which is against God and this involves the whole of creation; just as the entire creation will therefore be involved in redemption. (Ro. 8: 18ff.) We have already noted how the Jew took the revelation of God's righteousness in the law and used it against God in much the same manner. In this way the sins of the Gentiles are only imitations of the Jews' rebellion since their revelation of God is not nearly so complete. Thus there is a discontinuity between God and His creation in this sense. God is always transcendent and over against His creation in this sense. Thus we must maintain a balance and a tension between the discontinuity of God and His creation on the one hand and the continuity between God and His redemptive activity in creation on the other. God acts in and through creation, i.e. nature and history, but He certainly is not one with it.

In summary we may note that Paul would gain an understanding of natural revelation both from his own Judaic background and from the Stoic influence of his day. But it must be remembered the Hebrew influence would be paramount for Paul. The Hebrew felt that since it was God's creation, by virtue of the fact that He was its author and thus it belonged to Him, it retained the mark of its Creator. At the same time it was different from God for He is transcendent and Holy and creation is fallen. But even here it continues to be creation God loves. Thus it is ambivalent, i.e. at one and the same time it reveals God's purpose of love and yet is involved in destruction. Nature

is a manifestation of the covenant made with Noah (Gen. 9: 11, 8: 22) but it also brings great tragedy upon man in the way of natural disaster. Man is ambivalent since even his best is tainted with sin. Man always exists as a mixture of good and evil. Thus we must keep a proper balance between the immanence of God and His transcendence at this point. Certainly God has a relational continuity with His creation but there is no way in which something of God Himself is part of creation in the manner that Stoics would understand it. It is by virtue of the fact that it is God's creation that even in its fallen state it retains the capacity to reflect God's righteousness. Therefore the creation may reveal God and yet at the same time be involved in rebellion against Him. In other words, there can be a continuity between God's activity as Redeemer and Creator as expressed in Jesus Christ but a discontinuity between the creation and the Creator. The creation always remains the scene of God's activity but this does not mean that the stage and the actor are in any way one.

#### IV ROMANS I

In Romans 1 and 2 Paul is concerned to state that all men are without excuse before God. Barth maintains that in Romans 1: 19-21 Paul "is speaking of the Gentiles as they are now confronted with the Gospel, whether they know it or not, or whether they like it or not."<sup>119</sup> We would agree with Barth that wrath is integral to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ but we would depart from him when he disclaims any knowledge of God outside of special revelation. According to the Old Testament this knowledge of God did in fact exist. Although Jesus Christ is the unveiled and climactic expression of God's love and true judgment on men, wrath has been revealed continually against men

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<sup>119</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 27.

from the beginning since it is a necessary aspect of the righteousness of God, i.e. the law of God, which is recognized in the laws of creation and the Mosaic law. Thus, there is a sense in which men have always been subject to God's wrath as an aspect of His activity among them which was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God. Murray comments that:

There is a contrast instituted between "the righteousness of God is revealed" (vs. 17) and "that which is known of God" (vs. 19), a contrast as respects both mode of revelation and truth-content. The distinction is that between the manifestation that is the property of all and its corresponding effect, on the one hand, and the special revelation which is saving in its effect, on the other.<sup>120</sup>

Although I would agree partially with Murray, I do not think that he has grasped the basic continuity which exists in all revelation of God. The extent to which He reveals Himself in creation, the law and Jesus Christ, may vary but certainly the 'truth-content' is basically the same, i.e. it is with God's righteousness that we are always concerned. There may be a distinction in the mode of salvation and the extent of revelation but not in its content. We must also note a contrast between the limited purpose of the revelation given to all men through creation which has essentially a negative result, in that all men are made responsible for their rejection of God, and the special revelation which contains the promise and thus the Gospel. There is no possibility of men coming to a true knowledge of salvation through the former manifestation of God's righteousness whereas there is a distinct possibility of this in the case of the latter revelation as signified by those Old Testament saints, i.e. the remnant, who recognized the promise in the law and the prophets and thus accepted God's grace as grace. This special revelation includes Jesus Christ who is now the only way of salvation and who thus supersedes all others. Therefore, although the means of revealing this one righteousness of

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<sup>120</sup>J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 38.

God and the extent to which it is manifest may vary, the basic content does not. The link-pin of all these expressions of revelation, i.e. the righteousness of God, is Jesus Christ Himself.

Normally when we approach Romans 1: 19-21ff. we are concerned to discover whether or not Paul held a doctrine of natural revelation as we understand it. In other words, we approach it with preconceived notions of what we are going to find. But let us attempt to understand what the text says to us without making it conform to our prejudices or to a system of theology which we have constructed previously. We have already noted that the Hebrew conceived of God as revealing Himself through creation but whether all men ascertained this knowledge was another question. "In so far as he (Paul) touches the question of a natural knowledge of God, he does not do so with the positive intent of declaring that natural man is possessed of the ability to come to a knowledge of God."<sup>121</sup> In fact I Cor. 2: 14 clearly states that natural man is incapable of obtaining true knowledge of God but this does not mean that God does not reveal Himself in creation. Man, on the other hand receives what God has granted him and inevitably turns it into a lie. If we translate  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\ \epsilon\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \lambda\upsilon\alpha\pi\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\acute{\eta}\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (so that they are without excuse) as a final clause this could suggest that God has made Himself known with the intention that men would have no excuse before God's condemnation. This expresses purpose, not merely result.<sup>122</sup> Thus this knowledge has, in a sense, a negative purpose in that it makes men inexcusable for their conduct. As Gärtner comments: "For Paul, therefore, the natural revelation is in some measure of only negative significance."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 105.

<sup>122</sup>J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 40.

C. K. Barrett, "The Epistle to the Romans", Black's N.T. Commentaries, General Editor: H. Chadwick, (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1957), p. 36.

<sup>123</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 80.



The revelation of God in creation is sufficient to confront men with a responsible choice and in so doing it also reveals the malice of their choice.

It was not in order to be able to accuse them that God enlightened them with true knowledge, but in order to prevent them from seeking vain excuses and to convince them that they are without excuse.<sup>124</sup>

In the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ the Gentiles, without the law, come to realize and accept the fact that they too are without excuse. But this occurs only as they are confronted by God's righteousness in Jesus Christ. Before this they refuse not only to recognize God as Creator but to accept the responsibility for this rejection. It is only in the light of God's revelation in Christ that men are able to ascertain and accept God's righteous judgment on their lives. In this context alone the final purpose of God's revelation in creation is clearly seen since making men without excuse places them in a position in which they must either accept God's salvation or perish. If we keep this purpose in mind and see the passage in context we need not approach Paul in 'either-or' categories, i.e. either he believed in natural revelation and therefore natural theology or he did not. It seems to me that Barth makes this mistake and therefore rejects any idea which even hints at natural revelation fearing that it might mean that man could come to God on his own by some other way than through Jesus Christ. Barth comments that man can only know God through His Spirit (I Cor. 2: 6-16) and it would be strange

... if Paul suddenly regarded the Gentiles as being in full participation and possession of a genuine knowledge of God. If Paul really did reckon with such a possibility, why did he not use it to much better advantage?<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 64.

<sup>125</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 27.

In the Areopagus Speech Paul seems to have employed this approach but it must be remembered that the validity of this passage is open to question and that even if he did attempt this approach it was not very successful. (Acts 17: 32-34) We do not find any further use of this approach in the letters of Paul.

But, as we have noted, natural revelation's purpose was only to make the Gentiles blameworthy. It was not intended in any way to be sufficient knowledge for salvation for man inevitably converts this knowledge into what it is not and uses it in his rebellion against God. The difference between the special revelation as embodied in the Mosaic law and natural revelation is clearly seen. The Mosaic law revealed to Israel and indeed the whole world the true nature of man's sin whereas natural revelation only makes men blameworthy. The Mosaic law contains righteousness of God whereas there is no possibility for the Gentile to hear God's word of grace in natural revelation. In other words, although we can accept the fact of natural revelation we need not accept the idea of natural theology. The knowledge of God in creation was turned into a lie and this further discounts any possibility of salvation by this means. Therefore, because Paul feels that God reveals Himself in His creation this does not also mean that he follows the way of natural theology and seeks God behind His revelation in Jesus Christ. Paul, as a Hebrew, would never feel that one could argue from the fact of creation to the existence and nature of God. Rather, the existence of God was the premise of creation.

In Romans I Paul is not concerned to support any theory of natural theology. There is no question of attempting to assess whether or not man can acquire a true knowledge of God for his salvation. Paul is not concerned with this here but only with the fact that all men are without excuse before God. In this case it does not matter whether or not they have the Mosaic law at all. But having said this, we must now inquire into the content of the knowledge that men were supposed to gain from creation and which makes them blameworthy before God. Verse 19 makes it clear that men hold the truth in unrighteousness and therefore they must have had this truth. It

has been revealed to them ever since the beginning of the world. (vs. 20)

It is described as that which is known to God. (vs. 19) "Hence the responsibility of man is securely based, since the revealing action of God

culminates in giving man a true knowledge of Himself; men knew God (  $\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$   $\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$  )."<sup>126</sup> This knowledge is not an unrealized potential but

man has realized it, although in a negative fashion, in that he refused to recognize it for what it was and turned it into the opposite of truth. It is not knowledge just up to the Fall and then never after, nor is it just for the Christian. No, men have perceived it but perverted it; they have turned it into the converse of true knowledge (  $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\iota\alpha$   $\tau\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\upsilon$  ).

M. D. Hooker suggests that although the Gentile may not have known God as Creator Paul was probably thinking of that knowledge which was available to him from the beginning by virtue of God's creative activity. Owen, on the other hand, has dismissed this interpretation suggesting that the Gentiles' knowledge of God pertains to the realization that the invisible God cannot be identified with the visible things of creation. The Gentiles should have known this, but they refused to acknowledge truth and thus the basis of idolatry was laid; they worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.<sup>127</sup>

But Miss Hooker's criticisms of Owen's position are well taken, namely; the weakness of the use of Paul's speech in Acts as reliable evidence of his thought<sup>128</sup> and that when thinking of God's creative activity Paul was not thinking of the Creator. As Miss Hooker suggests: "it must nevertheless be remembered that Paul was a 'Hebrew of Hebrews', and it seems impossible that a Jew could speak in these terms without implying a knowledge of God as Creator."<sup>129</sup>

<sup>126</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>127</sup>Rev. H. P. Owen, "The Scope of Natural Revelation in Rom. i and Acts xvii", *New Testament Studies*, Ed. by Matthew Black, pp. 133-143, Vol. V (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), p. 134.

<sup>128</sup>M. Hooker, "Adam in Romans I", *New Testament Studies*, Ed. by Matthew Black, Vol. VI, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), p. 298.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 299.

The text therefore suggests an embryo knowledge of the Creator in and through His creative activity but due to man's perversity he suppressed the truth and worships the creature rather than the Creator.

"The present tenses of Chap. I clearly indicate a continuous revelation and a persistent suppression of this revelation."<sup>130</sup> Just as God's wrath is perpetually manifested and not reserved for the Day of Judgment ( ἀποκαλύπτεται vs. 18), so God's invisible attributes are clearly seen and continue to be manifested. By Paul's use of the gnomic aorist in 1: 21 (ἐμκταιώθησαν, ἐσκοτίσθη and ἐμωρῶνθησαν ) he indicates man's present disregard of the knowledge of God.<sup>131</sup> If we were to hold that this knowledge was valid just up to the Fall it would be irreconcilable with the continual revelation of verse 21 and the statement that all men have a knowledge of God ( γνόντες τὸν θεὸν ) and his commandments ( οἵτινες τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες ). Thus we see that the tenses of these verbs indicate a perverted knowledge of God in man's degenerate state. Let me emphasize that this perverted knowledge can never achieve the end of natural theology which suggests that this knowledge can lead men to salvation. Its avowed purpose is to make men blameworthy for their rejection of the Creator. The fact that men, even in this degenerate state, retain a knowledge of God's judicial ordinances throws into sharp relief the perversity of their condition, since, although they know the death ( ἀπόστασις ) they deserve, they actually applaud their apostasy and its resultant immorality. Thus verse 21 indicates that even though men knew of God they remain in their apostasy. This knowledge does not keep men from sinning nor does it create in men any desire to repent. Its purpose is to make all men without excuse before the righteous judgment of God.

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<sup>130</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 79.

<sup>131</sup>"The Gnomic aorist is a timeless and almost futuristic aorist, expressing

Barth feels that all that men may know through creation is that God cannot be known; that God is the 'wholly other', the unknowable. "We know that God is He whom we do not know, and that our ignorance is precisely the problem and the source of our knowledge. We know that God is the personality which we are not ..."132 The created order should have made men aware of the fact that God is unknowable. In the light of this realization man should have recognized his creatureliness over against God. This is the extent of Barth's understanding of any sort of revelation of God through creation, i.e. the knowledge of the impossibility of any knowledge of God. It is the failure of man to recognize his creatureliness which gives rise to his religions. But, as we have noted, the knowledge of man is a little more positive than this although this knowledge serves a negative purpose. It may be summarized by saying that man knows God as Creator but he refuses to acknowledge Him as such and subsequently his own creatureliness. It is only in this manner that the responsibility for man's rejection of God can be safeguarded. Paul holds 'that God's invisible attributes, that is to say his everlasting power and deity, have been visible.' (vs. 20) Here Paul is not wishing to prove God's existence by recourse to nature but rather he sees God's creation as expressing His invisible attributes. It is in His creation that God is presented as a living, acting and almighty God to which His works testify. We have already noted how Judaism used the fact of God's livingness as a polemic against idolatry which was the worship of 'no gods'. "Verse 20, with its reference to God's works, functions in its context partly as a forceful argument against idolatry, partly as a pointer of man's responsibility; this, too, follows Jewish tradition."133 By contemplating God's works man should have grasped

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axioms which avail for all time". (Nigel Turner, "Syntax," Grammar of New Testament Greek, ed. J. H. Moulton, Vol. III, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 73.

132K. Barth, The Epistle of Romans, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) pp. 45-46.

133Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 137.



enough not to make the error of confusing the creation with the Creator. Thus men have rejected this real and valid knowledge offered to them by refusing to acknowledge God as God. They have distorted their knowledge by confusing the perishable with the imperishable, by making the invisible visible or by identifying Him with the things He has created. "Instead of recognizing God as Creator and Father, men's slavish fear has incited them to invent "religion", "human religion"."<sup>134</sup>

Barth points out that human religion is nothing more than this refusal to acknowledge God as Creator in confusing Him with the things of creation.

Human religion, as radically distinguished from belief in God's revelation, always originates and consists in this confusion: in the mistaken confidence in which man wants to decide for himself who and what God is, which can only produce this confusion, i.e. idolatry.<sup>135</sup>

The result of this perversion is seen in the tragic consequences and wreck of man's life. Man's reason is cast down and shares in the general depravity of his nature. (vs. 21) But man's error is not simply an intellectual one but a religious one in that he refuses to give God the worship that is His right. The relationship between God and man is affected and since this is basic to all relationships we find the pollution spreading to other spheres of man's existence. The breakdown of the primary relationship with God affects man's very grounds for existence and brings into question the whole of his life. It is in this manner that man deals with the true knowledge of God revealed to him from the creation. He turns it into a human religion.

Religions would not exist, had God not revealed Himself; revelation explains the existence and the quality of religions; but the latter are the fruits of the rejection and inversion of revelation; they seek to know God who cannot be known except in the movement by which He makes Himself known; they aim at attaining by means of their technique a God who is pure and gracious self-giving. Here lies the source of both their truth and their error.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 65.

<sup>135</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 29.

<sup>136</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 68.

Thus the presence of religions is a negative sign of God's revelation in His works. All human religion is at bottom a search for God who is not known to man other than through His own self-revelation but man refuses to accept this manifestation of God. When men attempt to name Him the result is an idol. Men have read the natural truth given them in nature apart from its divine source and thus, like the Mosaic law, it becomes a demonic force which men use to escape from God. In such a way the heathen religions do not speak of a natural theology or natural revelation but of the corruption of man: not God's truth but man's falsehood. Human religions are in no way a preparation for a higher truth but the opposite of truth; a lie. Natural revelation has the function of making men without excuse and therefore under the wrath of God.

All the allusions in these verses are to be regarded as an illustration, admittedly terrible - but no more than an illustration - of the fundamental thesis that the Gentiles are irreverent and insubordinate, and subject to God's wrath because they suppress the truth, because they exchange it for a lie, because they permit themselves and achieve that confusion between the Creator and the creature.<sup>137</sup>

By the way of summary we must note that God's natural revelation is for the purpose of making men blameworthy. Paul is not concerned to provide us with some sort of natural theology nor a point of contact with the heathen in Christian missions since their religions are the opposite of the truth of God. The rejection of God's truth in creation is man's responsibility alone while it is God who determines the sanctions and who alone can give man life. Thus Paul maintains "that the Gentiles though outside the scope of the special revelation to Israel, are able to know God, whose invisible attributes are discerned by ratiocination (νόησις) from His works in creation."<sup>138</sup> It is the same God and His righteousness with which we have to do both in this natural revelation and in Jesus Christ. However "this general revelation is implicit, while the special revelation is couched in explicit terms."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 30.

<sup>138</sup>C. H. Dodd, New Testament Studies, Op. Cit., p. 140.

<sup>139</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 55.

Just as man must infer from creation that God is the Creator, so we must also infer a concept of natural revelation from Paul at this juncture. Paul is primarily concerned to make it plain that all men are without excuse before God and he is not concerned to develop this thesis any further. In other words, Paul was probably not concerned with the scope of man's knowledge of God through creation. But nevertheless, since he did feel that man was responsible for his rejection of God it is legitimate to infer that he must have understood man to have had some sort of knowledge of God as Creator to reject and pervert. This, it seems to me, is the only way that we may safeguard man's responsibility for his sin as well as reject the accusation that God's judgment in this context is irresponsible and unjust.

He does not expressly state it in Rom i, but he also implies in that chapter that God's moral demands are apparent to all men in their natural state, man's natural recognition of his Creator would have naturally led to his recognition of that Creator's moral laws, that is Paul's implicit logic; ... <sup>140</sup>

It is to be noted that this is an implicit revelation rather than an explicit one but since man is part of the creative act of God, his being would also reflect the Maker's purposes as creation itself has. These moral laws which Davies refers to are not like the prescribed Mosaic laws but rather signify the Gentile's capacity to make moral judgments, i.e. to distinguish between right and wrong in certain areas which have to do with relationships on the natural level. Indeed the term 'moral law' which Davies uses presents a difficulty for it immediately brings to mind some norm by which man may measure his behaviour. But this is not the sense in which Paul refers to the work of the law written in the hearts of the Gentiles. Rather it indicates that capacity for moral judgment which is involved in the very structure of man's being which arises from the fact that man is God's creature, even in his state

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<sup>140</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 115.

of degradation.<sup>141</sup> This leads us into our next section in which we shall discuss primarily Romans 2: 14-15.

V ROMANS 2

At this point we must answer the question, is Paul concerned with the Jews or the Gentiles in Chapter 2: 1ff.? Gärtner suggests that Paul confines himself to the term 'man' from 1: 18 to 2: 14 and then makes a distinction between the Jew and the Gentile.

This means that up to 2: 14, Paul has in mind a universal revelation, touching both Jew and Gentile. When he comes to the law, he differentiates between the two, since the Gentiles did not have the Mosaic Law.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Although we have established the presence of a conception of a moral understanding among the Gentiles on the basis of the concept of Wisdom and the initial development of the Noachian commandments in Paul's Judaic background, I do not think that we must agree completely with the position that Davies assumes. Certainly the text in Romans 2: 14-15 does not allow us to assume that Paul understood that the Gentiles actually had moral laws within, which helped to determine behaviour as the Mosaic laws did. The most that we can say is that the Gentiles have that moral capacity which enables them to recognize the universal validity of some aspects of the revealed law. If the Gentiles actually had laws or norms with which to guide their behaviour then Barth's criticism would be valid; that if Paul accepted this notion then why didn't he use it more in his preaching to the Gentiles? (K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 26ff.) Therefore although we would agree with Davies that this conception of Wisdom and the Noachian commandments and its relation to the Gentiles' capacity to make moral judgments are part of Paul's Judaic background, I do not think that our text nor its context allows us to make the assumption that Davies does, i.e. that the Gentiles had these laws or norms in their being which helped them to determine their behaviour. For further discussion of this aspect see page 81.

<sup>142</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 74.

Leenhardt along similar lines holds that since the previous chapter was concerned with the natural man he continues to think of him up to 2: 17.<sup>143</sup> But are these arguments, although valid in themselves, sufficient to dictate a rejection of the opposite view? It has been suggested that, since Paul has just shown how the Gentiles are without excuse, now at 2: 1f, he turns to the Jews in particular even though he does not indicate this explicitly.

But actually it is obvious right from the beginning that Paul means the Jew, who was circumcised, who possesses and reads the books of God's covenant with Abraham, Moses and David, who is the man who has sought and found the realization of his life in the fulfillment of God's Law to the last letter.<sup>144</sup>

Paul says that this judgement which applied to the Gentiles applies in particular to the Jews since they had the revealed law but still did not obey God. The very law, which the Jew felt would save him, which marked the Jew from the Gentile and by which he condemned the Gentile, would be his downfall. Paul is not putting words into the Jew's mouth for the Book of Wisdom (13-14) clearly indicates this attitude. The wrath of God rests on the Gentile, but not on the Jew since it is his knowledge of God that saves him. But even when God judges He is merciful and gives His enemies the opportunity to do better. Finally, when the Jew is judging others he ought to remember the goodness and mercy of God. Thus the Jews are indited by their own traditions.

There has been some suggestion that the preposition  $\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron$  (vs. 1) militates against such an assumption. If we accept the logical significance of this word then we must see this as referring to the Gentiles. But this is not necessary.  $\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron$  may be an emphatic 'therefore' in which case Paul is here saying that what is said of the Gentiles may more emphatically be said of the Jews.<sup>145</sup> Thus the Jew is without excuse when he judges others

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<sup>143</sup>Leenhardt feels that otherwise there would be a duplicity of what is said of the Jews from 2: 17 onwards and that those who sit in judgment over their fellows (2: 1ff.) indicates the pharisee in us all. (Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 74.)

<sup>144</sup>K. Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 31.

<sup>145</sup>Murray points out that  $\delta\acute{\iota}\omicron$  may refer to the whole preceding section



for in passing this judgment he condemns himself. We have already noted the propensity of the Jew to judge others from his consciousness of the privilege of the law to which Paul refers in 2: 17-20. The one addressed shares in the 'wealth of kindness, of tolerance, and of patience' of his God and although the Gentiles also participate in these, the strength of the phrase indicates the Jews.

But in the final analysis need we accept an 'either-or' argument in this regard? Either it is the natural man or the Jew? Could we not accept that Paul is referring to both the Jew and the Gentile until 2: 17 where he turns to deal specifically with the Jew? Paul certainly has the Gentiles in mind in 2: 10-11 although he probably has the Jews particularly in mind in 2: 1-6. But even in this instance the reference to the Gentile need not be rejected altogether. Barrett adopts this stance when he says: "It is not till vs. 17 that he (Paul) turns specifically to the problem of the Jews; here as vv. 9ff., 12-16, show, his thought applies to both Gentiles and Jews."<sup>146</sup> Paul is addressing both the Jew and the pagan moral philosopher. Both would have a propensity to view their fellows from what they would consider a superior moral position although the Jew undoubtedly displayed this attitude more readily since he was the custodian of the revealed will of God in the Mosaic law. Thus I would suggest that both are referred to in vss. 1-16. Consequently the transition to the Jews specifically is not so abrupt in vs. 17 as if Paul were just referring to the Gentiles. Murray's argument

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or just verse 32 or even that it is related to what follows. "On the last alternative it points to a conclusion drawn from the latter part of the verse, in other words, that the conclusion of the apostle's syllogism is stated first and the grounds are then set forth." (J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 56.)

<sup>146</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., p. 43.

concerning <sup>610</sup> does not necessarily refer to the Gentile only but may also refer to both the Jew and the Gentile. Therefore this particular passage is a transitional stage for Paul as he turns his attention from the natural man to the Jew in particular, in which he lays the basis for his assertion that all have sinned, both Jew and Gentile, and fallen short of the glory of God. All men are without excuse.

But we must not leave this question without further inquiring of 2: 14-15; to whom is Paul referring here? Barth holds that they are simply the Gentile Christians.

The Gentiles whom in 2.14-15 Paul mentions in contrast to the Jews are simply the Gentile Christians (Paul addresses them in the same short style, e.g. in 11.13; 15.9), to whom, through God's wonderful deed in Jesus Christ, the very thing has happened which those prophetic words promised to the people of Israel.<sup>147</sup>

There can be no suggestion that there are Gentiles who fulfill the law because of some law written in their hearts. This would contradict what Barth feels is the proper understanding of 1: 19-32. But we have already noted what Paul means by natural revelation and certainly Paul does not seem to be talking of Gentiles who fulfill the law in the sense that Barth indicates. Nor is Paul concerned about a law written in the hearts of the Gentiles in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah. No, Paul is here concerned with the Gentiles who exhibit in their lives good works which indicate that, on occasion, those who are ignorant of the law do the work of the law. They put to shame the Jew who has God's revealed law and yet does not do it. 2: 12-16 refer to both the Gentile and the Jew; the Gentiles who are 'without the law' and the Jews who are 'under the law'. Besides, Paul has not referred to the Christians up to this point since he is concerned to show that all men have sinned. (vs. 12) It would indeed be an abrupt change to introduce them

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<sup>147</sup>Karl Barth, A Shorter Commentary on Romans, Op. Cit., p. 36.

at this time particularly when, for Paul, the Christian has already accepted the judgment of God and is no longer under the law. "It is hardly possible that St. Paul is here speaking of former pagans who have become Christians: Christians have more to guide them than the 'light of nature'".<sup>148</sup>

Just as the Pauline foundation stone for natural religion was not part of the Apostle's direct intention, but came in indirectly to guarantee universal human blameworthiness, so we must note that 'natural morality' also is not part of what he positively wishes to say: it comes in indirectly to emphasize the blameworthiness of the Jews.<sup>149</sup>

While recognizing this we must also be careful that in our approach to the question of natural law we do not come with preconceived notions of what to expect. We must look at the context to ascertain what Paul means by the 'work of the law inscribed in the hearts of the Gentiles'. Paul is critical of the trust of the Jews in the law and their own ability to keep it. God shows no partiality to them, in fact, all men, whether with or without the law, come under His judgment. "The emphasis is not on having the law but on keeping it, on fulfilling the law"<sup>150</sup> Concrete obedience is the principle determining judgment.<sup>151</sup> Now to be 'without the law' does not mean that these

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<sup>148</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 60.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>150</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 123.

<sup>151</sup>We have already noted that, although a man may obey the precepts of the law, he may still commit the one act which is basic to all sin, i.e. he refuses to rely on God's grace for his salvation. The Gentiles in vss. 14, 15 put to shame the Jews who have the law and still do not obey its precepts. But because these Gentiles sometimes do evidence behaviour which portrays an unconscious obedience to the law this does not mean that they are saved. They too have not fulfilled the law in its intention, even though sometimes they obey its precepts. They too are declared sinners as well as the Jews. As we have already noted, Paul's intention here is to point to the guilt of the Jews who have the revealed will of God and yet still refuse to obey.

men are lawless, i.e. completely destitute of law, as Paul himself indicates in 1 Cor. 9: 21. "The law they are without or which they do not have (cf. vs. 14) must therefore be the specially revealed law which those in the other group possess and under which they are (cf. vs. 12b)."<sup>152</sup> Thus these Gentiles are judged according to the knowledge they did have, i.e. the work of the law inscribed in their hearts.

It is to be noted that Paul does not talk just about the law inscribed on the Gentiles' hearts but the 'work of the law'. ( τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου vs. 15). To do the work of the law indicates that the Gentiles do sometimes obey the law although this obedience is not formal. They have neither the itemized knowledge of the law which the Jew possesses nor the type of knowledge suggested by the prophecy of Jeremiah since this would be a more intimate acquaintance with the law than the Jews themselves have. But they do know when they are going against the will of God since their conscience testifies to this.

When he (the heathen) acts in harmony with the law, his solidarity with the law is fully certified. It could not be said better or more forcefully than Paul does: he is a law unto himself. That is not in the least to say that he has the law.<sup>153</sup>

Thus the Gentile, although he has no great knowledge of the content of the law nor of the God who is the source of this law, does exhibit in his life the signs of a moral character.

By means of this formula (the work of the law) Paul suggests that the Gentile has a certain knowledge of the law, not perfect and complete (for this would imply the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy) but none the less real: he knows in truth what the law commands, without knowing that it is God who commands it, and also without knowing the nature of the God who commands it.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 70.

<sup>153</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., pp. 123-124.

<sup>154</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 81.

This knowledge of God's law takes the form of a capacity for moral discernment in the Gentiles.

The fact that the Gentile can make moral decisions indicates that he is able to act rightly outside of the special revelation granted to the Jew.

Φύσις does not suggest natural law as we normally understand it, i.e. as a set of laws or norms which direct behaviour, but the given nature of some one or thing in view of its origins.<sup>155</sup>

"The things of the law" must mean certain things which the law prescribes and refer to those things practised by pagans which are stipulated in the law, such as the pursuit of lawful vocations, the procreation of offspring, filial and natural affection, the care of the poor and sick, and numerous other natural virtues which are required by the law.<sup>156</sup>

In other words, those things suggested by direction of God in the act of creation which are concerned with primary relationships on the natural level. Now this does not mean that the Gentiles have these actual laws within their heart but rather that when they are confronted by these laws or actions which typify these laws, such as in the case of a foreigner dwelling in the midst of Israel, they ought to recognize the validity of them. That the Gentile does so is indicated by the fact that on occasion he does exhibit what the law requires in his life. In the light of this we must remind ourselves that these were not written commandments like the Mosaic laws but were part of man's created structure. This in view of the fact that he was created by God and as such is His creature. We have already noted that as God's creature, like the creation itself, he would reflect the purposes of God in those areas of

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<sup>155</sup>Arndt and Gingrich indicate that Φύσις may "indicate nature as the natural order" but that in the case of Ro. 2: 14 it may also mean "instinctively", "a natural characteristic or disposition". (Wm. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, Op. Cit., p. 877). Perhaps Moulton has the clearest definition for our purposes when he suggests that it indicates "innate properties or powers, what belongs to persons or things in view of their origins". (James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, (Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary Sources), (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1949), p.679.

<sup>156</sup>J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 73.



his life suggested by the conception of Noachian commandments and Wisdom. Thus the Gentile does not have a norm or standard by which he may judge and determine his actions but rather a natural power of moral discernment which is indicated by the fact that sometimes he does obey the law in the realm of natural relationships.

God has not written "the law" in the hearts of the Gentiles, in the sense that they have by nature a universal principle to which to subject life and from which to draw conclusions as to how they ought to live. He has written "the works of the law" in their hearts so that if they do otherwise in the concrete situation, they are aware that they have done evil.<sup>157</sup>

This is further substantiated by Paul's understanding of conscience and the excusing and accusing thoughts of vs. 15. The word conscience (συνείδησις) which Paul uses here occurs only twice in the Septuagint and it has been suggested that Paul adopted this from Stoic sources. Seneca used it nearly as synonymous for 'reason' since it directed man to good. Paul, on the other hand, used it primarily to signify the disapproving verdict on a man's moral action after the act. Thus for Paul it was "the capacity for moral judgment rather than the source of the moral ought."<sup>158</sup>

C. A. Pierce suggests that essentially Paul's use of συνείδησις must find its source in its popular usage of his day rather than in his own Hebraic background or Stoic influence.<sup>159</sup> And even at this point it was

<sup>157</sup>Anders Nygren, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>158</sup>M. S. Enslin, *The Ethics of St. Paul*, (London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1930), p. 101.

<sup>159</sup>C. A. Pierce, *Conscience in the New Testament*, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), p. 13 and 16.

"This means that no recourse can be had, through this translation (Septuagint) to any Hebrew idea in the Old Testament from which material might be forthcoming for an elucidation of its meaning for the New Testament writers, and for St. Paul in particular". (p. 13)

"But the assumption of a Stoic origin for the idea of the conscience having been abandoned, it is plain that St. Paul's starting point must be sought in some popular idea current at the time when he was writing." (p. 16)

I quote these two references to substantiate Paul's understanding of συνείδησις which must be found in the popular usage of his day.

introduced into Christianity under the pressure of the controversy at Corinth.<sup>160</sup> In this context, rather than having a positive connotation, the function of conscience was to cause pain to the individual who had participated in a morally bad action; that ... "man is by nature so constituted that, if he overstep the moral limits of his nature he will normally feel pain - the pain called *συνείδησις*".<sup>161</sup> Obviously in this process the Gentile may develop a set of laws which will help to govern his actions simply as a response to the pain of conscience which he has learned to avoid. But its primary function was that of moral discernment after the act. In summary Pierce indicates that 'the Gentiles are a law unto themselves' is shown by three things:

First, their behaviour, their overt acts, reveals that they have accepted standards of some sort for conduct, not entirely other than those of the Jewish Law: secondly, they suffer this pain, conscience, which warns them that they have done or are doing something morally wrong; and thirdly, their reasons pass judgment on their conduct (or, perhaps, in their rational discussions with one another they agree in calling some things right and other things wrong). That by this threefold means some standards of conduct are maintained in theory and practice among the Gentiles is an indication that there is a 'natural Law' derived from the nature of things which is itself a revelation of God's everlasting power and Divinity and thus related, through the one God, with the Jewish Law.<sup>162</sup>

Thus not only does the doing of the things of the law prove the existence of some type of capacity for moral discernment but the witness of the conscience does also.

Elsewhere in Paul's writings we can notice an appeal to this moral capacity of the pagans which is ingrained in their natures. We have already noted in conjunction with man's degradation that they had exchanged normal intercourse for that which is contrary to nature. (Rom. 1: 26-27) There is

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<sup>160</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-86.

that within man's created being which enables him to discriminate between what is moral and immoral in his relations with his fellows. In 1 Cor. 11: 1-16

Paul clinches his argument concerning women in the Church by an appeal to nature.

οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτῆ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς  
ὅτι ἄνθρωπος μὲν ἔστιν κορυφή, ἡ τιμὴ αὐτῷ  
ἐστίν, γυνή δὲ ἔστιν κορυφή σώματος αὐτῆς ἐστίν;

Although this is a somewhat dubious argument from our point of view the fact remains that he does appeal to nature. In Ro. 12: 17 he admonishes the

Christians to let their aims be such as all men count honourable (προνοούμενοι κατὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων).

Surely this also indicates the pagan's capacity to make moral decisions and to realize that some actions are right and some wrong. Paul also asserts that

those who are in authority in the State can distinguish between good and

evil by nature. (Ro. 13: 1-6) The secular authority is a servant of God

to you for good ends. Θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονός ἐστιν σοὶ εἰς

τὸ ἰγαθόν. They are even the sacred ministers of God who praise good but

punish evil. λειτουργοὶ γὰρ Θεοῦ εἰσιν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο

προσκαρτεροῦντες. These are able to distinguish between good and evil out-

side the revealed law of God simply by virtue of their human capacity to make moral judgments. In the question of relations between the Jewish and Gentile

Christians perhaps Paul had Wisdom and the Noachian commandments in mind when

he says that such men as he described in 1 Cor. 6: 9-10 cannot inherit the

Kingdom of God. On the basis of this background both the Jewish and Gentile

Christian would have a common understanding of the evil of these men; the

Jewish Christians as they had them in the Mosaic law, and the Gentile Christians

because of their moral capacity to recognize right and wrong in those areas

of life which were concerned with relationships on the natural level. Certainly,

after we have considered all the available evidence to us in Paul's letter we

may assume with a high degree of probability that Paul did conceive of the pagan as having the capacity for moral discrimination.

The implication is that there is in pagans a capacity for sound moral judgment, a 'communis sensus' which will lead them to recognize as good that which the revealed Law of God declares as good.<sup>163</sup>

We therefore conclude that the Gentiles do have some knowledge of God. It is not a saving knowledge but was given to make men blameworthy. There is no possibility of establishing a personal relationship with God via this knowledge. Thus, in the last analysis we have inferred our understanding of natural revelation and natural law as we have defined it from this negative purpose since Paul nowhere states these beliefs in explicit terms. Through natural revelation Paul has made man responsible for his rejection of God as Creator which occurs in man's confusion of the creation with the Creator. Natural revelation and law, as we have defined it, in no way prepares us for a higher truth but it only serves the negative purpose of making all men without excuse before God. Beyond this purpose we may not go with any certainty. Since the Gentile is in this state of sin God's wrath falls upon him. This is in line with Ro. 1: 18 where Paul indicates that the wrath of God is being revealed against all unrighteousness. As we have already noted, wrath is the sinner's experience of God's love because he exists in a state of unrighteousness over against God's righteousness. Natural revelation can be said to contribute to man's salvation only when it is viewed from the standpoint of Christ Jesus. Here the Gentile realizes that God's verdict upon him is just, that he is without excuse and can never claim salvation as his right. But while he lives without this knowledge of Christ he also exists in ignorance of the actual depths of his predicament. In the end

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<sup>163</sup>C. H. Dodd, Studia Paulina, Op. Cit., p. 133.

it would appear that I have maintained a middle line between Barth's complete agnosia and those who are concerned to claim that it is a law which is inscribed in the hearts of the Gentiles. Barth, I feel, fails to do justice to man's created being, i.e. that he belongs to God and bears the stamp of ownership upon his nature even in his state of sin, and also destroys the foundation upon which man's responsibility is constructed. As Davies comments on Barth's position:

But where there is complete agnosia, such as Barth refers to, there can be no responsibility, and therefore, no relevance in claiming that men are without excuse for their condition. The argument of Paul that the Gentile can shame the Jew and that the Gentile is without excuse for his moral corruption implies that there had been given to the Gentile world apart from the Christian revelation a certain definite knowledge of God's moral demands - enough indeed to make that world responsible.<sup>164</sup>

But, on the other hand, I could not go as far as Davies' implication when he refers to a 'certain definite knowledge of God's moral demands'. Paul's conception of 'the work of the law inscribed on the hearts of the Gentiles' does not allow us to understand any sort of definite norm or principle by which they may direct their behaviour. Davies' understanding comes too close to the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy which can only be really fulfilled by those who are indwelt by the New Torah, i.e. Jesus Christ.

We have also noted that this 'natural law' is not a law like the revealed law of God, nor a set of prohibitions written in the heart but, what I have called a capacity for moral discrimination and Dodd's 'communis sensus', ingrained in man's being from the beginning. Caird suggests that "there can be little doubt that Paul held a highly developed doctrine of natural law, which he derived partly from Jewish and partly from Stoic sources."<sup>165</sup> Dodd also holds the affinity between Paul's understanding of natural law and the

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<sup>164</sup>W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 328.

<sup>165</sup>G. B. Caird, Op. Cit., p. 49.



Stoics' conception. "This doctrine of the Noachian precepts is the Jewish equivalent for the Stoic doctrine of the Law of Nature."<sup>166</sup> But our understanding at this point does not include a conception of a law which helps to determine behaviour as the Stoics would understand it. The Stoics, as we have already noted, conceived of the law as a principle in man's being which guided him in his conduct. Paul, on the other hand, did not go so far as to give this 'work of the law' inscribed in the hearts of the Gentiles such positive content. Certainly Paul did not understand reason or what the Stoics called the Rational Principle in the universe to be a part of divinity. Man's reason had also shared in the Fall and thus it too was defective. The universe told of the invisible attributes of God but there was to be no confusion between God and His creation for that was idolatry. "... this sets up a sharp distinction between the revealed, transcendent God of the O.T., and the immanent God of Philosophy and the Stoics".<sup>167</sup> Therefore, although Paul saw the pagans as having some sort of capacity for moral discrimination which helped to indicate the evil of their actions and to also recognize that good which was related to the law of God in other actions, he did not conceive of it as a set of laws inscribed on the heart which acted as a norm or standard for behaviour. Nor did Paul 'hold a highly developed doctrine of Natural law' for, as we have noted, such a belief must be inferred from the Gentiles' blameworthiness and the fact that sometimes they do what the law prescribes.

Directly St. Paul wishes to show that all men are fallen and stand under the wrath of God: indirectly, in order to preserve human responsibility, he has shown his belief that all men have had some knowledge of God revealed to them.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup>C. H. Dodd, Studia Paulina, Op. Cit., p. 139.

<sup>167</sup>Bertil Gärtner, Op. Cit., p. 140.

<sup>168</sup>D. E. H. Whiteley, Op. Cit., p. 58.

Thus we must limit ourselves to our definition of the expression 'the work of the law' since Paul nowhere explicitly indicates the content of this work or on what it is based. We must understand this phrase in the context in which it lies and in light of the purpose for which it was given. Thus Paul does not claim that the pagans are models of virtue but that sometimes they do what the law requires. He realized that they had a relative capacity for forming moral judgments.

Let us consider briefly the relationship between the revealed law of God embodied in the Mosaic law and the natural law as I have defined it. Paul's background with its Judaic conception of Wisdom and the initial development of the concept of the Noachian commandments and his thought here in Romans indicates that both the Jew and the Gentile have a common basis in God's law, i.e. His righteousness. In the case of the Gentile, God reveals Himself and therefore His righteousness in creation and puts into man's being a capacity for moral discrimination. These two forms of knowledge are implied by each other. The Mosaic or revealed law also contains this revelation but in a written form with a far wider scope. It also has a positive purpose as well as a negative one. It reveals man's sin but it also has the purpose of giving life because it embodies the righteousness of God and thus points to Jesus Christ. The privilege of having this law is great, but as we have also noted, so is its responsibility. We have also seen that the Mosaic law was granted to the Jews for the whole world with the purpose of revealing man's sin. The natural revelation that we find in Romans only makes man responsible for his rejection of God but fails to reveal man's sin as rebellion against God. It is concerned primarily with those who are outside the covenant made with the People of Israel. But in both cases we have to do with the righteousness of God which in natural revelation is sufficient to make all men blameworthy. This they experience as wrath. Pierce defines

conscience in this regard, "as the internal counterpart and complement of the Wrath ..."169 We have noticed how Paul understood Jesus Christ to be the revelation of God's righteousness and how he gave to Christ some of the attributes of Wisdom in the Old Testament. Wisdom was involved in the act of creation and now is embodied in Jesus Christ Himself.

In Christ, therefore, man is confronted with that Word, Wisdom or Law, which is the law of creation, the same which is partially disclosed to Israel in the Torah, and is known in some measure to all mankind, through conscience and reason, as the Law of Nature.<sup>170</sup>

It is the same law of God whether it be revealed in man's created being as his capacity for moral discrimination which is based upon the fact that man belongs to God, or in the Mosaic law or in its perfect expression in Jesus Christ. The manner of revelation may vary as well as its purpose and the extent of its manifestation but it is still the one law of God with which we are concerned. "It is not therefore a different law that confronts the Gentiles who are without the law but the same law brought to bear upon them by a different mode of revelation."<sup>171</sup> In Romans 1 and 2 Paul is not providing us with a contrast between the law given to Moses and that which is natural to the Gentiles, but "the heathen's actual doing of what the law requires, even when he does not have the law, is what Paul is contrasting with the Jew's confidence in the mere fact that he knows the law."<sup>172</sup> This Paul does to shame the Jews and to indicate that they are just as guilty, if not more so, than the Gentiles. They have the revelation of God's will in the Torah, indeed they also have the form of the Gospel but they refuse to listen to its demand for acceptance of God's grace for their salvation. Therefore

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<sup>169</sup>C. A. Pierce, Op. Cit., p. 85.

<sup>170</sup>C. H. Dodd, Studia Paulina, Op. Cit., p. 142.

<sup>171</sup>J. Murray, Op. Cit., p. 74.

<sup>172</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 124.

they, of all people, stand under God's judgment. Thus there is a 'differentness' and a newness exhibited by these several manifestations of God's righteousness but there is also a basic unity which is finally revealed in human flesh, i.e. Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER III

THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOSPEL AND LAW

I THE GOSPEL AS JESUS CHRIST: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

What is the Gospel of Christ? 'It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.' (Ro. 1: 16-17) Paul immediately strikes the theme of his letter to the Romans by giving a definition of that which has shaken the foundations of the world. The remainder of the letter is but the explosion of this basic theme. He does not begin by chastizing the congregation in Rome for their sins but rather with the good news of Christ. This is indicative of the whole relationship between the Gospel and the Law.

The Gospel is power by its very nature and the effect that it has on man. It signifies the activity of God in His world both in the Old and New Testament times. In the Old Testament it was manifested particularly in the calling of Abraham who was justified by grace, in the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the giving of the Law. The Law was a sign of the presence of God although clinging to it did not make Him accessible to men. Indeed although the Law was the sign of God's presence it had no indigenous power. Only God acting among men in Jesus Christ to save them could be understood to have such power. The Jew, on the other hand, conceived of the Torah as power but Paul saw clearly that the law was powerless to save. "In the life of the Jew, the Torah, the revelation of the will of God, became a power of salvation. Paul overthrows the whole scheme by saying that the gospel is power."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 49 (Grundmann, Th. Wb. N.T., II, pp. 289-299).



The Jew had put his faith in the sign of the Presence rather than the Presence itself. In New Testament times the power was manifested clearly and perfectly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who was the very presence of God dwelling with His people. It is Jesus Christ because He is the omnipotent presence of God. The effects of this power or presence were seen in the whole life of Christ, particularly His resurrection, in which man participates through baptism and faith. Thus the Christian knows the presence of God since the broken relationship has been restored and he is raised from death to life. In all circumstances it remains God's power which is shared with man because God is present with him through His Spirit. It has nothing in common with the power of man since man's power has to do with sin and death. God's power is victorious over this authority since He defeats it while reclaiming man for true freedom.

The power of God means then at one and the same time the power which God has shown in Jesus Christ, the efficacy which He grants to the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the spiritual power manifested in whoever believes in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>174</sup>

In both the Old and New Testaments we are concerned with the One Presence and activity of God and His Son.

The Gospel is the power of God because whenever God reveals Himself by His action His righteousness is also made manifest. In this sense the Gospel is the righteousness of God. An uncovering of that which is hidden, i.e. the righteousness of God, occurs in His Son who is the perfect expression of this righteousness in human form. Again in every situation it remains God's righteousness over against the righteousness of the man who thinks that he can achieve his salvation by the works of the law. Therefore whenever we

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<sup>174</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

are concerned with the presence or power of God we are also concerned with His righteousness. "The gospel is the power of God for salvation because in it the righteousness of God is revealed; salvation is here connected with the fact that the gospel reveals powerfully the righteousness of God."<sup>175</sup> Here the Gospel necessarily exposes man's sin since it is concerned with the righteousness of God but it also provides the grounds for man's salvation. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ man is confronted with the just verdict concerning himself. The acceptance of this verdict completes the work of salvation wrought in man. "God's verdict is God's work of salvation."<sup>176</sup> Both the verdict and the realization of this judgment in man is God's work. The righteousness of God indicates His fidelity to His promise made to Abraham of which the law is a sign. It expresses the fact that God would be false to Himself if He broke the covenant made with His people through Abraham and repudiated His promise. Thus another aspect of the righteousness of God has to do with His faithfulness to His promise which is the expression of the Gospel initiated in Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It will be the function of this chapter to investigate more directly the relation of the Gospel and the Law as well as the place of the promise in God's scheme of salvation.

## II THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOSPEL, THE LAW, THE PROMISE AND ABRAHAM

Paul quotes, 'the just shall live by faith' Ro. 1: 17, from Hab. 2: 4 which indicates the Old Testament background already suggested by Ro. 1: 2. The Good News has already been initiated in the Old Testament with the promise made to Abraham. "The gospel is the decisive act of God who

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>176</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 22.

continues to break forth into the course of human history in order to complete the work begun with Abraham."<sup>177</sup> It is from this basis that Paul shows that all men, Jew and Gentile alike, not only come under the just judgment of God but are also included in salvation through trust in the promise. We have already noted in Chapter 1 how Abraham was accounted righteous when he was without the law and therefore in a sense still a Gentile. It is this fact coupled with the promise that makes him the father of all mankind. Thus Paul asserts mankind's unity in salvation over against the Jew who conceived of the Law and his works as the only way of salvation and who would thus limit God's salvation to Israel. All this he can maintain because of his experience of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God and the fulfillment of the promise.

Fundamental to God's work of salvation is the promise made to Abraham. In Gal. 3: 15-18 the apostle speaks of the heir to which the promise (ἑπαγγελία) was made. He points out that the promise was given to Christ, the heir. This promise cannot be disannulled by a law which comes 430 years later but the law must stand as an addition to make wrong-doing a legal offence. (Ga. 3: 19; Ro. 5: 20) Therefore if the messianic inheritance comes by the promise, it does not come by the law.<sup>178</sup> Paul is at pains

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<sup>177</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 46.

<sup>178</sup>In the light of this understanding of God's work of salvation Verweij's criticism of Schoeps is valid.

Hier ist Paulus nicht "einer eigentümlichen Perspektivenverzerrung erlegen" (s. 224) (p. 213 English Edition), weil er "offenbar den ganzheitlichen Zusammenhang Berith-Thora nicht mehr verstanden hat." (s. 208) (p. 198 English Edition) Wie aus oben angegebenen Stellen deutlich ist, hat Paulus noch ein lebendiges Verständnis der jüdischen Auffassungen, er verwirft sie ober, weil sie dem Heilswillen Gottes widersprechen. (P. G. Verweij's, Op. Cit., p. 65)

Paul's argument rests on the fact that God's work of salvation is based on the promise, not the law. Thus even in the end time it is not law which is the

to point out that salvation comes not from the law but from the promise. Romans 4: 13-15 indicates that the contents of this promise were to be given to Abraham and his posterity, i.e. those who have the faith of Abraham. This depends solely upon the Giver and thus only God can bring about the fulfillment of the promise, without man's co-operation.

A promise differs from a legal contract, which receives a return for services rendered; a promise implies a gift for which the recipient can make no claim, which he can never in any way secure for himself.<sup>179</sup>

This is in line with the question with which Paul is concerned in Romans 4; what made Abraham righteous? He was made righteous because he believed the promise of God, which is to say, that God would fulfill His promise. In this manner Abraham trusted in Jesus Christ who consummates the promise although at the time of Abraham the promise was not fulfilled.

It (the Promise) refers to something for which he can only trust the word that has been given him. In the measure in which he does trust the one who has promised the gift, he is able to act on the assumption that the promised gift is as good as his already.<sup>180</sup>

Consequently Abraham is united with all the believers in Christ as their father in faith. "It was this godless unbeliever with his empty hands whom God justified for the sole reason that he believed in the divine promise."<sup>181</sup>

The Jews had concluded that Abraham had known and kept the law and this was why he was accounted as righteous. They had reversed the true understanding of Abraham's righteousness by arguing back from it to the knowledge of the law. Since Abraham was righteous, they argued, he must have known and kept the law or how else could he be called righteous? Therefore he is the father of those who possess the law. But Paul reverses this understanding to comply with the true situation by pointing out that Abraham was righteous

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way of salvation but the consummation of the promise. Thus Paul does not misunderstand the covenant-law relationship but rather he realized that the Jewish view which based salvation on the law was contrary to God's purpose of salvation.

<sup>179</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., From First Adam to the Last, p. 34.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.

<sup>181</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit. p. 115.

because he trusted in the promise. "The righteousness which is in question here must be defined, not from the point of view of the law and its commands, but from the point of view of the word of God and what it promises."<sup>182</sup> The former has to do with the works of the law by which no man can be justified while the latter is concerned with complete surrender to and trust in the grace of God for one's righteousness. Thus Paul stresses that God began with the promise and not the law, as the Scripture foresaw (προιδούσα δὲ ἡ γραφή). (Gal. 3: 8) This promise was the Gospel of ancient times (προεγγεγρίσαστο Gal. 3: 8 and προεπηγγείλατο Ro. 1: 2). This is no different from saying that the fulfillment of the promise, i.e. Jesus Christ, is the basis of salvation in the end-time and not the law. "Evangelium und Verheissung werden einander gleichgestellt; so gehören nach dem Heilswillen Gottes auch sein Bund, das Evangelium und die Verheissung zusammen."<sup>183</sup> Thus we would define the Gospel in this context as the fulfilled promise.

Therefore the story of Abraham is one of pure Gospel; one in which the initiative lies solely with God Himself. (Ro. 4: 16) Abraham accepted the judgment that he could do nothing on his own behalf to warrant salvation. Circumcision, which the Jew saw as the rite of membership in the people of God, is of no importance in this regard. The promise was granted to Abraham before circumcision and although circumcision was a sign of Abraham's justification it was no guarantee of it. (Ro. 3: 10, 11) The Jews' appeal to the possession of the law and circumcision was made invalid since justification was based on trust in the promises of God.

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<sup>182</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>183</sup>P. G. Verweij's, Op. Cit., p. 53.



Now the promise is something alien to the law; by which Paul means that it inaugurates a dispensation in which works are no longer fundamental. They take second place as a consequence of the promise (of which they are a sign and seal), and they have not the character of a cause effecting the realization of the promise.<sup>184</sup>

Since this is the case salvation is made available to all men, not just from the time of Jesus Christ, but from the beginning. (Ro. 4: 11)

Das Volk ~~Kommen~~ ist nicht in der Tora, sondern in der Verheissung verankert; es wurde darum auch dem Abraham als Mann des Glaubens geschenkt, so dass es von Anfang an die Heiden für den Tag der Erfüllung mit umfasste.<sup>185</sup>

### III THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOSPEL, THE LAW AND ISRAEL

Now that we have considered the Gospel and the law in relation to Abraham we shall turn to Israel and investigate this same relationship. We have noted that from Paul's understanding of Abraham, righteousness is gained by faith in the promises of God and not by works of the law. What happens to the law then, and what is the relation of the Gospel to the Mosaic law? Perhaps Gal. 4: 21ff. would be the most appropriate starting point.

Hier stehen sich Gesetz und Gesetz gegenüber, einmal das Gesetz, das als Tora, als Verkündigung des gottlichen Heils in der Schrift verfasst ist, zum andern die Tora in dem beschränkten Sinne der Tora Moses, des Sinaigesetzes.<sup>186</sup>

For Paul the Torah as the proclamation of salvation, i.e. the law of God, and the Torah as the Mosaic law are not identical. Israel's problem arises in fact from this false identification. The only basis of salvation is the promise made to Abraham and this is the proclamation of salvation. Israel had conceived of the Covenant made at Sinai as the beginning of salvation but Paul saw it as the beginning of the bondage of the son. But this dominion,

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<sup>184</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 120.

<sup>185</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 86.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

which was destined to pass away, was an aspect of the will and intention of God from the beginning. Thus the Mosaic law, although not a way of salvation, was of crucial importance. But it should also be mentioned at this point that the Mosaic law and the promise did not stand in opposition to one another. Granted, as a means of achieving salvation, they differed radically but as Barrett suggests: "The law is not contrary to the promises of God (Gal. iii.21), but lays down the divine requirement of love (Rom. xiii.8ff.), which is not denied but confirmed in the Gospel."<sup>187</sup> The difficulty was the law's relation to sin, which easily perverted  $\xi\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  to desire ( $\epsilon\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ ) and thus the law became sin's means of entry into man and even served to increase sin.

We have noted that the law was given to reveal sin, to bring judgment and ruin, not just for Israel but for all mankind. (Ro. 3: 20; 5: 20, 18) God's judgment in this regard is not according to whether men have the law or not, nor whether men hear the law or not, but according to the deeds of men, whether or not they do the law. Israel on the other hand saw the Gentiles included in sin because they had not the law but Paul points to the deeds of the law. This is what Paul is concerned to say in Romans 2: 13-14. "So ist nicht Haben oder nicht Haben der Tora das grosse Kriterium für das Gericht."<sup>188</sup> The law serves only to exaggerate the offense (Ro. 5: 20) and therefore it does not concern salvation in the slightest whether the sin was committed with or without the law.

Consequently those who have the Law and those who do not have it are confronted with the same question: are they doing or are they not doing what the law demands? If they are not then they perish with the Law just as well as without it. (Ro. 2.12)<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., From First Adam to Last, p. 80.

<sup>188</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 59.

<sup>189</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 36.

The demand of the law is trust in God's grace for man's salvation, in that it should have indicated to men that it was powerless to save. And yet under the dominion of sin there was no way in which men could have grasped this revelation. It must be seen in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, who would free men from sin's dominion. Another way of expressing it is to say that men should have turned to the promise made to Abraham but again sin led them astray. They thought that they could establish their own salvation by works of the law.

It is not merely that the law is good as law; it also bears witness to that which is not law at all. ... Rightly understood in the context of the gracious, delivering action of God, the law bears witness to the Gospel, and commands precisely that relation with God in which Abraham reversed the sin of Adam.<sup>190</sup>

Therefore Paul destroys the basis of 'Torah Religion' by which the Jews thought to assert their superiority over the Gentiles by holding the law as a way of salvation and a sign of God's favour. The poor Gentiles, on the other hand, had not the law and thus were doomed to destruction. But both have come under the judgment of God since each in their own way, with or without the law, have attempted to achieve their own righteousness. Both have rejected the revelation of God's righteousness, the former as it is revealed in the Mosaic law and the latter in general revelation. This was in times past but now it is revealed in Jesus Christ and in this sense the righteousness of God is revealed outside the law, just as salvation by faith is apart from the law. Thus the law reveals sin and brings it to its full strength for it clearly indicates that men rebel against their Creator. (Ro. 7: 7) It does not bring men to repentance but when seen in the light of the Gospel it does enable them to recognize the justness of their condemnation

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<sup>190</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., From First Adam to Last, p. 66.

contained in the law. All must be included under judgment that all might be included in grace. The law has no power to effect salvation but through it the power of sin works to bring death. "Das Gesetz kann, wenn es als Gebot Gottes auf den Menschen zutritt, nur das Urteil besiegeln, es ist Buchstabe ohne Kraft,"<sup>191</sup>

But if the law is not the way of salvation and circumcision is no longer necessary have the Jews any advantage? (Ro. 3: 1) Paul's answer is that as the people of God they have been entrusted with the oracles of God.

(Ro. 3.2) "By this we must understand the promises rather than the law, as is suggested by what follows where the emphasis is placed on the promises as the vital centre of God's plan."<sup>192</sup> Whether or not Israel trusted in the promise of God does not alter the fact that God is faithful in spite of what man does. In other words, Israel's privilege rests solely with God who has bestowed the gift of His grace for the whole world in the form of the promise to Israel who is to be its vehicle for all men. Israel's importance lies in the fact that they are the vehicle of this promise. (Ro. 3: 8-18)<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 69.

<sup>192</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 91.

<sup>193</sup>"For God the salvation of the Gentiles is bound up with the salvation of Israel, just as Israel's salvation is of importance to all Gentiles." (Johannes Munck, Op. Cit., p. 259.) We have already noted, in conjunction with Abraham being justified by faith, that God's promise was intended from the beginning to include all men. Existence as a nation was not based on the Torah but rather on the promise of God to Abraham. Thus what makes Israel of crucial importance for the salvation of the Gentiles is the fact that they are the bearers of the promise up to and including Jesus Christ, the consummation of the promise. The Gentiles, although included from the beginning in God's plan of salvation, are guests in that it is Israel which is the bearer of the promise and its consummation. (Ro. 3: 1-2) Thus Israel "trägt die Verheissung, aber es trägt sie für die Völker. In der Tora ist sie vorübergehend eingeschränkt, um aber in Christus zur Erfüllung zu kommen," (P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 86).

The fact that Israel retained this privilege is further substantiated when it is noted that the early church, i.e. the Jewish Christians in Palestine, like Jesus and His first disciples, was concerned to preach to the Jews only. They too were concerned with the place of the Gentile in God's plan of salvation but felt that the Jews must accept Christ first and then the message would be carried to the heathen. Munck comments on Paul's role as the Apostle to the Gentiles and the success that accompanied it.

These experiences bear out Paul's missionary theory that because of the Jew's unbelief and hardness of heart God has decided to have the Gospel preached to the Gentiles and that the result of that missionary work will in turn react on the Jews through their jealousy of the believing Gentiles, because the latter obtain what was promised to Israel. (Johannes Munck, Op. Cit., p. 276)

Although the Jews did harden their heart this was not the basic reason why the message was preached to the Gentiles but rather because Paul realized that salvation was not by works of the law. Therefore membership in God's people was based on the promise and this meant that the Gentiles were included in God's plan of salvation from the beginning.

Das Volksein ist nicht in der Tora, sondern in der Verheissung verankert; es wurde darum auch dem Abraham als Mann des Glaubens geschenkt, so dass es von Anfang an die Heiden für den Tag der Erfüllung mit umfasste. (P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 86)

Thus since salvation comes out of Israel and through its Christ to the world Israel is of crucial importance to the Gentiles. The Gentile Church can only truly understand itself and its existence in the light of the Israel of old.

But once the Church comes into existence does this mean that it takes the place of the old Israel? Indeed from the evidence of the missionary endeavour of the sub-apostolic Church this idea seemed to have gained support. By this time the proclamation was understood to be for the Gentiles only since Israel had, by all historical evidence, rejected it. Paul did not feel that the Church replaced the Israel of old but rather Israel remained crucial in God's plan of salvation. But at the same time Paul did think that the Church was the Israel of God (Gal. 6: 16) which existed alongside the old Israel. However, although Israel may have rejected God, He does not retaliate by rejecting them. He remains faithful to His promise. (Ro. 11: 1ff.)

Die Heiden sollen verstehen, dass Israel die wohl verborgene Wurzel des Baums, nämlich der Kirche ist und bleibt, dass sie eingepropft worden sind durch das wunderbare Erbarmen, ohne jeden Grund der Verheissung. (Ibid., p. 88)

Unless the Church recognizes this fact it will be in danger of basing the Church on something other than God's grace.

Diese Gnade aber hat ihren Grund in der Verheissung des Glaubens, die für die ganze Welt an Abraham ergangen ist und die jetzt in Christus aus jener Unklammerung durch Gesetz in der Vorzeit herausgelöst worden und zur Erfüllung gekommen ist. (Ibid., pp. 88-89)



Since the promise is the foundation of God's salvation Paul maintains a continuity between Abraham and Christ. This means that in a real sense there is no break with the past but rather a consummation of what has gone on before. "Es geht ihm (Paul) nur um die Heils-ökonomie Gottes, die in Israel von Abraham an durch die Gesetzesperiode hindurch auf die Erfüllung der gnädigen Verheissung hinzielt."<sup>194</sup>

During the period of the dominion of the law until the time of Christ, the promise made to Abraham and thus the Gospel, existed under the law.

Alter Bund bedeutet also notwendig Verheissung und Evangelium; aber weil die Zeit der Erfüllung noch nicht da ist, ist das Evangelium unter das Gesetz getan, d.h. aber um der herrschenden Sünde willen unter ein forderndes Gebot, unter bindende Regeln und Einsetzungen.<sup>195</sup>

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Now Israel stands as an example before the world as those in whom sin has been condemned but also as God's people. They are an example of men who rely upon themselves for their salvation rather than upon God. (Ro. 9: 30; 11: 20-23)

Paul concluded by pointing out how the fall of Israel led to the salvation of all men just as the salvation of the Gentiles shall produce jealousy in Israel and thus lead to their salvation. "For the way of God's salvation is: disobedience, and afterwards compassion; and in that way God will save everyone." (Johannes Munck, Op. Cit., p. 42) With the obedience of Israel the glorification of God will be completed and then His Kingdom will come. Thus we see how the salvation of the Gentiles and Israel are of crucial importance to each other. They can only be understood in the light of each other, just as they help to clarify God's plan of salvation. Thus we see the Gospel, in respect to the promise, as the basis of God's salvation and how the judgment in the law serves His ultimate purpose. This indicates the two aspects of God's righteousness at work to effect the salvation of all mankind as well as the balance and tension which must be maintained between God's love and the fact that it is a consuming love.

<sup>194</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 75.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

But the Gospel is under the law simply because men exist in this state of slavery. Men, because of their sin and its dominion over their lives, began with the law when they were concerned about salvation. Thus they understood God's righteousness only in terms of commands which they attempted by their own strength to fulfill. While the law should have revealed their sin, in connection with sin, the law became the occasion for men to grasp by their own efforts what could only be accepted as a gift. The Gospel on the other hand revealed without question men's failure and sin and in this regard enabled men to accept not only the law's condemnation but the gracious gift of God, their salvation. This acceptance of their plight could only come from the realization of the consummated promise in Christ in their lives and not from the point of view of the law.

We have already made the distinction between the law of God, i.e. His righteousness, and the Torah noting that the Torah in the limited sense of the Mosaic law does embody the law of God. In this case the form of God's righteousness is His verdict on sin, made and revealed completely in Jesus Christ, and expressed in the commandments and prohibitions of the Mosaic law. This is in conjunction with the law's purpose to reveal sin and bring condemnation upon all men.

Darum sieht der Apostel auch in diesem Briefe (Romans) die Aufgabe des Gesetzes nicht darin, dass es durch seine Radikalität zur Busse führt, sondern es ist in der Vorzeit der Verheissung gekommen, um Israel und der Welt deutlich zu machen, dass jedes Heil aus dem Tun der Gebote vor Gott unmöglich ist, damit der Sünder seine Rechtfertigung, wie Abraham, nur im Glauben suche: d.h. in der Erfüllung der Verheissung.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

Thus the law's primary purpose in revealing God's righteousness was to show the impossibility of attaining salvation by means of the law and this in turn would lead men to regard the promise made to Abraham as the foundation of their salvation. But under the dominion of the law and its connection with sin men did not accept the law's condemnation nor did they seek the gift of God in the promise.

Perhaps if we consider Paul's understanding of how the promise was embodied in the Scripture we shall see more clearly the relationship of the promise and the law. The Scripture for Paul was the law and the prophets. The Jews hear the promise of the Gospel of salvation in the Scripture but because of a veil upon their minds they are unable to recognize it. Paul stresses repeatedly that the Scripture is evidence of something else; it is bearing witness to something that is to come. (II Cor. 3: 12ff.)

Die Schrift soll auf Grund der gegebenen Verheissung Gottes im Lichte des Kommenden Christus und seines Gnadenheils betrachtet werden und nicht - wie das Judentum es tut - von der Tora und von Mose her, als seien diese grundlegend.<sup>197</sup>

Thus if one is to understand the Scripture aright it must be seen in the light of the fulfillment of the promise revealed in the Scripture and not in terms of the law. The law is not the definitive act of God, but the promise made to Abraham. In the same way, if the Jew was to understand the law aright he must see it in the light of the promise itself and Jesus Christ who consummates it.

Now the law should be understood in the light of the promise. Paul has already shown what this means: the law is an instrument of the promise, for it should convince man that God alone can give what He has declared it His intention to give.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>198</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 265.

As we have noted, although the law should have convinced man, it did not. Only the Gospel is able to do that. Just as Jesus Christ is the goal, meaning and reality of Scripture, so is He the same for the law. With the coming of Christ the promise, which has existed under the law, is fully revealed and men come to salvation apart from the law. Men are freed from the bondage of the law and the dominion of sin which it characterizes to live in the freedom of the Spirit.

The cultic worship of Israel, which was regulated by the law, also had as its inner meaning the gospel of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice was seen as the means whereby the guilty were pardoned by the grace of God.

Standing at the centre of the law as its culminating point are the ordinances relative to the cult, which reminds Israel that the law draws all its significance from the grace which God incessantly renews for His people.<sup>199</sup>

In such a manner sacrificial rites indicate the manner, the necessity and the need of God's grace being manifest in Jesus Christ. In other words the Gospel is the innermost meaning of the rites of sacrifice. Of course it was necessary to have repeated sacrifice but Jesus Christ would come and consummate all these rites making them redundant. (Ro. 3: 25) Thus once again the cultic worship of Israel must be understood in the light of the promise, just as the law can only be rightly conceived in this context. Thus from the time of Abraham to Christ the Gospel as promise and fulfillment is proclaimed. All who put their trust in the promise of God are justified and thus made contemporaries of Christ. In the history of Israel we have to do with one God who speaks differently according to the diversity of times and seasons but whose message is always the same.

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<sup>199</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

In a sense there is nothing new about the gospel, as the whole letter (Romans) will show; there is no rupture between the promises which appeared to be reserved to some only, and the reality which fulfilled them all. The culmination which the prophetic oracles find in Jesus Christ elucidates them by showing the goal to which they tend.<sup>200</sup>

#### IV THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW AND JESUS CHRIST

We have already seen in Chapter I in Paul's understanding of Christ and the Mosaic law how Christ fulfills the law.<sup>201</sup> It is necessary to

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>201</sup> When Paul talks about Christ fulfilling the Mosaic law is he just concerned with the ceremonial laws or with the ethical laws also? We find that Paul does not distinguish between the two sets of laws within the Mosaic law in this regard but felt that they were both fulfilled by Jesus Christ. "Das Gesetz ist für ihn immer eine Einheit und ethische Prinzipien werden daraus niemals hervorgehoben." (P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 76) Yet when we are concerned with their fulfillment Paul does proclaim it in a different manner. In other words there is a basic unity since all law originates in God but they are fulfilled in the light of their respective natures or concerns.

In the case of the old institutions they are abolished with their accompanying dominion but since they are also fulfilled in Christ they are given a new meaning. In Ro. 4: 11 Paul indicates that circumcision is an essential sign of faith. But here it has become a circumcision of the heart by the Spirit in Christ rather than the flesh. In olden times it pointed to the distinctiveness of Israel in the midst of a pagan world, although under the law Israel was still of the flesh and therefore in this sense not separate from sinful man. Here its separation was based on an outward sign and maintained by human effort. But in Christ our separation is a reality since it relies upon God's grace and not just the outward sign. Thus the necessity of the outward sign of circumcision is abolished but in Christ circumcision attains its true significance and meaning.

Ethical laws are also fulfilled in Christ. In the old dispensation living up to these precepts was characterized as bondage. But in Christ this slavery is eliminated and now these laws receive their true significance and meaning. They become part of God's gracious invitation to men to rely upon Him for their salvation rather than labouring under a burdensome load of demands in an attempt to gain their own salvation by obedience to these commands. In Christ men fulfill these precepts by dwelling in the freedom of the Spirit and thus fulfilling the 'law of Christ'.



to summarize this section to see more clearly how the promise made to Abraham and its relationship to the law is the crucial act of God in His salvation history. In this way we shall recognize the 'promise-fulfillment' motif which reaches fruition in Jesus Christ. At the same time we shall consider the law's termination and consummation. This will further substantiate our thesis that from the beginning God's mode of salvation has always been basically a Gospel-and-law activity.

Gott hat der sündigen Welt von Abraham an in der Verheissung, dass er in Gnaden kommen und die Sünden vergeben wird, das Heil in Aussicht gestellt. Das ist die Tora, wie sie überall in den Schriften des Gesetzes und der Propheten zu hören ist.<sup>202</sup>

We have just considered how this 'Tora', i.e. the righteousness of God was embodied in the law. In Chapter I we saw that the righteousness of God must of necessity reveal man's sin and bring him to death. But with the coming of Jesus Christ not only is the promise fulfilled by the righteousness of God which was hitherto manifested in the law is fully revealed. In this way Christ not only fulfills the law and in this sense He is the goal of the law, he also ends the law as a way of salvation. (Ro. 10: 4)<sup>203</sup>

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Paul indicates that the whole law with its bondage is abolished but since it is fulfilled by Christ it attains its true meaning. This is perhaps best expressed by Paul's understanding of the relation of the Old and New Covenant which is characterized both by discontinuity and by continuity. This relation can also be extended to include that between the Old and New Torah. "Paulus unterscheidet nicht zwischen vorübergehenden und bleibenden Bestandteilen im Gesetz, sondern verkündigt überhaupt das Ende seiner unseligen Herrschaft." (Ibid., p. 75.)

<sup>202</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., pp. 74-75.

<sup>203</sup>Barth interprets this in the light of ἀνακεφαλαιώσις and thus sees Christ as the essence and sum total of the law. "For Jesus Christ is knowledge and truth, the essence and sum total of the Law." (K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 37.) But surely 10: 3 indicates that Paul is also thinking here of Christ as being the end of the law. Here God's righteousness is over against man's.

"Christ is the end of the law" may be understood; He is the end, the culmination of the law, revealing its true purpose - or else: He is the term of the process of the law, and abolishes it. These two interpretations are not mutually exclusive: Christ puts an end to the law because the law find in Him its goal and crown.<sup>204</sup>

Let us consider how Christ fulfills the law and thus establishes it as well as bringing its dominion to an end. We have noted that although the law reveals the righteousness of God man is unable to attain it, simply because it belongs to God and must come as a gift. We saw that in the case of Abraham: "'Gerechtigkeit" und "Leben" gehören hier nicht zum Gesetz und zur Gesetzesbeobachtung, sondern zum Evangelium und zum Glauben."<sup>205</sup> This gift of the righteousness of God is none other than the person of Jesus Christ. God's righteousness which was revealed in the law, and to which the law itself attested but which was distorted by man's sin, is clearly evidenced in the act of God in Christ. This righteousness fulfills the demand for righteousness embodied in the law. This is over against the self-righteousness of man who thought to achieve a right relationship with God by his own efforts. In this manner Christ also becomes the end of the law as a way of salvation. In Jesus Christ it is revealed, once and for all,

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St. Paul has in the preceding verse been contrasting two methods of obtaining δικαιοσύνη; one, that obtained by God, as ix. 32 shows, a method ἐκ πίστεως; the other that pursued by the Jews, a method διὰ νόμου. The latter has ceased to be possible, as St. Paul now proves by showing that, by the coming of Christ Law as a means of obtaining righteousness had been brought to an end. (Rev. W. Sanday and Rev. A. C. Headlam, "The International Critical Commentary", The Epistle to the Romans, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1895), pp. 283-284)

<sup>204</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 266.

<sup>205</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 59.

that the law can never be a way of salvation. Thus by His righteousness Christ not only brings the law to its culmination point, He also suspends it as a way of salvation.

Christ also fulfills the law in the sense that He takes upon Himself the curse of the law, i.e. its judgment on man's sin. The law necessarily had the effect of exposing man's sin because it was a manifestation of God's righteous demands. The effect of the law was condemnation and death. On the Cross Jesus Christ takes upon Himself the consequences of our rebellion and achieves complete acquittal for us. This achievement is obtained by granting unto God the perfect obedience the law requires. By taking upon Himself the consequences of our rejection of God Jesus Christ dies and thereby exhausts the curse of the law. "Christ Himself took the law to its uttermost conclusion when he became obedient unto the death of the Cross and submitted to its condemnation of sinful man."<sup>206</sup> In this manner the curse of the law is ended at the same time that God's righteousness is not compromised and man's sin is taken seriously.

Finally Jesus Christ terminates the law by consummating the promise and thus brings to an end the law's dominion over man which was characteristic of the interim period between Abraham and Christ. He establishes the new order which the promise indicated and in which men may live in the freedom of the Spirit of life. In Romans 7: 1ff. we noted how Paul indicated that in dying with Christ we are freed from the law's dominion and its inevitable consequences. Thus the dominion of the law and its damnation are terminated. In Christ the law can no longer find any fault in us. In Christ we fulfill the law by being dead to its accusation and dominion in the new state of the fulfilled promise. (Ro. 8: 1-4)

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<sup>206</sup>Ragnar Bring, "The Message to the Gentiles," Studia Theologica, Vol. 19, Johannes Munck Paim in Memoriam, ed. H. Lindroth, Einar Molland and Lauri Haikola, (1965) p. 36.

So ist Christus auch das Ende des Gesetzes nicht in dem Sinne, dass alle vormaligen Gebote aufhören, sondern er ist das Ende der seit Mose Bestehenden unseligen Herrschaft des Gesetzes, weil die Notwendigkeit dieser Herrschaft jetzt nicht mehr besteht. Die wahre, von Gott als Endziel bezweckte "Gerechtigkeit" ist durch Christus wirklich geworden und wird im Glauben empfangen. Das Endziel ist mit Christus erreicht, und das Neue hat angefangen. So ist auch das τέλος in 10, 4 heilsökonomisch zu verstehen.<sup>207</sup>

τέλος in this regard can be seen as the fulfillment or goal of the law since Christ consummates the promise and thereby ends the law's dominion. This is recognized from the point of view of God's plan of salvation for from the beginning He has always come to man in grace. Jesus Christ the perfect manifestation of the righteousness of God was the Gospel in the form of the promise in bygone days but now he has come in bodily form in the last times. From the beginning, in spite of man's rebellion, it has always been a relationship of the Gospel and the law. As Leenhardt comments: "The acts of God in history must be considered as such in their origin and intention (i.e. as acts of God) not as acts in their earthly manifestation or effects."<sup>208</sup>

#### V THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW IN JESUS CHRIST AS IT CONFRONTS SINFUL MAN

In our understanding of the law we have noted that although it judges man and reveals his sin he neither accepts the verdict of this revelation nor is he driven to repentance and dependence upon divine grace for his salvation. It reveals to him that he cannot attain the righteousness of God through the works of the law but man ignores this revelation. He is deluded by sin into thinking that he can establish his own righteousness by works of the law; that he is too good for the grace of God. But in Jesus Christ man becomes aware of the justness of the verdict of God; he repents, which is nothing more than the acceptance of this judgment, and trusts in God for his salvation.

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<sup>207</sup> P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 65.

<sup>208</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., pp. 90-91.

Why is God's purpose manifested in the promise made to Abraham now accomplished? Simply, because Jesus Christ is the revelation of the righteousness of God: He is the consummation of the promise made to Abraham. That which was foretold by the prophets and the law has now come to pass; the righteousness of God has been revealed in power in the person of Jesus Christ.

Die Gottesgerechtigkeit ist also die Heilsgabe und das Heilsgut der zum Durchbruch gekommenen Heils - und Endzeit; sie gründet in dem Sühnemittel Christus, d.h. in seinem Tod für unsere Sündenschuld. (Ro. 10: 3)<sup>209</sup>

But this righteousness of God has two sides which cannot be separated, each being necessary for the salvation of man. We have already noted in Chapter I how the wrath of God is part of the Gospel. "By revealing in Jesus Christ true God and true man, the gospel suggests the judgment of wrath which God makes on the false gods and the aberrations of mankind."<sup>210</sup> Not only is there a revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ but it must of necessity expose man's unrighteousness. That which lay hidden has been clearly seen, not only from the side of God's truth, but also from the side of man's lie. In Jesus Christ God's verdict on sin has been finalized and made abundantly clear. "The verdict of the faithful God on the whole world, which is revealed in Jesus Christ, has this side, this dark side as well; it is also the revelation of God's wrath."<sup>211</sup> Wrath is not foreign to God's love for it is a consuming love. He will not tolerate the existence of other gods and thus in the Cross He reveals His utter opposition to man's rebellion. (Ro. 1: 17-18) This wrath is not only revealed against the Gentile but also and most particularly against the Jew. The law which distinguishes the Jew from the Gentile is that which demonstrates and identifies sin as sin. The

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<sup>209</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 60.

<sup>210</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 61.

<sup>211</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 25.



very law which the Jew uses to condemn the Gentile world applies first to him. Thus the Jew stands before God as first and foremost condemned.

(Ro. 2: 1ff.) He is an example of the world's sin and the attitude that God has toward it. But basically, whether the sinner be Jew or Gentile, it is with the one revelation of the one God in Jesus Christ that we are concerned.

The gospel reveals sin - the Cross shows us our sin; the gospel enhances sin, giving to our continuing sin the character of wilful rejection of God's love; the gospel increases sin - for when God's claim on man is made most clear and pressing, it enrages our sinfulness most, our self-centredness recognizing the seriousness with which it is threatened; the gospel declares God's condemnation - it is declared in the Cross even as it is borne for us.<sup>212</sup>

We also noted that God's righteousness had to do with His fidelity to His promises. In the covenant relationship with Israel God not only intervenes against His people to punish but in this context He punishes to save. He reveals His goodness by being faithful to His promise to deliver and save His people. Thus the righteousness of God qualifies His salvation. This righteousness is the person of Jesus Christ who is the expression of God's faithfulness to His promise as well as the actualization of the promise. When God confronts man in righteousness in Jesus Christ He normalizes the relationship between Himself and man which sin has temporarily suspended. It is to be noted that this restoration of the broken relation depends solely upon God's initiative. Since faith is the crucial issue in this regard, such a righteous status is irrespective of membership in Israel. "The righteous God is He who justifies man; the righteous man is he who is justified by the righteous God."<sup>213</sup>In so justifying man God is faithful to His righteous character and the promises He has made.

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<sup>212</sup>C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 68.

<sup>213</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 56.

In the Gospel the divine judgment is pronounced upon all men. But since it is against God ~~that~~ men rebel then it is only He who may acquit them. This He did by taking the consequences of man's rebellion upon Himself in the death of His Son. Thus the Judge takes upon Himself the consequences of His own judgment. When men accept both the judgment of God and His acquittal and thereby trust in His action for their salvation they are justified by God. Here we see the two aspects of God's righteousness fully revealed: His faithfulness to His promise and His holiness.

Unfortunately the Jew did not recognize the way of Jesus Christ as one of mercy and judgment. He did not accept the fact that man must die in order to live. He refused to accept God's grace as grace but rather continued to look for his own way. The Jew, in his rejection of the grace of God declared in Christ, refuses to repent and thus receives wrath and anger from the judgment-seat of God. In other words he typifies the situation of man under the dominion of the law and sin because he does not accept God's judgment. Rather he considers himself as righteous through the law. But over against this, in Romans 2: 27-28, Paul defines for us the mark of the true Jew, i.e. the son of Abraham. He is the one who is circumcized within, not just without.

He would be a Christian, who praises God's grace and therefore accepts his judgment, who is therefore not trying to escape from the divine condemnation. He does not try to save himself from it but surrenders to it in order that he may glory in the mercy of him who condemns him to death.<sup>214</sup>

Only as the condemnation of the law, i.e. the righteousness of God in the law, is understood in the total context of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can men see that in the final analysis God's judgment is a saving Word: that God judges only to save: that the purpose of judgment is salvation. Romans 5: 12-21 indicates that the grace of God becomes exceedingly abundant at the

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<sup>214</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 39.

point of man's greatest sin, i.e. at the crucifixion of the Son of God. When God's judgment is pronounced on sin in the Cross His grace becomes clearly visible and thus God's condemnation serves His redemptive activity. In this sense human sin witnesses to God's grace since it shows the depths of the grace which overcame sin. As Barth comments:

... what follows from the Law, and from the Gospel itself inasmuch as it is God's Law, is the knowledge of sin (3: 20): the revelation of God's condemnation of man, to which as such we must submit for our salvation, to which we are allowed to submit to our rich comfort.<sup>215</sup>

This further indicates, as Paul says in Romans 3: 31, that in this manner the law is not made invalid, but it is established. The righteousness of God revealed in the law is brought to full force in its condemnation of man in the Gospel. But here this condemnation is not seen only as the prohibitions and demands of God but as a gracious invitation to accept God's grace for our salvation. The law had kept man in prison, i.e. it kept man under judgment until Christ came. In this way it prepared for Christ since it revealed the verdict of God's righteousness to man although in this situation he refused to accept it. But now in Christ man is able to accept the verdict and the grace which this acceptance necessitates. Thus once again, it is only as sinful man understands the condemnation of God in the light of His love that he is able to grasp the true content of the Proclamation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Or in other words, only as man hears the Word of God in His Son as basically the Gospel and the law.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>216</sup>We have noted that in Christ the Mosaic law was brought to an end. As a way of salvation the law is no longer valid. Indeed the old age was characterized by man's slavery to the law which resulted in death. This is the Mosaic law which Israel held to be the way of salvation. This is the law in the restricted sense that has come to an end but the wider context of law, i.e. the revelation of God's righteousness, is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and

In order to complete this section on the Gospel and the law in Jesus Christ as it confronts sinful man we must say a word about the relation of faith and works. Here we define sinful man as that one who thinks to achieve his own salvation by works of the law and thus rejects God's grace. It is important for us to see this relationship clearly for as Verweij's comments:

Wie aus dem allen deutlich geworden sein dürfte, entspringt bei Paulus der Gegensatz Glaube - Werke dem von Evangelium und Gesetz; am Gesetz Israels wird er erst in voller Schärfe offenbar.<sup>217</sup>

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established. Cranfield suggests that the law is not a disastrous misconception that Christ came to set us free from, nor was it God's first unsuccessful attempt to save man.

On the contrary, it is clear that we are true to Paul's teaching, when we say that God's Word in Scripture is one; that there is but one way of God with men, and that an altogether gracious way; that gospel and law are essentially one, and their unity, so far from being a mystery still hidden from us, has been once and for all revealed to us in that one gracious Word of God, whose name is Jesus Christ, in whom at the same time God gives Himself wholly to man, and claims man wholly for Himself. (C. E. B. Cranfield, Op. Cit., p. 68.)

Certainly we would agree with this if we understand this law as the righteousness of God. But it seems to me, as our discussion of Galatians indicated, that Cranfield is in danger of making a complete identification of the law of God and the Mosaic law. (Supra p. 44, Ch. I) It is true that the Mosaic law does contain the righteousness of God and also witnesses to it. But the two are not identical. The Mosaic law and its bondage is at an end but the righteousness of God continues and is consummated and established in Jesus Christ. This identification was the mistake of which Israel was guilty for she gave the law and the religious institutions the character of divinity. "The Jews certainly invested the law with the highest qualities, with divinity itself; it was a metaphysical entity, created before the world." (Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., p. 36) Therefore if we maintain the distinction between the law as the righteousness of God in the wider sense, and the Mosaic law in the restricted sense, we may say that Gospel and Law are essentially one, as we have held. They are mutual names for the righteousness of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It is not so much the Mosaic law in the restricted sense which is integral to the Gospel but God's righteousness which it embodies and reveals and which, as we have already noted, may be called the divine requirement of love.

<sup>217</sup>P. G. Verweij's, Op. Cit., p. 52.

The law in this context is the Mosaic law through which man hopes to achieve his own salvation.<sup>218</sup> We noted in conjunction with Abraham that he was accounted righteous by faith and not by works. We have also described faith as the acceptance of God's verdict in Jesus Christ about ourselves and trust in His grace for our salvation. In the case of Abraham, and for

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<sup>218</sup>Davies suggests that it is misleading to see Paul's basic distinction between Christianity and Judaism in terms of faith or works.

... we must deprecate that approach to our problem which exaggerates the antithesis between Pauline Christianity as a religion of Faith and the Spirit and Rabbinic Judaism as a religion of obedience and the Torah, and which has elevated the doctrine of Justification by Faith to the primary place in Paul's thought. (W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 221ff.)

He continues by pointing out that the centre of Paul's thought is not his attack on the Old Torah but is the realization that in Jesus Christ the New Age has dawned and now men live under the law of the Spirit of life. He substantiates his argument by noting the importance of works in Paul's understanding of the life of the Christian. But here works are in a somewhat different context. Works do find their proper place as an expression of a man's new status given to him by God in Christ. But even here they do not add to man's salvation, in the sense that they complete what Christ has already done. Although we would agree that the centre of Paul's thought is the affirmation of Jesus Christ, at the same time, it will be He who will necessarily expose man's sin as his attempt at self-salvation by works of the law. This is further indicated in Paul's discussion of the slavery of man to the law from which he must be freed by Christ. Paul is concerned to show that salvation is by faith or trust in God's grace over against the efforts of man. Thus this basic distinction does not arise out of a polemic against Judaism but out of an affirmation of the Gospel and the law relationship in Jesus Christ. Indeed it was this same person, Jesus Christ, who enabled Paul to see that the end of the law was failure. Therefore, because he affirms, Paul must also reject and thus the basic distinction results. The Judaism of Paul's day represented for him man in his attempt at salvation by means of the law. From the beginning of the promise to its fulfillment God has revealed His way but men have ignored it to follow their own path. Thus the contrast arises out of the nature of God's revelation and man's sin.



that matter all men, faith is an act of obedience in which one submits to a promise; a promise which was fulfilled in God's good time in Jesus Christ. Here we see both the subjective and the objective aspects of faith; man's response to God's prior action. In both cases the prime actor is God since faith is also His work.

Consequently in faith the objective and the subjective aspects are inseparably commingled, to isolate them from each other would be to distort them; faith arises only in an encounter, in a relation which concerns both God who speaks and man who listens, God who offers and man who receives, he who makes the promise by the preaching of the good news and the one to whom the promise is made.<sup>219</sup>

Over against this is the obedience of a man to the law as characterized by Judaism. Such a man would claim his salvation from God as his right. This gives rise to boasting which is characteristic of the man who seeks to usurp the prerogatives of God.

It is never to be denied that God is interested in the way a man behaves, but it is impossible to over-emphasize that His love does not depend on the individual's conforming to a certain moral standard - not even a divine one.<sup>220</sup>

God loves us while we were yet sinners and such love opens the doors to all men regardless of their standard of morality. Now this does not mean that Paul was not concerned with good works but for the Christian they are characterized as fruits of the Spirit. Good works are the manifestation of the Christian's justified existence, i.e. the outward signs of the indwelling Spirit. Thus with Paul's understanding of faith we see, once again, the Gospel and the law relationship which is characteristic of his proclamation.

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<sup>219</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 39.

<sup>220</sup>J. H. Deibert, "Law-Gospel or Gospel-Law", The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 15 (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), p. 233

VI THE GOSPEL, THE LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

Now let us consider the relation of the Gospel and the law in the Christian dispensation. We have already noted that Jesus Christ in His life and death fulfills the law by revealing and establishing God's righteousness. Now the question arises, how does the Christian participate in this righteousness and thus fulfill the law? Bring comments that "the Gospel was the living Christ who had fulfilled the law, and who now through the gospel offered participation in his own righteousness."<sup>221</sup> As God's creatures we participate in God's righteousness through faith and thus fulfill the law. In this sense we are united with Christ and share His fulfillment. Thus we do not fulfill the law ourselves but participate in what Christ has already achieved. This faith is characterized by two aspects which are in conjunction with the two aspects of God's righteousness. First, when we consider faith as trust we understand the fulfillment of the law by Christ as the revelation that God is faithful to His promises. Here Christ as the righteousness of God is the Consummation of His promise made to Abraham. Faith in this instance is characterized by our complete dependence upon divine grace for our salvation. Therefore in Christ we fulfill the law in that we participate in the salvation He has achieved for us as the consummation of the promise. "Dadurch, dass die Verheissung erfüllt ist, sind wir auch zum "erfüllten Gesetz" gelangt."<sup>222</sup> This new situation is characterized by our life in the Spirit which enables us to cry 'Abba Father'. (Ro. 8: 15)

The important thing about continuing in hope, in patient expectation, is for us to continue, to carry on in that work of calling on God, of crying 'Abba, Father' (Ro. 8: 15), in which grace is accepted as grace and the Law is fulfilled.<sup>223</sup>

Abraham is the example of one who trusted in God to fulfill His promise in the face of a human situation which contradicted this promise. (Ro. 4: 17-18)

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<sup>221</sup>Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., p. 36.

<sup>222</sup>P. G. Verweij, Op. Cit., p. 78.

<sup>223</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 100

Here Paul gives us an Old Testament example of one who, even at that time, fulfilled God's righteousness and was looked upon as righteous himself.

Faith has also been defined as obedience particularly in connection with God's righteousness which also demands obedience. In Jesus Christ we behold the One who was perfectly obedient, even unto the death of the Cross. (Ro. 5: 17-19) In so doing Christ fulfills the law's demand for righteousness and overcomes death, i.e. the curse of the law. In this case the fulfillment of the law is again the decisive act of God in Jesus Christ for Israel and the world. We participate in this obedience through faith and thus we too fulfill the law's demands not of our own accord but by participating in Christ's achievement. Of course these two conceptions of faith are integral to each other and really cannot be considered in any way separate. Man's obedience in this context is a sign of his trust and reliance upon grace whereas his trust is characterized by obedience. In both cases Faith is indicative of our reliance upon and participation in what Jesus Christ has already done on our behalf. Thus our fulfillment of the law depends entirely upon God's action in His Son. In other words we must see our fulfillment of the law from the point of view of God's mode of salvation, i.e. the Gospel. Because of this action the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in our hearts. (Ro. 5: 5) enabling us to participate in Christ's achievement.

Der Wandel nach dem Geiste ist also nicht etwas Übersinnliches, sondern ein Ergebnis der Heilswirklichkeit in Christus. Nur indem wir in ihm sind und bleiben durch den Glauben haben wir ihn und wird der Anspruch des Gesetzes erfüllt.<sup>224</sup>

We have noted how His death was a manifestation of His obedience to the demands of God and how we participate in this obedience through faith. The symbol of our participation in this death of Jesus Christ is baptism. Romans 6

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<sup>224</sup>P. G. Verweijs, Op. Cit., p. 78.

indicates that what happened to Christ also happens to those in Christ. We have died with Christ to sin and therefore it no longer has any claim on or authority over us. We belong to Christ and He it is that is our Lord and Master. Now we are servants of righteousness, that righteousness revealed in Jesus Christ. Once again we have noted how the Christian is enabled to participate in Christ's redemptive work by relying solely on God's power. The Gospel, as the revelation of the righteousness of God, not only fulfills the law but enables man to participate in this salvation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the story of God's initiative and action to save man and to this man can add nothing. In the Gospel His obedience becomes our obedience, His achievement our achievement, His righteousness our righteousness.

But once the law has been fulfilled and its dominion terminated are we left without any sort of authority in our Christian life? Paul indicates that now we are under the 'law of Christ' and thereby not lawless.

'The law of Christ' (Gal. vi. 2) is not a new law, for it is the law of love which was already laid down by Moses, though laid down by him in such a way as to be readily capable of perversion. Christ therefore is not a new lawgiver, but the interpreter, or indeed the vindicator or establisher, of the old law. (Ro. iii.31).<sup>225</sup>

It is this new 'law of Christ' which is now authoritative for the Christian; a law which, as we have noted, is the consummation of the old law. It is what we have called the righteousness of God, which in this new context is related to the Spirit which grants life. The old law witnessed to this righteousness of God but now that the bondage of this period is past and the promise fulfilled this same righteousness of God brings life and freedom to men.

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<sup>225</sup>C. K. Barrett, Op. Cit., From First Adam to Last, p. 80.

But is this just another law to which men will be subjected and to which they must be obedient in order to complete their salvation? It is this to which we shall now address ourselves. We have just noted how, in our baptism into Christ, we are liberated from the dominion of the law. Are we now free to do what we please? No, for:

Liberation from the power of the law thus by no means gives us the option of sinning because such liberation implies that the believer has passed from one authority, now superseded, to the sphere of a new authority!<sup>226</sup>

This new authority is Jesus Christ Himself whose life of righteousness, in which the Christian participates by the Spirit, enables this same Christian to fulfill  $\tauὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ$ . (Gal. 6: 2)

Jesus Christ is the revelation of the righteousness of God revealed in the beginning in the promise to Abraham, maintained under the law in the time of Israel and consummated by His life, death and resurrection. We have already noted how the Old Torah did in fact reveal the righteousness of God, although Israel as a whole did not recognize it properly in the Mosaic law, but now this has been consummated and revealed unambiguously in Jesus Christ. With this in mind it would appear that Paul, although he did not call Jesus the New Torah, did feel that Christ was the central authority in his life and therefore assumed some of the characteristics of a new Torah for him. A. C. Davies suggests that:

the possibility is not to be ruled out that much in Paul's understanding of his Lord, as the pre-existent agent of creation, e.g. (Col. 1: 15ff.), may be due to his ascription to Christ of the attributes ascribed by Judaism to the law. Certain it is that Christ, in his person and words, has taken the place of the law in Paul's life and thought, and, in this sense, has become for him a new Torah.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Franz J. Leenhardt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>227</sup> A. C. Davies, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3: *Law in the New Testament*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 100.



To suggest as Davies goes on to say: "Jesus Himself - in word and deed or fact is a New Torah"<sup>228</sup> seems to go beyond what Paul claims. That Christ is the central authority in Paul's life there can be no doubt, but this is not to say that Christ is the New Torah. Christ grants us the 'law of Christ' in his teaching and life and it is by living in the Spirit that the Christian is enabled to fulfill this but to suggest that Christ is the New Torah is to go beyond what is suggested by Paul. Further, this new authority is not a challenge to justification but the proclamation of the justifying and sanctifying grace of God. In Jesus Christ God has revealed for all men that they belong to Him and that He has saved them. This is nothing more than the revelation of Christ's lordship over men. Faith in this case is characterized by obedience which is trust in Jesus Christ and what He has done as well as assent to the new authority of the Spirit of Christ.

But what is the content of this 'law of Christ' and how do men obey it? We have already seen in Chapter I how Paul would be familiar with something of the words and life of Jesus Christ.<sup>229</sup> Since Jesus is the revelation of the righteousness of God it is inevitable that the content of this 'law of Christ' would be contained in the life and teachings of Christ.<sup>230</sup> In so

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<sup>228</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>229</sup>Supra, pp. 4&5 Ch. I

<sup>230</sup>Dodd comments that "the law of God, which at one stage and on one level finds expression in the Torah, may at another stage and on a different level find expression in the "law of Christ". (C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 99) This indicates the distinction which we have maintained all along between the law of God, which is the revelation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ, on the one hand and the Mosaic law on the other. The law of God, which in the Old Testament times found its expression in the Old Torah, now finds its complete expression in Jesus Christ's life and teaching. Thus Paul may claim to be free from the Mosaic law and yet still be under the law of God as he does in I Cor. 9: 20.

far as the teachings of Christ are concerned I Cor. 7: 10, 9: 14 give us some indication of the importance they had for Paul. There are also other places in which it is not difficult to recognize some reference to sayings of Christ which may have formed a common tradition known both to Paul and those whom he is addressing.<sup>231</sup> Gal. 6: 2 indicates that by obeying certain moral injunctions, particularly the one in Gal. 6: 2, one fulfills the 'law of Christ'. This passage is closely related to the preceding one which is concerned with the fruits of the Spirit. We may conclude that the Christian, in that he is

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<sup>231</sup>In Chapter I we have already referred to the likelihood of the presence of a common tradition known to Paul, Matthew and Luke. C. H. Dodd discusses the points of agreement between Ro. 14: 10 and Matthew 7: 1-2, 18: 10; Rom 14: 13 and Matthew 18: 6, Rom. 14: 14 and Mark 7: 18-19; Ro. 14: 19 and Mark 9: 33-50. He also points to the similarity between Gal. 6: 2 and Matthew 23: 4; I Cor. 5: 4-5 and Matthew 23: 4. For a more detailed discussion see C. H. Dodd, Studia Paulina, pp. 106-107. In studying the relationship between St. Paul and St. Matthew Dodd concludes that there is:

significant agreement in eschatological teaching, in the idea of Church and Church order and in the controversy with Pharisaic Judaism. There is nothing to suggest either literary dependence or derivation from a common source; but it would appear that behind both writers there lies some kind of common tradition. (C. H. Dodd, "Matthew and Paul", The Expository Times, Vol. 58, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark), p. 297.

Thus Paul could draw from this store of a common tradition to complete his picture of Christ and His teaching and this would form part of the content of what he conceived to be 'the law of Christ'. The stories of Christ would present how the love of God would operate in specific situations and Christ's ethical maxims would also indicate proper Christian action. These would be of special importance for Paul and did form the nucleus of his ethical exhortations. But with Christ gone from the earthly scene and the situations varied Paul relied upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the light of the teachings of Christ and his understanding of the whole life of Christ. Thus Christ, His teachings and His life and the guidance of the Holy Spirit enabled Paul to manifest the love of God in a variety of situations and thus fulfill 'the law of Christ'.

the dwelling place of the Spirit, fulfills the 'law of Christ' by exhibiting the type of conduct which, in this instance, is obedience to these moral injunctions. In other words such Christian action is a manifestation of love which finds its source in the indwelling Spirit. Thus the presence of the Spirit and its outward manifestation in the Christian life enables the Christian to fulfill the 'law of Christ'. In I Cor. 9: 20 Paul indicates that, although he does not obey the Mosaic law while engaging in missionary activity among the Gentiles, he is not lawless but is *ἐννομος Χριστοῦ*. Here he maintains the distinction which we have observed and also holds that in so far as his action manifests the love of God he fulfills the 'law of Christ'.

There, Paul described himself as *μηδὲν ὑπὸ νόμον*, and yet as *ἐννομος Χριστοῦ*: and so here the Christian, in so far as he is led by the Spirit, is *οὐχ ὑπὸ νόμον* and yet he is said to "fulfill the law of Christ".<sup>232</sup>

But the presence of the Spirit depends upon the initiative of God in Christ and thus once again we are concerned with the Gospel.

## VII THE GOSPEL, THE LAW AND THE SPIRIT

It remains for us to consider the Gospel and the law in relation to the Spirit before concluding this present chapter. Davies suggests that:

The weight of the evidence suggests that that activity (the activity of the Spirit) was regarded as a past phenomenon in Israel's history, a phenomenon which had indeed given to Israel its Torah, its prophets and the whole of its Scriptures, but which had ceased when the prophetic office ended.<sup>233</sup>

But with this relegation of the activity of the Spirit to the past there also arose a strong expectation of its return in the future. This age would be inaugurated by the Messiah and thus the Messianic Age would also be an Age of the Spirit. As far as Paul was concerned this age had arrived in Jesus

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<sup>232</sup> C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 100.

<sup>233</sup> W. D. Davies, Op. Cit., p. 215.

Christ and was equally characterized by manifestations of the Spirit in ecstatic experiences and moral enthusiasm. Paul did not create these manifestations of the Spirit which were to be exhibited in the End out of his own imagination but found these signs of the Spirit's activity in the Old Testament. The Hebrew saw the Spirit's activity in the ecstatic experiences of certain leaders who possessed the charismatic gift as well as in the moral discernment of the prophets. The New Age of Christ was also characterized by these manifestations given, as in the Old Testament, primarily for the sake of the community. It would be by this same Spirit that men would be able to fulfill the 'law of Christ' as well as to discern what this law of love required in a given situation. Again we must remember that this fulfillment of the 'law of Christ' does not depend so much upon the believer but upon the redemptive work of Christ and its continuance in our life by the action of the Spirit. This is in line with the expression of the Spirit in the prophets as well as the time which they prophesied would come to pass.

This twofold nature of the Age to Come, as the fulfillment of the expectation of an invasion of the Spirit and of a perfect conformity to the Torah can be traced back to the Old Testament. (Ezekial 37; Jer. 31: 31-34)<sup>234</sup>

Thus we are able to discern in Paul's understanding of Christ as the inaugurator of the final age the line of promise and fulfillment noted before. The chief characteristic of this age was to be the giving of the Spirit and the effects it was to have in man's life. The Spirit's presence was the redemptive activity of God among men, not isolated from the work of Christ, but based upon it. Ro. 5: 5 indicates that Paul's hope was based on the fact that the guarantee of God's promise was here; the Holy Spirit was the first fruits of this consummated promise.

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<sup>234</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

For Paul the gift of the Spirit enables the Christian to fulfill the law which, as we have seen, was not contrary to the promise for it too laid down the requirement of love. Freed from the law of sin and death the Spirit of life in Christ causes the just requirement of the law and its righteousness to be fulfilled in us. (Ro. 8: 2ff.)<sup>235</sup> We have already considered how we share in Christ's death and resurrection through Baptism. This is made

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<sup>235</sup> Perhaps this is the place where we ought to consider the difference between, and the relation of, the Old and New Covenants. In II Cor. 3 Paul points to the false teachers which have come into the midst of the Corinthian Church with equally false letters of commendation. This, he says, is indicative of the very nature of their appeal. They are concerned with the 'letter-nature' of the law, i.e. the Old Covenant, which is a thing of the past. Paul's point is clear: "the law killeth, but the Spirit giveth life". (II Cor. 3: 6) The Old has passed away with the coming of Christ, and a New Covenant has been established. The Old Covenant was characterized by man's attempt to obey the law written on stone. The law written down in black and white and to be carried out to the letter in every situation of life, is now abolished in Jesus Christ. The character of the past age under this dominion was bondage and death, that of the New Age is freedom in the Spirit.

Jeremiah preached that the Old Covenant was void because of the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel. But this did not mean that the promise was made invalid or that His purpose was defeated. God's purpose, as it was intended from the beginning, would be accomplished by the inauguration of a New Covenant in which men would know God in their hearts in a new way. (Jer. 31: 31-34) Jesus Christ initiates this New Covenant by the shedding of His blood as well as establishing the basis of the new law which is to be written on the hearts of men by the Spirit. What we have is a contrast between the Old and the New, between that which was written on stone and on flesh, between externality and internality, between the letter that killeth and the Spirit which giveth life, and between bondage and freedom. Indeed this relationship also gives us some idea of the relation between the Gospel and the law. The former is characterized by the New Covenant and the latter by the Old Covenant.

But as well as a contrast there is also a continuity between the Old and New Covenants. There is the continuity of expectation and fulfillment in that the law pointed to the One who, by His righteousness, would fulfill its demands. Both the law and Christ are concerned with the righteousness of God; the former perverted into a way of salvation by man's sinful pride and the latter made perfect because in this case man's salvation rests upon God's action and not man's efforts.



possible by the indwelling Spirit in the Christian's life. As we have suggested the Christian dies to the dominion of the law but is raised to life which is lived in the freedom of the Spirit. (Ro. 8: 2) In this new condition of the Spirit men participate in the righteousness of Christ and thus establish or fulfill the law.<sup>236</sup>

The Spirit also enables men to recognize the true end of the law and not to use it for their own glory and salvation. (Ro. 2: 23, 3: 27, 4: 2)

To begin with him - because he has made a beginning with us - 'to be in Christ' simply means to be bound by the pure and true Law of God established and made effective in him; to be compelled and allowed to accept the offer of God's grace and to be obedient to the commandment of God's grace, which has appeared in him; as men who were dead and who have been brought to life by him.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Perhaps it is here that we should ask the question: what happens to the Torah if it is fulfilled and its dominion ended? The key lies in Dodd's comment: "It would perhaps not be going too far if we said that the ultimate law of God can be discerned in the Torah when it is interpreted by Christ;" ... (C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 101) Thus the Torah is still valid if seen in the light of the revelation of God's righteousness in Christ. We should expect this simply because God has not rejected Israel but is faithful to His promise, that promise made to Abraham. Thus it is still valid for the Jew. As for the Christian they are still of importance to us. We have already noted that Paul understood the law to embody the righteousness of God and this is in no way cancelled although it is fulfilled by Christ. The Christian fulfills the law by his participation in Christ's action through the Spirit. The moral laws remain as indicators of God's requirement of love and as sources of guidance for the Christian's fulfillment of the 'law of Christ'. This is understood only in the light of Christ who enables the Christian to understand the law aright so that he does not use it as a way of salvation. In this manner the moral laws are of crucial importance for the Christian. The sacrificial laws also serve as expressions of the way of salvation since their meaning understood in the light of Christ indicates that the sacrifice of love is the manner in which the Christian expresses his gratitude to God for his salvation. Granted the Christian is no longer required to adhere to the sacrificial regulations as set down by the law, but they still indicate that the sacrifice of a contrite heart is the mark of a believer. These laws also help to explain both the manner and the necessity of God's righteous action in Jesus Christ to achieve our salvation. Thus through the understanding given to us by the Holy Spirit in the light of Jesus Christ the Torah which contains an expression of God's righteousness has meaning for the Christian and his life.

<sup>237</sup> K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 90.

To walk in the flesh is to disregard God's grace and to react against God's claim. Paul has characterized life in the flesh as bondage whereas life in the Spirit is one of freedom. By the indwelling Holy Spirit man becomes free from the law of sin and death to be free for God; to be free for obedience. Paul has indicated that this life is one of sonship in which we may call upon God as our Father. (Ro. 8: 15) This cry of 'Father' made possible by the indwelling Spirit, indicates the dependence of man upon divine grace for his salvation, in fact, that which was promised to him from the beginning.

"The gospel was the living Christ who had fulfilled the law, and who now through the gospel offered participation in his own righteousness."<sup>238</sup> By being united with Christ by the Spirit we achieve what was the primary aim of the law, i.e. that righteousness should prevail. Through Christ we share in the power of the Age to Come, which does not mean that now we have some sort of moral power to fulfill the law but that we rely upon God in Christ to do what we could never achieve. The Spirit, which is the new source of power for the Christian, tells again and again that we always stand in need of God's forgiveness but that God on Calvary has already extended this to us. In crying out to the Father we exhibit our dependence upon Him, achieve a righteous status and thus fulfill the law. But the fact remains that we still exist in the old era and thus sin is never far away. (Ro. 8: 12-16)

"The Christian is at the same time "free from sin", and yet subject to the condition of sin."<sup>239</sup> He lives in the two Ages but since the Holy Spirit dwells in him the Christian is assured of the consummation of God's salvation. In this situation the unattainable Christian life presented by the New Covenant lays infinite obligations upon us and so helps us to realize that our best is always under God's judgment. But here this judgment is founded on the love of God in Christ and is expressed by the fact that the Judge is interceding

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<sup>238</sup>Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., p. 36.

<sup>239</sup>Anders Nygren, Op. Cit., p. 200.

on our behalf. (Ro. 8: 34) But such forgiveness is not just that which comforts an uneasy conscience but is a new and vital power which enables men to live a new style of life. In such a manner the good life of the Christian is dependent upon the Gospel. Those in Christ must render their obedience moment by moment by God's grace. In such a fashion the Christian announces continually that he believes while at the same time he witnesses to the object of his belief. Thus exhortation is the consequence of the Gospel.

Faith, which was stirred into life by the gospel, was a spiritual power expressing itself in love to the neighbour; and when the gospel came and the Spirit was given, it was for man to order himself according to the new principles, to live in the Spirit. Paul's moral exhortations spring directly from his preaching of the gospel: he does not urge man to create good himself, but since the good (righteousness) has been given, it is to be accepted and the consequences followed up in one's manner of life.<sup>240</sup>

This is seen in the case of the sacrament of baptism which, as a cultic form of the Gospel, was often followed and preceded by ethical teaching. The indwelling Spirit, which enables men to participate in the death and resurrection of Christ as symbolized in the rite of baptism, not only brings the believer to Christ but is also the source of corporate action. The Spirit's gifts are not bestowed on the individual for his own sake alone but for the whole Church and the whole world. (Ro. 12: 9-21) The love which now operates in the Christian as a result of the Spirit is for the upbuilding of the community. In fact the Church itself does not exist for itself but for the world and as the Body of Christ is the vehicle of God's redeeming love. "With this love she fulfills every commandment of the Law, for in this love she follows the One who has fulfilled the Law, once and for all."<sup>241</sup> This Body is not self-contained or self-complete but serves Christ.

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<sup>240</sup>Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., pp. 36-37.

<sup>241</sup>K. Barth, Op. Cit., A Shorter Commentary on Romans, p. 160.

Thus to be in Christ is to be a member of His Body, to be subject to His will and dedicated to His ends as revealed in and through the Church. What we have here is a two-way relationship in which the individual serves the Church and the Church as the Body of Christ nurtures the individual. Paul felt that the Christian discovered the will of God for himself by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ro. 12: 2) But even the renewed mind was not left without guidance. Paul did not feel that the Christian was left in isolation to interpret the promptings of the Holy Spirit but rather he was a member of the Body in which the Spirit lives and moves. Within this context each believer is offered guidance and help to understand what it means to fulfill the 'law of Christ' in a variety of situations. But the Church is the repository of the Apostolic tradition and the record of the acts and words of God in Christ. As C. H. Dodd suggests:

Certainly it would be a mistake to attempt to confine the connotation of ὁ νόμος τοῦ Χριστοῦ to the comparatively restricted body of traditional Sayings of Jesus, but it appears that even for Paul, with his strong sense of the immediate governance of Christ through His Spirit in the Church, that which the Lord "commanded" and "ordained" remains the solid, historical and creative nucleus of the whole.<sup>242</sup>

This nucleus indicates the basis and type of action necessary in the life of the Christian to fulfill 'the law of Christ'. Here the Christian's ethical action, i.e. his obedience to his Lord, is based on his mystical communion with his Lord in the Church through the Holy Spirit. All this is made possible and sustained by the act of God in Jesus Christ who re-establishes the relationship between man and Himself by the revelation of His righteousness in His Son. Thus, once again, we note that the Gospel is the basis of the Christian's action and his fulfillment of the law in this context.

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<sup>242</sup> C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Studia Paulina, p. 110.

We have noted how Jesus Christ, His life, death and teaching, grants us a new law. In this sense the Christian's ethical action is based on an imitation of Christ as a human example in the light of His obedience unto death. But the Christian is not left alone as if striving and suffering were the end of his life, for through the Spirit Christ dwells with him, helping him to achieve the unattainable and giving him strength and hope in the midst of his suffering. "His relationship to Christ constrains him. It is a fact but it is also a duty. It is a present reality, but it is also a beckoning ideal."<sup>243</sup> The Spirit is the author, the essence and the consummation of the communion that the Christian has with his Lord. This communion as we have noted is moral in character; it is a dynamic or living communion and it is based upon the Divine initiative. (Ro. 8: 9f.) The obligation imposed on us by the Spirit's presence "is not based on an idea of moral obligation; it is a debt to be paid: what we have to do depends on what has been done for us: it is something rendered in return and that is why it can never have the value of merit."<sup>244</sup> (Ro. 8: 12-14a) As the Spirit's presence results in ethical action, so the love manifested in this action is a sign of the indwelling Spirit. This gives the Christian life its basis in the Gospel which is the action of Divine love in Jesus Christ.

At this point, then, the religious and the ethical moments in Christianity are no longer distinguishable. Ethics reaches out into that which transcends ethics, while at the same time the religious principle which is the foundation of all Christian theology, the definition of the nature of God himself, cannot be stated except in ethical terms: "God is love",<sup>245</sup>

Prior to man's action there is always the compassionate initiative of God.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup>J. S. Stewart, Op. Cit., 199.

<sup>244</sup>Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 211.

<sup>245</sup>C. H. Dodd, Gospel and Law, (The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity), (Cambridge: The University Press, 1963), pp. 44-45.

<sup>246</sup>This raises the question of the place of God's judgment in relation to the Christian's good works.



In conjunction with Christ's teaching the same holds true. We cannot separate the teachings of Christ from His life but both form the revelation of God's righteousness. We have noted the importance that these teachings had for Paul and how they were integral to Paul's understanding of the 'law of Christ'. Here they not only have the purpose of making men realize their need of continual forgiveness but they also offer positive guidance in the Christian life. In both cases, the act of repentance which involves the dependence of man on God's grace for his salvation and thus a participation in the righteousness of Christ and the accompanying fulfillment of the law, and the application of the Gospel of love to a variety of life situations, is made possible by the indwelling Spirit. Those specific precepts which are involved in the 'law of Christ' (I Cor. 7: 10, 9: 14, Gal. 6: 2) may be regarded "as indicating in a dramatic picture of some actual situation the quality and direction of action which shall conform to the standard set by divine agapé."<sup>247</sup> Thus Jesus Christ, i.e. the revelation of God's righteousness,

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If no one is saved by his works, yet the works of him who is saved will be judged; and although one cannot achieve salvation by meritorious good works, the believer can lose his salvation by bad works. (Franz J. Leenhardt, Op. Cit., p. 307)

This indicates that entrance into the Kingdom of God is not automatic and that even a Christian's works come under the scrutiny of God. As I Cor. 9: 27ff. indicates the Christian does continue to live in an evil age. Yet in the midst of this God supports the Christian and thus when he is tempted His Father will assist him in warding off temptation and provide him with an escape from evil's hold. Paul suggests that the failure of the people of Israel in the wilderness should be instructive for us so that we do not commit the same mistakes. With this support and the realization that our Judge is also our Saviour we are given to good works as an expression of God's redeeming love at work in our lives and the gratitude we feel for the salvation He has accomplished on our behalf. All this is built on the foundation of God's grace by which He achieves our salvation and to which we can add nothing.

<sup>247</sup>C. H. Dodd, Op. Cit., Gospel and Law, p. 73.

becomes the basis of Christian action, the goal to which this action is directed, the meaning of the action and in a sense the action itself for as Paul has expressed it: it is not I that live but Christ who lives in me. This Christian action, which is divine love in operation, is basic to God's nature as well as man's since it is the basis of our creation and the goal of our being. "It is the law of our creation, and its field of application is as wide as creation itself."<sup>248</sup>

#### VIII CONCLUSION

Perhaps we ought to conclude this Chapter where we have begun with Paul's definition of the Gospel. "It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Ro. 1: 16, 17) Thus Paul defines the Gospel for us as the revelation of the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. The acceptance of this righteousness entails participation in that power which saves, i.e. the very presence of God Himself. In the Old Testament we noted that the definitive act of God's salvation was the promise made to Abraham, which the Jew thought was fulfilled by the covenant and law made and given at Mount Sinai. Paul on the other hand realized that from the beginning it was God's intention that the Promise was to be fulfilled by the person of Jesus Christ. We were able to note this theme of promise and fulfillment, indeed Gospel, throughout God's salvation history. While men lived under the law in its connection with sin they attempted to use the law as a means of salvation and thus God's righteousness was diverted from its original intention. Because of the 'letter-nature' of the law, which included the belief that the law was essentially a closed system to

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<sup>248</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

which nothing could be added or taken away, men were wooed into thinking by sin that they they could use the law to work out their own salvation. In this situation the law revealed man's sin as well as enhancing it by providing him with the opportunity to use the revelation of the righteousness of God in the law for his own ends. The depth of man's sin was revealed in that he continued to rebel against God even in the face of the knowledge of His righteousness revealed in the law. Finally we noted that the law had this effect because it was truly concerned with the righteousness of God, which was to be fully revealed in Christ. Thus there is a sense in which the Gospel and the law have a mutual concern since both embody the righteousness of God but while man lives under the dominion of the law of sin and death he does not recognize the true nature of this righteousness. The law did serve God's purpose even here for it exposed man's sin and kept him in prison until Christ arrived. In this fashion man was prepared to accept the verdict of God's condemnation upon himself when it was fully and unambiguously revealed in Jesus Christ. But we also noted that man under the law refuses to accept God's just judgment. He accepts it only from the point of view of the Gospel and not from that of the law per se. In this context the relation of the Gospel and the law is one of contrast as manifested in the 'faith-works' dichotomy. The dominion of the law was characterized as despair, slavery and death while the life of the Spirit was characterized by hope, freedom and life. Thus we may conclude from the preceding, that as preachers of the Gospel, we do not bring men to Christ by proclaiming the law per se but by offering the free gift of God's love and righteousness.

But we have also noted that the same righteousness in the Mosaic law is also integral to the Gospel itself and thus judgment must play its part even in Jesus Christ. What is the relationship here? With the coming of

Jesus Christ the situation was radically altered. Paul's experience of Christ changed his understanding of the law and Scripture so that he was able to see their true meaning.

The basic thought was that Scripture, and the tradition in which it lived and was expounded, did not possess that complete clarity which enabled man to understand them without a further revelation from God. For it was in the light of the gospel that the Scriptures surrendered up their deepest meaning for the first time. In Christ, man could realize what God's purpose had been all along, and what his word in the law and the prophets had meant.<sup>249</sup>

While men should have realized the Scriptures' meaning since they had the promise, Abraham being the example of such a man, it was not until the fulfilled promise appeared in Christ that their true meaning became evident. In Christ men were freed from their slavery to the law and were also given to understand the true meaning of the law and Scriptures. Thus they were also liberated from any misunderstanding of the law and realized that it could not be used as a way of salvation. It was here that men realized that God's judgment in the law serves His redemptive purpose, indeed was part of it. But they could only grasp this realization from the point of view of God's love in Jesus Christ. We have maintained the necessity of God's judgment since without it we would sentimentalize God's love but the consequences of His judgment were assumed by Christ on man's behalf. Therefore, in Christ, the fulfillment of the promise, men fulfill the law which He establishes, i.e. the righteousness of God, and participate in His abolition of the law, i.e. the curse and slavery of the Mosaic order of law. In Christ men achieve the prime purpose of the law, i.e. they attain righteousness. For a man to be in Christ means to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and this signifies his dependence upon divine grace for his salvation. The Holy Spirit's presence also enables man to continue to fulfill the law of God

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<sup>249</sup>Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., p. 37.

of the 'law of Christ' by manifesting the love of God to the neighbour and by causing the Christian to cry 'Abba, Father', i.e. to accept grace as grace continually. Here the understanding that there is an integral relationship between the Gospel and the law does not mean that it is a challenge to justification but rather the proclamation of God's love, i.e. of His justifying and sanctifying grace. The fact that Jesus Christ grants us a new law also indicates the imperative which is always involved in the indicative. Here the Christian, by living the sanctified life, becomes a walking proclamation of the Gospel just as the Church, as the Body of Christ, should be the visible expression of God's redeeming love in the world. Both are sustained by the strength of the Holy Spirit and serve under His direction.

The relationship of the Gospel and the law are recognized clearly when we consider the Cross. When men come to experience the love of God offered to us in His Son at this place, it is then that our knowledge of sin becomes the most excruciating. God's love carries with it the necessary corollary of the exposure of our sin. But this is recognized in the light of a love which assumes the consequences of our alienation upon itself. At the moment that we realize the utter worthlessness of ourselves God exalts us to be joint heirs with His Son. Thus God looks upon us in the same manner in which He views His own Son and in this situation we are seen as righteous. All this depends upon God and we can add nothing. It is only in the light of God's love in Jesus Christ that we come to recognize our true worthlessness as well as our true worth. Indeed God loved us so much and took our sin so seriously that He sent His only Son to redeem us. It is in this context that we must see the relationship between the Gospel and the law. The Gospel is of ultimate importance, the proclamation of which shows man his need of



salvation and repentance as well as the way of salvation and gives him the capacity to repent. Thus we do not preach just the judgment of God but rather that God's judgment is essentially His saving Word, i.e. that He does not judge in terms of strict justice but in terms of the redeeming love revealed in His Son who is our Advocate with the Father. As a man comes to experience this love he sees and accepts the justness of God's verdict upon his life and consequently becomes the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit who is the first fruits of God's Kingdom. This is the Gospel that we are called to preach with both our words and our actions.

## APPENDIX

### THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S GOSPEL IN THE WORLD OF MEN

#### INTRODUCTION

The only preaching which is up to date for every time is the preaching of this eternity, which is opened for us in the Bible alone - the eternal of the holy love, grace and redemption, the eternal and immutable morality of saving grace for our indelible sin.<sup>1</sup>

As preachers of the Gospel we are commissioned to preach Jesus Christ with a power which does not belong to us nor this world. The result and effect of preaching this Word become flesh is the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus when the early Church was given the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost this was connected with the disciples' commission to take the Gospel to the whole world. This Gospel, as we have noted throughout, is the Person of Jesus Christ who is, as Paul has defined it, the righteousness of God. Thus we do not bring a message about Christ, an ideal or a vision, but the very Person of Jesus Christ Himself. It will be the purpose of this appendix to investigate the relationship of Gospel and law in God's righteousness, in preaching, and more particularly, in the sermons of these three men; Helmut Thielicke, P. T. Forsyth and Billy Graham. This is not done with the express purpose of criticism from a negative point of view, but rather that, in actually investigating this relationship in their preaching, we might learn better what is required of us as stewards of God's Word.

But before we look directly at these three men we must summarize and extend our understanding of the relationship of Gospel and law. The Gospel is the self-revelation of the righteousness of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus it is through Him that men attain this righteousness by faith. Man is in the situation where he can do nothing to effect his own salvation, so complete is his slavery to sin and the law. He must await the action of God to save him. The Gospel is this initiative of God to save such a man.

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<sup>1</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), p. 33.

So complete is man's slavery that he does not even recognize the extent to which he is in bondage. The law serves to expose his sin and his bondage but man refuses to accept the verdict of the law but rather turns to himself in an attempt to win his autonomy.

But are we not in danger of sentimentalizing God's love if we maintain that God's righteousness in Jesus Christ is a free gift offered to all men despite their sin and slavery? But as Wingren comments:

... when the Gospel is preached it brings this judgment to a head. When Christ is set forth before men, their lack of purity is disclosed in clearer detail than at any other time, for now they see before them the one who is the "image of God" and who exhibits perfectly the generosity of giving which they no longer possess. It is only in the light of the Gospel that men come to see that the old Adam in them is indeed old, for by this light the new being comes to life in them.<sup>2</sup>

Love is much more searching, much more penetrating, than any precept of the law. It is in the light of Jesus Christ who is God's holy love in human flesh that man's sin is completely and radically revealed. Thus we have in Christ the union of God's grace and judgment. The Event of Jesus Christ is God's resounding 'No' to man's sin but this 'No' is laid in the cradle of His 'Yes' to His lost and erring children. But not only is God's judgment revealed in Jesus Christ it is also absorbed by Him. "Christ not only exercises the judgment of God on us; He absorbs it, so that we are judged not only by Him but in Him. And so in Him we are judged unto salvation."<sup>3</sup> Thus our sin is clearly made most damnable before the love of God since it reveals God's longing for those creatures who, even while they realize this, rebel against Him. But it is also in the light of this love that man is able to accept the radicalness of his sin revealed to him by God's righteousness in the law and particularly in Jesus Christ. Here man is saved in and through Jesus Christ who bears in His own Body the consequences of the judgment which should have fallen upon him. It is only within such a love relationship as this

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<sup>2</sup>Gustaf Wingren, Gospel and Church, trans. Ross MacKenzie, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>P. M. Forreth, ...

that man is able to accept the truth about himself as well as the fact that he is loved by the One who accepts him. The problem becomes to 'accept our acceptance'.

It would appear that, as preachers of God's Word, we must start with the Gospel if we are to confront man with his need of salvation as well as the power and way of salvation. To begin otherwise is to begin with man himself and what he can accomplish. While it is true that Paul seems to begin with man under the law in Romans his purpose in this regard is to indicate that all men are blameworthy; that there is not one who is righteous, that all deserve the condemnation of God. This provides the backdrop for the proclamation of the Gospel. In this manner the Gospel's radical nature and its richness is heightened in the face of man's sin. But Paul also makes it quite clear that man's realization of his predicament can only be ascertained in the light of the Gospel. Otherwise he perverts the knowledge of God available to him in Creation and the Law. At the same time the introduction of the Letter (1: 1-17) sets forth a definition of the Gospel which cannot be understood in a vacuum but must be seen in the light of man's true situation under the law. Thus I would suggest that in Romans the Gospel is presented initially even though Paul then spends some time describing man's true state under the law which in this case serves to reveal the fulness of God's grace. To begin with man is to start with man under the law for if he does not live in grace he exists in slavery. But what is the law in this context? How are we to understand the law here? In other words, what are the powers of the law which hold men in bondage? Gal. 4: 3-11 and Col. 2: 8-20 give us some indication of these powers.

His (modern man's) various phobias, insomnia, feelings of inadequacy and fear of death all combine to taunt and accuse him and instill anxiety in his innermost being. If only he could escape it all and become what he ought to be and live up to his idea of what a free man should be! In some such way as this the law continues to operate in our own day.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Gustaf Wingren, Op. Cit., pp. 113-114.

Thus man's fears and anxieties are the manifestations of the law under which we live. We noted how the law was concerned with man's relationship with God. The law intimates that man belongs to God and by obedience this relationship is maintained and fulfilled. When man denies this basic relationship he becomes anxious and worried for he is at odds with his destiny. The law agitates and increases this anxiety until he becomes a slave to it. Thus we ought not to limit the word law to just that understanding which signifies the Torah but see it in the wider context of what it indicates and to what it is directed. But how is man under the law to know that his quest for freedom will only turn to bitter disillusionment, indeed nihilism, if it is not discovered in God's search for him? It is only as the Gospel reveals both man's situation under the law and his fruitless quest for freedom for what they really are, that the possibility of true freedom exists. This is seen in Forsyth's understanding of the two points of departure for the modernizing of theology. "The one begins with man, the other with God, the one with science or sentiment, the other with the Gospel, the one with the healthy heart and its satisfaction, the other with the ruined conscience and its redemption."<sup>5</sup> Since the Cross is primarily a confession of God's holy love it must necessarily expose man's sin. If we are to understand man aright then we must begin with the Gospel and not with man under the law. To begin with law, indeed, to begin with man's situation under the law will lead inevitably to disaster.

Let us consider for a moment why this is so.

The proclamation of the Law does not perplex, is not surprising. The Law is what man expects. It is natural to man to assume that any authority placed over him as, for example, God will speak to him in legal terms prohibiting and demanding.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., p. 249.

<sup>6</sup>J. H. Deibert, Op. Cit., p. 228.



The law may convict man, it may lead him to anger against the law-Giver, but it does not bring him to salvation. Only Jesus Christ can enable man to accept the verdict of the law for he recognizes that this Judge is his Saviour. If we preach the law it may make the conditions under which man lives more terrible or he may even think that he can by his own efforts fulfill the law and thus become acceptable to God and win the salvation promised to him in Jesus Christ. In this way he hopes to free himself from the fears and anxieties that plague him. But from the Christian point of view this is recognized as a legalistic confidence in works. "The law operates today as it always has, though in different ways, in the multitude of the demands which it lays down as the conditions of securing health and security."<sup>7</sup> To preach law is to cast man back upon himself in an appeal to his ego to overcome his anxieties and fear, but this acts only to reinforce his super-ego. Thus, to bring the law's condemnation upon man may increase his dissatisfaction with himself as well as his anxiety but it does not lead to repentance and wholeness.

The law is concerned with that which is structured, expected and controllable whereas the Gospel is unstructured, unexpected and uncontrollable. The law is concerned with man's existence as it is structured and controlled by sin and its slavery. Man under the law thinks that he can control God by means of the law, that God is manageable and will accomplish the ends which man dictates. The Gospel, on the other hand, reveals the opposite. The Gospel always breaks down our conditions and stipulations; those structures that we have erected, on the basis of our self-achieved goodness by means of the law, to protect ourselves from God and the demands of the neighbour. The Gospel shatters those barriers which divide men. It transforms men and

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<sup>6</sup>J. H. Deibert, Op. Cit., p. 228.

gives them new perspectives and new forms through which to experience His love. We shall note this, particularly when we consider preaching and the accommodation which must be involved in the real communication of the Gospel. We have noted how the law was used as the criterion which distinguished Jew from Gentile but now the Gospel has destroyed this barrier and now all men are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3: 28)

That is what happened when, in Paul's time, the Gentiles accepted it. So when we trustfully accept the gospel for what it is, and do not try to put God's ways under the judgment of our moral ideas and customs, then the Gospel can, by the open embrace it extends to the Gentiles - that is, to those whom we are accustomed to call its enemies - reveal its refreshing glory for us also.<sup>8</sup>

But we always desire to take this Gospel and control it and make it into a system which we present only to a certain limited segment of mankind; those we feel are worthy of the message. "Are we not so easily tempted to turn the gospel itself into a carefully defined law, a doctrine, or a rule of life, that is, something concerned only with a certain group of men?"<sup>9</sup> But when we yield to this temptation God's Gospel becomes a system of morals or a human religion which once again must be shattered and transformed by His truth. Thus we see that, in preaching to men under the law, we are not concerned with an empty vacuum but with that which is filled with unbelief and death, with that which would distort God's message of love into a hideous denial of God. The law of Moses may help to reveal the predicament in which man lives, it may even produce anxiety and guilt but it does not bring him to the point of accepting this just judgment of God and thus repentance. Therefore, if we are going to preach the Gospel effectively and relevantly, we must listen to what the law says of man and of the situation in which man exists. But, although this is true, we have already noted, that man's situation under the law is only finally and clearly grasped from the point of view of the Gospel.

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<sup>8</sup>Ragnar Bring, Op. Cit., p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

Thus in our preaching, as well as our theology, we must begin with the Gospel and not with man or the law. The law is helpful in enabling us to accommodate the message to man's actual situation but our primary concern is the Gospel and not man's needs. If man's needs become our starting-point we are in danger of becoming carried away with that which is not man's basic problem.<sup>10</sup> The Gospel is the starting point of our understanding of man as well as the answer to his predicament. The law helps us to recognize man's sin but when it serves under the law its revelatory power is enhanced. It is here that God's judgment in His law becomes a judgment unto salvation and life. In the Gospel God's righteousness is fully revealed as a saving judgment.

#### GOSPEL, LAW AND THE PREACHER

When the Gospel has been brought to bear upon the guilt under which man labours, the spirit is at work. The purpose of the ministry is to bring the word of the Gospel to this point in every human life. When this word does come to guilty man, as we saw in our previous discussion of the meaning of Christ's resurrection, it is Christ Himself who comes to man.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the preacher's task is to communicate the Person of Jesus Christ, i.e. the righteousness of God. But contemporary preaching lacks the impact which it ought to have when we consider the power which is inherent in this Word of God. Does the fault lie with the minister, the form of the message, or the

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<sup>10</sup>An example of this is modern-day advertising which creates a need for a particular product and then sells to this need. If we concentrate on man and his needs as our starting point we may just answer his symptom needs, i.e. those manifestations of his deeper problem, but never get to the depths of his basic sin. For example, we may answer his need for mental health but not his relationship with God. The writer does not feel that the two are unrelated but nevertheless by modern standards of normality a man may exist without any reference to God and still be healthy mentally and emotionally speaking. This I feel is one of the greatest dangers of the North American situation where, with the disciplines of sociology and psychology becoming included in Theological curricula, we tend to see man only from the point of view of his own self-understanding. Although these disciplines are exceedingly helpful in enabling us to grasp where man is and how his basic need of God is manifested, we must always come back to the proper starting point of the Gospel, since it is only here that man is laid bare at the innermost point of his life.

<sup>11</sup>Gustaf Wingren, Op. Cit., p. 121.

hearer? It is our contention that all these aspects are interrelated and cannot be separated as if any one area is wholly to blame. But modern man does have the suspicion that the proclaimer of the message is not convinced himself; that he has not been touched by the grace which he so fervently declares. He sounds more like the man who is attempting to convince himself by his muchspeaking and his self-initiated enthusiasm. Thus we ourselves stand in the way of our message and consequently it does not reach those to whom this vital news is presented. In other words, this Gospel itself ought to be manifested in the preacher's life. He ought to live the very message which he is proclaiming. His life should show that he has been touched by God's love and thus in all humility loves his neighbour. The preacher does this in the midst of the world in which all men live under the law. As he dwells in the midst of these men, their fears and their anxieties, they become his as he struggles with the relevance of the Gospel to this world.

Therefore the preparation of a sermon also requires a continuing exercise of an inner, spiritual order. And above all it requires an exercise, a training in love, and hence a work (yes, a "work") which includes the whole man.<sup>12</sup>

Thus we are concerned with the preacher's communion with God as well as his situation in the midst of a world under the law. It is only as he takes both with utmost seriousness that his message will have credibility and relevance. Is it not also a comfort to the preacher, as he embarks upon such a bold and hazardous undertaking, that he does not have to bear the final responsibility for the success or failure of this communication? Only the Spirit is able to penetrate into the hearts of the hearers. This is the knowledge and comfort which comes from the experience of God's love in his own life. "For after all, the witness not only confesses and declares his message, he also confesses and declares his encounter with the message."<sup>13</sup> But this is no excuse for complacency or shoddy sermon preparation. Rather it is that which gives meaning

<sup>12</sup>Helmut Thielicke, The Trouble with the Church, (A Call for Renewal), trans. John W. Doberstein, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 24.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 50

and purpose to our task as well as the courage to face something which is infinitely beyond our capabilities as human beings. It is also because of this that we need not attempt to put the whole Gospel into one sermon as if everything depended upon our efforts. Therefore, because of the Gospel, we are not given to despair in the face of the task before us as we live in the contradiction between the incomprehensibility of God's ways and our hearts' demands. The prophets of old knew well this despair which resulted from the contradiction between their desire to have the message accepted by the people and the seeming inactivity of God in this regard. But still they continued and were not given over to disillusionment.

On the contrary, the very message which was committed to their frightened souls also contained a promise that rescued them from fear and trembling. And that promise was that he who commanded them to speak would himself expose his Word. He would let it be his Word. He would allow his glory to shine through our dim and broken words.<sup>14</sup>

The Gospel which we preach is uncontrollable and is continually breaking out of the forms and structures into which we men are apt to place it. When we attempt to confine it, it shatters the limitations which we have imposed upon it and with our demands for theological, ecclesiastical or moral purity. This indicates, as does the fact of the Incarnation itself, that we must accommodate our message to where man is; i.e. where he lives and moves and has his being. It is only the Gospel which makes man aware of the demands of the law under which he lives and exposes man's sin as well as his inability to fulfill this law. But the Gospel must be preached in a relevant manner if it is to confront man with the need and the way of salvation in their actual life situation. Quite obviously, the Church is composed of those men and women who have not only experienced God's redeeming love but who also exist under the law so long as they live in this world. They are the ones who are

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 108.



equipped to transport this message in whatever forms are made available by God. Thielicke suggests that "only he who risks heresies can gain the truth."<sup>15</sup> Thus all Christians are given a freedom in the proclamation of this message. Although preaching is the climactic form of the proclamation of the Gospel so far as the Body of Christ in its gathered form is concerned, we ought not to confine ourselves to this one form of presentation. What of those who comprise that group commonly called industrial man and whose attention span, so far as the spoken word is concerned, is extremely limited? It is little wonder that missions of the traditional sort, in which preaching is of paramount importance, are of small impact. It is worthy of note that Jesus Himself was probably not one for long sermons. Rather He was able to use the questions of those around Him in a creative manner by reinterpreting them to ascertain their profound significance and then speaking a true Word to them in their particular situation. Most of the time this Word was limited to a sentence or two in the daily and common language of the people. He used relatively little religious language. But His impact upon the hearers was obvious for He spoke with authority. He identified himself with man under the law; He lived where they lived, He suffered what they suffered and knew at first hand the despair that tore their hearts. As preachers of the Gospel and servants of Jesus Christ should we not dwell in the midst of men and share their sufferings as far as it is possible? Then, perhaps, men will hear the message of the Church rather than vain shouting from the distance. It is only as one loves and in this love shares the lives of others that one is able to understand their real needs. Thus we will not be 'way-laid' by the unimportant and the trivial which seems to occupy so much of our time. This will also help us to preach a relevant word, not from afar but right in the midst of men. To accommodate the message to man's situation and to be in danger of

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<sup>15</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., p. 40.

heresy in Christ's Name is the freedom given to us by the very nature of the Gospel itself. This is the Gospel we have encountered and confess. It is the Gospel which gives freedom but the law which confines and restricts us to one form of proclamation as if it was sacred in itself.

If the preacher is going to be heard he must speak with that authority which arises from the fact that he himself has experienced the message he is called to proclaim. But while keeping this in mind, he must speak in the language of the hearers of the message. This accommodation does not mean that he conforms the Gospel to the world but rather he puts the message in terms that are understandable to men where they are. This is why there is always the danger of heresy which is inherent in the freedom of the Gospel itself. We must always be prepared to use whatever forms God provides in His world, but the offence must always continue to exist. There is not just one method of preaching the Gospel: there are no absolute rules for when men regulate their lives only by principles there is no love. Law in this connection sterilizes love in the context of a desire for theological purity which may be free from the taint of heresy but which does not reach out to man in his sin and despair. Of course this is not to suggest that the preacher is lawless for certainly he exists under 'the Law of Christ'. Thus love informs and moulds our theological concerns and enables us to adapt to what is demanded by the situation in the light of the Gospel in our preaching. This means that the preacher must have experienced the Gospel and know the world intimately as it is revealed to him in the light of the Gospel. But in this endeavour we must be careful not to construct our message so that we are dependent upon the limited needs and concerns of our immediate contemporaries. This would mean that our message would be limited to a small segment of our world. We must preach an intelligible message to those outside the Church in hopes that through our members they might hear God's Word. To limit our preaching

to the limited needs of our hearers may also carry with it the danger of limiting our concern to 'symptom needs' rather than man's basic dilemma.

The sermon must be contemporary, it must correspond with the time in which it is preached; it is linked with the venture of the witness who trusts the Spirit who moves where he wills.<sup>16</sup>

#### GOSPEL, LAW AND THE CHURCH

That place where the Gospel and the world meet is the Church. This is the context in which men become truly aware of the Gospel and therefore the law under which they live. It is because the Church is concerned with the Gospel that here men may both see their predicament and accept it. "The Church has not only to read the present situation; she has to read her own Gospel before that; ... ."<sup>17</sup> But at this point we must be careful not to limit the Church to our structure or institutions. The Church is God's gathering company of the redeemed whether they are actively involved in worship on the Lord's Day or whether they are in the world. In the world they exist under the law although they are free from it and in Christ live a triumphant life over it.

The freedom which comes to be consciously understood as freedom in the offering of worship in divine service must prove that it is indeed freedom in the nexus of daily restrictions and difficulties that exist outside the Church.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the freedom which we enjoy in Christ in the Church must be lived outside of the Church walls since such men and women who belong to the Body of Christ are still members of His Body in their daily life. Surely this is how the Gospel penetrates the defences that man has constructed in his existence under the law. Without this correlation our freedom from the law is a sham. The Christian man is now free to serve his neighbour. He is free to choose between the demands made upon him by his obligation to and responsibility for his neighbour. All his ties are judged in the light of

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>17</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., p. 342.

<sup>18</sup>Gustaf Wingren, Op. Cit., p. 201.

agape. Again we must remind ourselves that this freedom is informed by 'the Law of Christ'. Ignore this and our freedom becomes expediency and we are then in danger of returning to the control of the law of sin and death. The Christian man is the vehicle of a profound freedom which enables him to exist in the midst of suffering, in the midst of injustice and of circumstances which cannot be changed. In this manner, the Church exists in the world while sharing its suffering, anxiety and guilt. It exists under the law and thus it is able to bring its Gospel of freedom as it exists in the context of 'the Law of Christ' into the world's alienated heart.

The imprisonment which we endure between birth and death is an expression of our bondage under the law. The Gospel, which always has regard to those who are in bondage to the law and is addressed to them, speaks of a human life which was lived on this self-same line but broke out of it through His resurrection on the third day.<sup>19</sup>

In Christ the Church is empowered to live out its life in the freedom of 'the Law of Christ' while sharing the life of men under the Law.

In the area of the Church's more structured life we have a tension between Gospel and freedom on the one hand, and law and structure on the other. Liturgy plays an important part in the life of the Church in this regard. Although liturgy may be legalistically applied the fact that it has traditional forms is important. In this manner the liturgy of the church can give a continuity with the historic past of the Church's life. In those periods of history in which preaching of the Gospel has been reduced to social concern or just right belief, the liturgy of the Church has acted as a counter-balance to draw it back to its real message. We can see this particularly in the sacraments which are the cultic and dramatic forms of the Gospel. In the Lord's Supper, in which God's message of free grace is revealed as well as concern for the neighbour in the light of this grace, we have a cultic form of the Gospel. This liturgy continually confronts man with the

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

Gospel in spite of his attempts to stifle it. The dramatic aspect of the Eucharist might also help the Church to speak to those who have only a limited attention-span so far as the spoken word is concerned. In this situation the dramatic form of the proclamation of God's forgiveness in the Eucharist might very well strike them with shattering clarity where all else had failed. At least, if we cannot allow them to participate until after a confession of faith, we could allow them to observe. Surely the Eucharist has a value in so far as the proclamation of the Gospel is concerned. The structured form of the Church also gives the new Christian some sort of visible expression of and guidance in his faith. Just as Paul held that, although he was not under the Mosaic law he was not lawless but still under the law of Christ so the Christian is not left to float in freedom as it were. Rather he is given the guidance and discipline of the whole Christian community in which and through which the Holy Spirit operates. Here the law of Christ becomes operative in human relationships.

In all this, it must be noted, an inherent danger exists. This is the danger that the forms of our liturgy and preaching might become once again vehicles of law and bondage rather than Gospel and freedom. We are in danger of worshipping the means of grace rather than its source. Indeed, the current liturgical renewal which we are experiencing may be a flight from God's Word into objective actions and the performance of sacramental acts. Unless this renewal stands under the scrutiny of God's Word and thus of the judgment inherent in the Gospel there is the danger that these too may become expressions of man's self-glorification and worship. Here they become expressions of his bondage rather than the freedom of the Gospel and its worship. All things must come under the control of God's Gospel so that the action of God is paramount and then the things of man will be sanctified and made holy.



The more the Church becomes the place where the "Word" is proclaimed and consequently the closer it comes to the Bible, the more it can become a home in which there are only children and no slaves, in which there are only free sons and not dependents.<sup>20</sup>

#### GOSPEL, LAW AND THE HEARER

We have noted that if we start with the Gospel then man's position is revealed and exposed. "Love is more searching, and therefore more imperative, than precept."<sup>21</sup> We would question that approach which is concerned only with man as the starting-point. The Gospel indicates that man is under the law, under the principalities and powers of this present age. Man labours in and under the structures of society which are demonic in so far as they function without any reference to God and His purpose and are products of man's self-assertion. These are the new gods which claim man, body and soul. "If today the Gospel is not being preached against this law then we have no Gospel, for the Gospel always offers men freedom from the law which actually burdens them."<sup>22</sup> Even as Christians we must continue to live under these laws although in Jesus Christ their sting has been withdrawn and we are no longer condemned to slavery. But it is extremely difficult for this age to recognize the fact that all men exist under those laws which inevitably result in sin and death. We live in a time when men think that they can ignore death; when they think in terms of a prolonged future. Gospel, on the other hand, does not allow man to continue in this disillusionment nor the dream that he can save himself through his own technological achievements. The Gospel reveals that all man's endeavours are tainted with sin and have in them the seeds of their own destruction. The urgency of the Gospel then becomes apparent.

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<sup>20</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., p. 103.

<sup>21</sup> P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., p. 156.

<sup>22</sup> Gustaf Wingren, Op. Cit., p. 114.

Thielicke points to a modern form of Docetism in our preaching in which we preach to man who has been 'abstracted' from his world. We isolate him from his world; from his place under the principalities and powers of this world and then present the message to him.

Then "man" is this man in his state of being unchained. This is why the listener, the real man who is gripped and squeezed by this world and is really enchained by it, does not recognize himself in that strange, denatured, and abstract double of himself.<sup>23</sup>

We must speak to this man where he is and we do this since we too share his life under the law. We too know the agony of existing in a structure which dehumanizes us and constructs barriers to prohibit us from expressing genuine love toward our neighbour and thus fulfills the 'Law of Christ'. In the light of the Gospel we may affirm the structures of our created order but we must also recognize that they are never pure but objectifications of man's sin. Thielicke comments that: "The disaster of Docetism has arisen in that we leap from the text into the sermon without having traversed the field of ethics".<sup>24</sup> But as we have noted, although we must concern ourselves with man as he is and where he lives, law, in the final analysis, does not cast the revealing light. It is only from the point of view of the Gospel, as we see man as the object of God's love, that his rebellion becomes clarified. As Christians we should be able to speak to man since we recognize his true predicament from the revelation of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ. This is also true because we exist alongside this man in the old aeon with its sinful structures although we also belong to the world to come. We are called to suffer with our fellows by a Lord who went to His uttermost in His identification with man under the law. Thus we must live out our freedom of the Spirit of Life under the Law of Christ in this situation.

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<sup>23</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., pp. 68-69.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

To do otherwise is to be in great danger of preaching a message which may answer man's 'symptom need' but ignore the real man and his need of God. The Church will be extremely successful since such a message does not radically challenge or expose men. But if she is true to Her Lord her message will not only expose his sin, it will shatter his self-security. Indeed it will slay him in order that he might have true and abundant life.

Now we shall concern ourselves with the three preachers we have mentioned previously. In our investigation we will consider how they bring the Gospel to man and whether, on the basis of our understanding of Paul, they succeed in maintaining the Gospel and the law relationship.

#### HELMUT THIELICKE

In investigating the relationship of Gospel and law in Thielicke's sermons we shall note that he appears to oscillate between a 'law and Gospel' and a 'Gospel and law' relationship. Perhaps this is due to the very nature of the task to which we have addressed ourselves. Is it not true that, for all our theological presuppositions, we cannot legalistically maintain a purity in this relationship in our preaching if it is expositional in character? The Gospel as we find it in Scripture is many-faceted and by its very nature defies any attempt to chain it to one method of presentation or theological approach. When we relate this fact to the actual sermons themselves our quest becomes even more hazardous since we often must infer our conclusions from Thielicke's sermons rather than finding the Gospel and the law relationship directly stated. He has commented that by the sermon's very nature he must make statements without justifying them with any qualification; that, therefore, he must speak from an unguarded position. Such a writer:

... can only cherish the hope that the specialist will note between the lines the reflections the author has turned over in his mind - and often been compelled to leave unsettled! - before he permitted himself to make this or that preached statement in the style in which he did.<sup>25</sup>

With this in mind let us consider his sermons in an attempt to ascertain as clearly as possible, within the limitations imposed upon us by the nature of our task, his understanding of the Gospel and the law and their interdependent relationship.

#### THIELICKE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

Perhaps the whole of Thieliicke's understanding could be gathered up under the theological heading of incarnation. In an extremely vivid and radical manner he succeeds in interpreting this Event for modern man. Its impact becomes even more evident when we consider the historical context in which many of these sermons were given. Amidst the bombing, the destruction and unimaginable human suffering of the Second World War, Thieliicke proclaimed that God was the loving Father of all mankind. Suffering does not always bring this type of assurance to men, in fact, it is perhaps more likely to lead them to nihilistic despair. Just as nature does not necessarily lead men to God so suffering does not always result in such a knowledge of God.

But one who sees him (God in Christ) in his brotherliness, sharing our dread, our guilt, our loneliness, and our exposure to Godforsakenness can only fall to his knees beneath the power of that love and say: "My Lord and my God!"<sup>26</sup>

Thieliicke's message of grace comes through clearly in his sermons on the temptations of Christ. Here he expresses the extent to which Jesus plunged in His identification with sinful man.

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<sup>25</sup>Helmut Thieliicke, How the World Began, trans. John W. Doberstein, (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 304.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

At this point we can only recognize reverently and with consoling certainty how deeply God plunged him into the flesh; for it is in this his flesh, in his and our body, that he experiences temptation; it is here, and not in his head which touches the stars that the crisis begins in his communion with God.<sup>27</sup>

Thielicke indicates that God does not remain impassively in heaven, calling man and shouting encouragement to him from the safety of an aloof domain, but rather enters in at the point of man's greatest weakness in the face of temptation. "This is the miracle of the gospel - in that we can seek and find God, not in the heights, but in the depths."<sup>28</sup> This also indicates the distance that God comes in His incomprehensible love to redeem men. The token of this love and the extent of its sacrifice finds its climactic expression in the Cross.

God must die for man, so that man may simultaneously - and transcending all this - know the heart of God and be allowed to understand that it is completely opened to him, and full of Good News.<sup>29</sup>

God does not seek out the most brilliant examples of humanity but rather looks for man at his lowest point. In his discussion of the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus he indicates God's concern for the publicans and harlots, i.e. those people who have nothing to boast about but rather live on the fringe of life.<sup>30</sup>

For God has no prejudices. A man can come as he is, even as an utterly poor, utterly sinful, and utterly unlovable person who cannot understand what God can see in him. The fact is that he cannot see anything in him, but he makes something of him; he makes him his beloved child.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Between God and Satan, trans. Rev. C. C. Barber, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Helmut Thielicke, The Waiting Father, (Sermons on the Parables of Jesus), trans. John W. Doberstein, (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 189.



It is in this manner that Christ identifies with man in his depths, man who in Christ is raised up by God into the status of His child and the brother of Christ.

But how are we to know that God is our Father and Jesus our brother in the midst of a world which seems to contradict this revelation? We can call upon God as our Father only on one condition, i.e. by means of a miracle.

And that would be if the Father had first spoken to us, if he had revealed himself to us and we therefore had the guarantee that he was actually and beyond all conjecture with us in the dark forest and that when we cried "Father, Father" we were not merely victims of the illusions of our own yearnings.<sup>32</sup>

It is Jesus Christ who is this miracle. It is he who has revealed that God has a fatherly concern for us all and that even in our sin He continues to regard us as His erring children. We cannot come to this knowledge through investigating the things around us but only through Jesus Christ. "The heart of all things discloses the things themselves; but the things themselves do not reveal the heart."<sup>33</sup> Thus it is made abundantly clear that man's knowledge, by which he is able to call God "Father", depends solely upon the initiative of God in His Son. "For the gospel is nothing else but the message of the divine initiative."<sup>34</sup> This is the initiative by which we live and by which God entered into man's life and destroyed the power of the law of sin and death. Now it is revealed that God no longer looks upon man in terms of strict justice but with the loving heart of a Father who mourns for His lost and wandering children.

In his discussion of prayer and particularly the Lord's Prayer Thieliicke's understanding of the Gospel, as the initiative of God in Jesus Christ to save man at the lowest point of his life, is clearly seen.

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<sup>32</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, The Prayer That Spans the World, trans. John W. Doberstein, (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1965), pp. 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Waiting Father, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

The very greatness of God lies in the fact that he condescends so low. His omnipotence is surpassed by only one attribute: his love. And that love comes down to those who cry out for it, and his love is also there to listen to everything for which they pray.<sup>35</sup>

Thielicke's recurring theme of God's identification with man is portrayed in his understanding of our petition for daily bread in the Lord's Prayer.

Here he shows that since God in His Son dwells with man then God understands the little desires and hungers, the cares and anxieties, the pain and joy, of all men. God meets us in the midst of these and does not demand that we lift ourselves out of these concerns in order to come to Him. Rather He condescends to where we are.<sup>36</sup> When we remember that these sermons were given during the destruction of Stuttgart their poignancy and vitality becomes even more clearly realized. It was in the midst of death and destruction that Thielicke was able to share with others the certainty that all things work for good for those who love God.

It is as if God intercepts these originally evil and disastrous missiles of fate, catches them in his fatherly arms and sends them in the direction he wants them to go for the benefit of his children.<sup>37</sup>

We shall not be overcome for not only does He dwell with us in our affliction but He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our capacity to resist. Since we resist in His strength alone we are assured of victory. "We live solely by the grace of God, who has fixed the bounds of destruction."<sup>38</sup> Nothing in heaven or earth can separate us from the loving concern of our Father. Even the evil perpetrated upon His children is turned into a resounding glorification of the Father.

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<sup>35</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer that Spans the World, p. 86.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 239.

In the communion service this blood and this death are commemorated as a sign of communion with him; as a sign that we are his and are torn free from all other feudal duty; as a sign that God is for us and that therefore no power in heaven or earth or hell can be against us or can separate us from God. (Rom 8.31ff)<sup>39</sup>

All this depends upon the life and death of Jesus Christ who alone has taught and shown us that God is our Father in the face of what appears to be a pitiless, hard and cruel world. Christ is always with us as our brother and companion. He is with us to the uttermost of our life in all its phases. It is He upon whom we can rely in our battle with the demonic. Indeed it is not we who engage in the conflict but Christ who has already done this for us. "God became man in Jesus Christ, was oppressed by the Evil One in our stead, and in company with us as our brother and companion."<sup>40</sup> This then is the Gospel in Thieliicke's preaching; that God, as our Father, has in His Son identified with man in the depths and there spoken His Word of love to His erring children.

#### THIELICKE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

"Only face to face with the law - and that means face to face with the incarnate majesty of God - does sin become completely sin (Rom. 7.13)."<sup>41</sup> In his discussion of Cain, Thieliicke suggests that the anxiety and fear in which he lives, although he does not know its source, is a sign that even the guilty man is still the property of God.<sup>42</sup> God's law and the guilt that it produces in man signifies fallen man's relational connection with the Creator. God has not rejected him although man has rejected God. Man refuses to accept the responsibility for his denial of God nor does he allow himself to be confronted by this God whom he knows very well he has rejected. This is why man

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<sup>39</sup>Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 62.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>42</sup>Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 230.

fears solitude. In this situation he is confronted by himself and the ultimate questions of life and meaning which are posed by his very existence. "We fear solitude, which is always solitude before the eyes of God, for here the truth of our lives bursts open unrestrained."<sup>43</sup> No, it is much safer to fly to those gods who make no demands upon us and to be busy in their worship.

But at the bottom and secretly man knows - in the company of these his gods - that there is a God who has known us (I Cor. 13.12) and who is a consuming fire; man knows this even when he actively avoids exposing himself to God.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the law works in man's solitude to expose him for what he really is. Is not the greatest solitude death itself and perhaps this is why man fears it with such desperation? "We can understand the mystery of death only if we take seriously man's rebellion against God, only if we see that death is the "wages of sin".<sup>45</sup> Death teaches us that we are not limitless, indeed, that we are no gods but stand under the judgment of the One whom we have rejected. Thus death exists as a sign of the radical disjunction between God and His creation as well as the logical result of man's rebellion. It is the judgment of God upon man's sin. It is Christ alone who can save us from this judgment and who re-creates death so that it becomes the entrance into glory rather than the slamming of the door of hell.

But God's judgment is not always active. He does not miraculously strike down the evil-doer with a thunderbolt.

The judgment itself may in fact be taking place in his silence and passivity; indeed his silence and passivity may be the judgment. In the language of faith this means that God withdraws his arm and leaves men to themselves, abandons them to the consequences of their actions and thus delivers them up to their own judgment.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Christ and the Meaning of Life, trans. John W. Doberstein, (London: James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Therefore it is not always easy to make the connection between sin and punishment. We must know the Judge in order to do that, in which case we realize that this same Judge is our Father. Perhaps, this silence of God may delude sinful man into thinking that God is not concerned with His world but with the eyes of faith we can discern God at work in history and we know that His judgment will not be thwarted. We realize that God does not destroy man because of His infinite patience and not because He is not concerned. He provided even the most sinful of men with the time to repent and to return unto Him.<sup>47</sup>

Since God creates man in love He risks the possibility that he will take his God-given freedom to reject his Creator. This is expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. "There God exposed himself to his rebellious children, put himself at their mercy and let his most beloved die by their hand but for them."<sup>48</sup> Thus man uses what God has given him in his self-assertion against God. This can be seen in his attitude to and use of God's law. We use the occasion provided by the law to achieve a legal righteousness by our own hand then claim salvation from God as our right. When we are tempted to overcome our own plight by our own efforts we think that we have defeated the Evil One by our strength alone. Yet we lack real achievement and final victory. We:

Overcome temptation with the great bravery of Pharisees - and yet remain tempted, remain men in whom the abyss yawns and the wound bleeds and the chain with which we are fettered rattles.<sup>49</sup>

We cannot accept the grace God offers nor the dominion which brings true freedom. We must live under a sense of duty and obligation and the 'Thou shalt's': the scourge of the law. Paradoxically we cut ourselves off from God in our attempt to reach Him.

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 14ff.

<sup>48</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 61.

<sup>49</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 16.



It is the same old story: If we are not obedient servants of this word who stand humbly beneath it, but have recourse to diabolical means to make it the slave of our own desires (so that we think that our works, done in fear and trembling, or our Faustian urge, could sway God,) this divine word turns in our hands to a rending, tearing demon, which thrusts these hands upwards till they become fists clenched against God.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore man's freedom is really a slavery and a bondage under the law.

Man has been granted many gifts but when he severs himself from the Creator these gifts become the means of his self-assertion. "In the biblical view, it is actually an elemental law of human history that creation decays when it is separated from God."<sup>51</sup> Man himself shares in this decay since his life becomes meaningless and burdensome. Like Cain he becomes an alien in a world which was meant to be his home. He is lonely and isolated not only in relation to God but in relation to his fellows. The final result is jealousy, pride and murder.<sup>52</sup> It is at this moment that man becomes susceptible to the appeal of the gods. We become slaves to the stars and the cosmic necessities. Indeed we also become the slaves of the creations of our own hands. God has given us knowledge with which to have dominion over His creation. But man uses this knowledge to create great technological demons which now carry him along in spite of his efforts to control them. He loses control over the machines which he has constructed whereby they become demonic and possess the power of man's destruction.

It follows from these observations that man is by no means merely an autonomous subject who produces technological processes, but that he is at the same time drawn into a relationship of dependence upon them and becomes an object of these processes.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>51</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer that Spans the World, p. 25.

<sup>52</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 202ff.

<sup>53</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, p. 143.

Atomic power is the modern example of this dominion and the inexorable law of retaliation which goes along with it. These are the principalities and powers under which man labours and from which he cannot escape. "We cannot free ourselves from this Either-Or through our works or through our achievements."<sup>54</sup> It is at this point that man is revealed as a pawn, as a slave to Mammon and the powers of evil. This also reveals that my sin is never just personal but involves all men as well as their sin affecting me.

First that the denial of God and the casting down of the Cross is never a merely private decision that concerns only my own inner life and my personal salvation, but that this denial immediately brings with it the most brutal consequences for the whole of historical life and especially for our own people.<sup>55</sup>

But now we must face the question: Is man responsible for this evil?

Thielicke comments that the Bible:

says very simply and with an almost shocking straightforwardness that back of the suffering and back of the death in the world lies human guilt, and that therefore the only way I can come to terms with my lot is to come to terms with this guilt or else learn to know a court of judgment that will relieve me of it.<sup>56</sup>

It is clear that we cannot escape temptation or evil since it lies within us. We cannot blame our environment, we cannot point the finger at God but only at ourselves. We are guilty and there is no way that we can save ourselves from this guilt. It is at this point, i.e. our existence under the law, that Christ comes to us. It is to this situation that, as preachers of the Gospel, we must be the vehicles of Christ and His redemptive love. Thus the law not only exposes our sin but it also indicates the depths to which God had to plunge in order to save man. "And when His Son dies on the Cross we get some idea of what it cost him to beat down the logic of his holy righteousness and remain our Father."<sup>57</sup> Thus, no matter how God hated sin

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<sup>54</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer That Spans the World, p. 118.

<sup>56</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, p. 76.

and the power under which His children lived He stooped down to our depths, i.e. He lived under the law, to achieve our salvation from our side through the perfect obedience which is signified by Christ's death on the Cross. Only He, in this manner, could save us from our bondage and restore us to the free relationship for which we were created.

THIELICKE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF GOSPEL AND LAW

In considering Thielicke's conception of this relationship we would probably expect that he would maintain a law and Gospel approach in his preaching when we remember his Lutheran background. As we investigate his sermons we shall see that this is true but we shall also note the opposite understanding. As we have already indicated the very nature of the Biblical material dealt with as well as the range of texts that he covers in his sermons might well give the reason for this paradox. Let us look for a moment at Thielicke's primary understanding. As the writer read over his sermons he was made bountifully aware of man's sin and the depths to which he had plunged. But it must be admitted that there were times when the reader was so overcome by the sense of man's predicament that he did not hear with full clarity the message of man's deliverance. This, it seems to me, is the danger when man's sin is exposed without the foundation of love. The love of God in Jesus Christ is that which radically exposes sin but it also has already established the hope and way of salvation. The preaching of the law may drive man to nihilistic despair or it may tempt man to exert his own strength to climb out of the depths.

We shall begin with Thielicke's comment that:

The Church has no other mission except to proclaim the commandments of God and to tell the imprisoned that they are free, the blind that they shall see, and the guilty and heavy laden that the Cross of Calvary is there for them.<sup>58</sup>

As we have indicated in our discussion of Paul the message of proclamation is concerned with the righteousness of God which is the good news in the person of Jesus Christ. This Gospel proclaimed the love of God which saves men but which also exposes his sin. Thieliicke has affirmed God's law before declaring the Gospel and in this manner assumes a different stance than the one we have discovered in Paul.

Further, when he discusses preaching and the difference between accommodation in speech and accommodation in substance, he comments:

The former is aggressive because judgment and grace are thus held up to the hearer at the level where he can see them. The latter is apologetic because it confirms the hearer in the position he has already taken.<sup>59</sup>

While we would agree that we must speak to man where he is while at the same time being careful not to accommodate the substance of the message to man, we have also noted that it is only as we proclaim God's holy love that man sees himself as a sinner deserving death and therefore repents in the face of such love. When Thieliicke discusses judgment on man he maintains that it is man's first experience of God and that the world given up to its own course will destroy itself.

So this first line in the Bible is quite clear: it is a descending line of decay, a line that ends in the terror of a world which is its own destruction as is envisioned in the last book of the Bible and expressed in the words of our Lord himself (Matthew 24 and 25).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer that Spans the World, p. 142.

<sup>59</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 306.

<sup>60</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer That Spans the World, p. 59.

But can we agree with this stance when we remember that the Bible opens with the activity of God creating a world out of His love and calling it good? It may be that with the sin of Adam and Eve the line of decay is evident but we must not disregard God's act of grace which became flesh in Jesus Christ, in whom and through whom God fashioned the world. It is from this type of perspective that it appears that Thieliicke holds a law and Gospel relationship in which man must first recognize and accept the fact of his sinfulness before hearing the message of grace. The realization of his sin increases his homesickness and thus the desire to return to his Father. But as we shall see in Thieliicke's own words, it is not man's awareness of sin that produces this desire but rather the awareness of his Father's love.

In his understanding of the Incarnation Thieliicke indicates that:

The incarnation of the Word is in principle nothing else but the meeting with man. At the same time it is the barrier against any kind of cooperatio, by which man must first put himself in a particular place and fulfill certain conditions in order to share in the message.<sup>61</sup>

But if we preach law and judgment man inevitably attempts to make himself acceptable to God either by works of the law, repentance or even faith if he understands these as human achievements. It is the same old problem of self-assertion rather than self-surrender. In his discussion of the Parable of the Seed and the Soils Thieliicke points out that "God must be obeyed to be understood."<sup>62</sup> But the question arises: At what point is our obedience sanctified, before or after our awareness of God's love? If it is before then it becomes a human work whereas if it follows after it is the manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He further indicates that God cannot be had cheaply. "You come to God only if you allow yourself to be mobilized and if you march."<sup>63</sup> But is not our salvation conditional at this point?

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<sup>61</sup>Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 306.

<sup>62</sup>Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Waiting Father, p. 59.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 60.



Does it not depend upon our efforts of obedience? He also comments that God has given me a limited probation through His Son in whom He promises that I may be His child. "But now I must ratify the agreement. And the way I ratify it - and the only way I ratify it - is by taking what God has given men and passing it on to others."<sup>64</sup> But am I not once again under the bondage of the law whether it be called the Mosaic law or the law of Christ? Does not my salvation, in the final analysis, depend upon my efforts to complete or ratify the work Christ has already finished? It would appear that in this understanding we have reverted to the position of the Galatian Christians who sought to make the work of Christ more perfect by their own obedience. This, it seems to me, is the difficulty with Law and Gospel preaching.

But as we have already noted we also find in Thieliicke a Gospel and law understanding.

The Bible always proceeds like this: how low we have fallen becomes clear to us in the effort God has had to make in order to help us. The theologians say: 'In the lowest depths it is made plain, not in the Law, but in the Gospel.'<sup>65</sup>

In his discussion of the Parable of the Marriage Feast this also becomes clear.

In the first place we must see that it is a real "invitation" and by no means an order to report for service. ... Rather, God addresses us as a friend and host. He comes to us as a royal donor, the giver of every good gift and joy.<sup>66</sup>

Thus God does not come with the demands of the law in His heart but rather as the One who is offering in His Son the free gift of salvation. To come with the demands of the law first may make man more miserable, indeed, it may point the way but it is powerless to effect salvation. We must give to

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<sup>64</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, pp. 79-80.

<sup>65</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 12.

<sup>66</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Waiting Father, p. 184.

God all that we have and are but first He gives Himself to us in love. In His Son God meets us in our depths: He transforms these depths by meeting us here and surrounding us with His love. Then He brings us back home. Christ does not summon us from the safety of heaven but rather comes to us where we are to issue this invitation of love.

But we must be careful not to sentimentalize God's love at this point. Christ comes and looks upon us individually with His gaze of love and then we become aware of our lostness and alienation.

As we stand there in utter stillness and solitude, before him who is, as it were, illuminated from within by the fullness of God that dwells in him, we suddenly become aware that we have lost God, that we are homeless, and that a great gulf yawns between us and our Father.<sup>67</sup>

In Thieliicke's understanding of the Sermon on the Mount he comments that nowhere are such radical demands made upon us and thus our judgment is absolute. But each section begins with the words: "Blessed are you".<sup>68</sup> The Gospel comes before the law and thus it makes the law even more penetrating since love is more revealing than precepts. Indeed, in this connection, love establishes the law. Thus what brings man to the knowledge of his alienation from his Father and enables him to accept this judgment, is the revelation of the Father's love in the Son. This is clearly indicated in Thieliicke's understanding of the Prodigal Son. The son did not return to his father's house because he was satiated and disgusted with his way of life.

No, what gave him a new initiative was the recollection that his Father's house was open to him, that the waiting lights were burning in its windows, and that there would come to meet him someone who loved him and would recognize him in all his rags as his own flesh and blood.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, pp. 61-62.

<sup>68</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., The Waiting Father, p. 185f.

<sup>69</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, p. 186.

Thus it was his awareness of his father's love that made him realize that estrangement and lostness really was. Therefore, repentance was not so much a renunciation as an affirmation of his father's love; a homecoming. It was a time of joy rather than a time of sadness. "Whenever the New Testament speaks of repentance, always the great joy is in the background. It does not say "Repent or hell will swallow you up," but, "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand".<sup>70</sup> The father received the son not because the son had matured through suffering but simply because he loved him. The Gospel is the story of this miracle of love.

It is God's love and the light that it casts upon us reveals our sin. But it is only as we recognize ourselves as loved that we can also accept our judgment.

Perhaps the only reason that we can bear the thought that God sees through us, indeed, that he sets even our secret sins in the light of his countenance (how terribly hard it is for guilt to come out from behind its veil of secrecy!) is that we know that here we are not dealing with such a theoretical attribute of God as his "omniscience", with the frightening specter of some gigantic heavenly intellect that nothing escapes, but rather that he loves us so infinitely.<sup>71</sup>

It is the same thing to say that our Judge is also our Saviour. We realize that no matter how great our sinfulness, Christ is standing as our brother before the judgment seat as the One who is not only interceding on our behalf but who has already taken on His own Body the full judgment meant for us. It is by this love, which we know will never forget us nor let us go, that we are assured that God can and does bring us home to sit at His table. Thus men are never just deceivers and blasphemers but also the hapless children of a loving Father. It is only as we meet God's love in Jesus Christ that we are able to recognize the justness of God's judgment on our lives, accept it

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<sup>70</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Waiting Father, p. 26.

<sup>71</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer That Spans the World, pp. 93-94.

and then say with John: "Let us love him" ... (I John 4: 19) Moral teaching begins with a command "Thou Shalt", but we must first begin with what is given to us. "The Gospel says to us: you cannot give anything whatsoever to your neighbour except that which you have received."<sup>72</sup>

#### THE IMPACT OF THIS GOSPEL ON MAN

As man becomes aware of the love of the Father he is freed from the slavery in which he has been held to be free for God and his neighbour. When we hear God's Word of life we see the extent to which He went to save us. We are then called by this Event to manifest the new situation, which He has brought about, in our lives. "Ye are bought with a price, therefore lead your lives in a way befitting the property of God, which means: Praise God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6: 20)."<sup>73</sup> It is only then that we can understand the relation between the indicative of God's Word and imperative. "Only he who knows Him who dearly purchased you and me and every one of us has compassion upon his brother and recognizes in his neighbour the naked, hungry Saviour."<sup>74</sup> Once freed from the slavery of sin by Christ man is empowered to see in his neighbour the very Christ who saved him. He lives by a creative new power in the light of his new situation. By this power and in this state the Christian recognizes all men as the lost children of God. But we cannot love our fellows by command but only as God gives us that love which is operative in His redemptive act in Christ.

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>73</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, pp. 55-56.

<sup>74</sup>Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 216.

So this is the law that operates in the life of the Christian man: the longer he lives in Christ's discipleship the greater grows his poverty and indebtedness. But the riches and abundance of his Lord also grow greater and make up for all he lacks.<sup>75</sup>

Thus Christians love their neighbours in Christ. The Christian man is transformed at his centre just as in his love God works to transform his neighbour. The Christian becomes the brother to his neighbour who in turn knows him as one to be trusted. "For the Gospel abolishes this law of retaliation and reciprocation and makes way for the I-Thou relationship."<sup>76</sup> Thus God's love which operates in human relationships transforms them so that they are relations between brothers of the children of God. As brothers we know each other's needs "for love does not merely go into action with its help and support after we have learned that a need exists. On the contrary, love helps us to discover these needs."<sup>77</sup>

Because God's love is hidden it may be rejected for a power which is much more obvious.

And its deepest mystery is that it is always, at the same time, judgment, that it always has this other, darker side: for is it not terrifyingly true that one can hide from his grace, that (just because it is defenceless) one may blaspheme against it and reject it, while we cannot treat the secular power in this way?<sup>78</sup>

The same idea is included in the thought that if man does not receive and use what Christ has given us then our Christianity will become a burden and a judgment. If we do not use the freedom of the sons of God and the creative love of this intimate communion we will find ourselves once again under the law. But there is a sense in which Christians do exist under the principalities and powers of this present age while being free from them and being joyous in their midst. "I therefore possess in his peace a sovereign

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<sup>75</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer That Spans the World, p. 100.

<sup>76</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, p. 145.

<sup>77</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., The Prayer That Spans the World, p. 93.

<sup>78</sup> Helmut Thielicke, Op. Cit., Between God and Satan, p. 73.



superiority over all the dread of atomic destruction, over the apprehension of growing old and the horror of loneliness."<sup>79</sup> As Christians we can never speak too highly, too glowingly of the invitation and home of our Father. It is in conjunction with this thought that we shall end our investigation with a statement which, I feel, is both profound and an indictment of many Christians. "So Christians are by nature happy people, and when they lose their sense of humor it is nothing less than a denial of their Lord."<sup>80</sup>

We have noted that Thieliicke appears to have both a Gospel and law relationship and the reverse in his preaching. We have suggested that this may arise from the scope of the material which he expounds. Most of his sermons in those volumes translated into English are concerned with Synoptic texts rather than those of Paul although the writer is not suggesting that there is a basic dichotomy between Paul and Christ. It is not within the limits of this thesis to discuss this problem nor to evaluate the exegesis of Thieliicke in this regard. When Thieliicke puts this relationship in a phrase it is always a law and Gospel relationship but when he is concerned with his preaching the opposite view often appears. But it is obvious that no matter what position he holds this man does speak the Gospel to the age and situation in which he lives.

P. T. FORSYTH

It is unfortunate that more of this man's sermons are not available to us for, although his comments are primarily directed to his day, we would do well to listen to him. The historical context, with its threat of war and the lack of a true understanding of the objective nature of God's action in

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<sup>79</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., How the World Began, p. 139.

<sup>80</sup> Helmut Thieliicke, Op. Cit., Christ and the Meaning of Life, p. 68.

Christ which was producing a sort of 'kindly clueless' God with its accompanying social gospel, is not unlike our own day. Most of Forsyth's sermons that we do have are in the form of lectures to clergymen and thus it is unfortunate that we do not possess more that were given to laymen. But nevertheless, from the few that we do possess we can recognize a primary emphasis on Gospel. In fact, so great is this emphasis that an understanding of law in the restricted sense was difficult to ascertain. Repeatedly, he stresses that the Gospel is the starting-point and sustaining power of all proclamation. At the same time he describes some of the general weaknesses involved in beginning with the law or with man in our concern as preachers. It is with this Gospel that we shall begin our investigation.

#### P. T. FORSYTH'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

For Forsyth the Gospel is the Cross and the atoning action of God's holiness in Jesus Christ at this point.

The Cross is (1) the holy act of grace and revelation through Christ to us; (2) the act of judgment on Christ for the world; (3) the act of judgment by Christ on the world; so that the judgment He bore becomes the judgment He wields. To lose one of these is to maim the gospel and reduce its effect.<sup>81</sup>

Forsyth is concerned to point out that Jesus Christ is the sole and exclusive revelation of God's redeeming love. Nature does not provide us with the insight and awareness of this love. Its law is the survival of the fittest whereas the Gospel is concerned to make the weak fit so that they might live. The Cross is for Forsyth the expression of God's very self and essence. "The Gospel of the Cross is the sole channel of the Father's revelation (as distinct from mere imitation), the sole vehicle of the Father's self-giving, the condition of permanent sonship."<sup>82</sup> In other words, if man truly desires to

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<sup>81</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Missions in State and Church (Sermons and Addresses), (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 77.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

know what God is like, to see Him in action, and to experience His very presence, he must turn to the Cross of Christ. Here He reveals and commits Himself to man with glaring clarity.

But the redeeming, judging, love of God revealed in the Cross is not just any kind of love but a holy love. In order to know and experience this type of love we cannot begin with man but only with the source of this love; i.e. God Himself. "We must go to the Father whose love is holiness going out to love men back to itself, and whose grace is holiness going down to love them up to itself."<sup>83</sup> But this holy love revealed in Jesus Christ demands His death in order to achieve man's salvation. This love cannot abide sin and thus in Jesus Christ it takes upon itself its own rejection of this sin. What should have befallen man was assumed by the righteousness<sup>of</sup> God Himself in His Son. This is summed up in Forsyth's understanding of the atonement.

By Atonement, therefore, is meant that action of Christ's death which has a prime regard to God's holiness, and finds man's reconciliation impossible except as that holiness is divinely satisfied once for all.<sup>84</sup>

Thus in Forsyth's understanding of the Gospel we are concerned with the Cross as the expression of the fulfillment of the holiness or righteousness of God. This could never be achieved by man and by its very nature holiness would never tolerate the achievement of redemption by any other being but itself. But the holiness of God achieves man's salvation, not in isolation from man but in complete identification with him. "Christ was the love of God giving itself to us, the grace of God bestowing, spending, pouring itself out on us, the holiness of God reclaiming us to holiness, not turning us toward it, but placing us in it."<sup>85</sup> This is expressed in the saving judgment of Christ on

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<sup>83</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Revelation Old and New, (Sermons and Addresses, ed. John Huxtable, (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1962), p. 13.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

the Cross, since the consummation of God's judgment on man's sin at this point is His climactic act of mercy.

Now a judgment upon man alone would have destroyed him. And a judgment borne by God alone would be manqué.<sup>86</sup>

In His death Christ experienced the worst that it had to offer. He experienced the Godforsakenness of it, the despair of hopelessness. There is no suggestion that Christ was sustained by a vision of heaven but rather He tasted eternal death. It was only His obedience to and trust in His Father that enabled Him to undergo death for man. In this way Christ died for the most sordid and sinful of men. He experienced despair even more than they and overcame it. Thus God saves to the uttermost by going to the uttermost. "He is the God of the God-forsaken, the Father of the fatherless."<sup>87</sup> It was also the death which arises from the fact of the existence of the morally perfect among the morally degenerate. It is one man living out his existence in the midst of a moral wasteland. It is the experience of utter loneliness. Now that Christ has experienced death and overcome it on man's behalf it becomes something which is no longer feared. It is not the end of life but the beginning of eternal life. "Death as the expression of the grace of God becomes neither a penalty nor a problem, but a promise."<sup>88</sup>

This then, is the Gospel of P. T. Forsyth; the Cross of Jesus Christ, its salvation and its judgment. Through Jesus Christ God has completed the judgment of the world and thus saved it. Indeed the last judgment is behind those in Christ since they have already accepted their judgment and have become re-instated as the sons of God. For Forsyth preaching is the declaration of an accomplished fact. "Our missions but proclaim on the housetop what is told us in the most secret place. The world has been saved."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, p. 30.

<sup>87</sup>P. T. Forsyth, The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, (London: James Clarke and Co., 1901), pp. 44-45.

<sup>88</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, p. 46.

<sup>89</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 58.

FORSYTH'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

Forsyth describes Christ's resurrection as "chiefly the saving of His soul from the powers and pains of death and their dominion over Him."<sup>90</sup> This, it would appear, gives us some indication of Forsyth's understanding of the law as those principalities and powers under which men labour in slavery. We noted how death itself, as the result of sin, was one of these powers. But now that Christ has overcome it, it becomes the entrance into new life. Law in the modern age is manifested by hopelessness and despair. Forsyth maintains that man's basic problem is still death but with civilization the trouble is internalized in the form of pain. "Pain becomes more inward - more in the nature of care, fear, or despair."<sup>91</sup> In this context the judgment of the law serves to make us realize how far we have fallen short, even in regard to our best achievements. It may drive man to despair and thus increase his hopelessness and desperation. He may even think that suicide is the answer. It was in the midst of this type of existence under the law that Christ achieved man's salvation and thus his freedom from the law.

But one thing death did not master or quench; it was His faith in the grace of God amid this moral mephitic, the fixed obedience of His will amid the stupefying contagion of universal sin and the failure of hopes and powers.<sup>92</sup>

Thus Forsyth appears to understand law in two senses. One as the principalities and powers to which man is in bondage and secondly as the revelation of God's righteous demands which brings judgment upon man. Both these are overcome by Christ's death on the Cross. In his discussion of the wrath of God he comments: "The wrath of God which banishes us from His presence still keeps us in His memory."<sup>93</sup> Thus the law as an expression of

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<sup>90</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 58.

<sup>91</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, p. 6.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>93</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, p. 299.



God's Person indicates that He loves His children enough to be angry with them. But if we were to preach the law, what would be the result? When we preach in this manner we are attempting to produce a sense of guilt in humanity. We are attempting to work it up by our own efforts. But we must not say that the feeling of guilt is an essential condition for coming to Christ. Here we are preaching an experience instead of the Person of Christ. "It is on the whole more true that Christ brings us to the sense of guilt than that the sense of guilt brings us to Christ."<sup>94</sup> Forsyth points to a strange phenomenon of human nature when he comments that the law which may cause despair finally works death and not life. He goes on to say that:

The age which is now closing is the age which has seen the reign of law established for the natural world as it never was before; and concurrently the favourite type of religion is divested of the sense of sin, of guilt, in an unprecedented way; and this even though the action of law has been traced and pressed deep into the windings of the moral world, and the automatic action of Nemesis in character.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, I would suggest in the light of Forsyth's comments, that those who would desire to elicit a conviction of sin in their hearers by preaching the law are defeated. The outcome is a religion without a sense of sin which is nothing more than a social form of the gospel rather than an evangelical one. Perhaps it is from such men. e.g. Moody in North America, that the social gospel has its roots rather than from those who preached an all-inclusive love of God without judgment, as many have supposed. The basis of the Christian message is not what we Christians have experienced but rather the source of our experience. Experience may be a medium of the Gospel but it is never the Gospel itself.

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<sup>94</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 77.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 81-82.

Forsyth continues: "Do not let us preach our experience, but a Christ and a Gospel familiar to our experience."<sup>96</sup> The same type of preaching is seen in the minister's plea for the people to believe. It is asking our congregations to pick themselves up by their own bootstraps. Indeed if we urge them fervently enough to believe and describe what we think is a feeling of belief many will have a very similar experience. But this is self-initiated whereas true faith is the gift of God. Such preaching "is ignoring the fact that both faith and repentance and all Christian experiences are supernatural things, are the gift of God."<sup>97</sup> Thus Forsyth advocates preaching with its starting-point in the Gospel. It is here that men will be made aware of their sin and their responsibility for it. We ought to preach the objective Word of God and leave it to handle each man as it will. We ought to offer men gifts rather than appeals.

It is easy enough to utter appeals with more or less ardour - I will not say passion. ... But it is not so easy to take home the gift of God to ourselves in Christ that we may carry it to others with its native and exclusive power to stir the love, the trust, the penitence which we try to flog up in vain.<sup>98</sup>

In other words, let us preach what God has already accomplished in Jesus Christ and leave the work of penitence up to the Holy Spirit. Modern preachers would do well to listen to this man's words and learn from his Biblical wisdom.

#### FORSYTH'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATION OF GOSPEL AND LAW

Perhaps Forsyth's conception of this relationship can best be seen in his understanding of the act of repentance. He poses the question of the Prodigal's experience of repentance and then comments:

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

Was it not, then, when he was taken aback by the absence of all censure, that he knew what guilt really was - when love was given him liberally, without upbraiding, without parade, or even indication, of its cost?<sup>99</sup>

Forsyth indicates that man's experience of God's love in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit produces real guilt and real repentance. It is the knowledge of this guilt, of our complete responsibility before God and the depths of our sin, that also awakens us to the extent to which God went to reclaim us.

But why should love also reveal our sin? Forsyth would hold that man is exposed because in Christ we are confronted with holy love. "The light that saved was the light that best showed the hell it saved from."<sup>100</sup> This light is the blaze of glory cast on man from the Cross. The holy love of God or His righteousness comes to man in the form of mercy even when it comes in judgment. Man could never stand before God's holiness unless it did come in the form of a merciful or saving judgment since it would consume him.

The Almighty reveals Himself as the All-Holy. A dreadful, crushing revelation, unless the holy God is revealed also as the God of all grace; unless revelation be redemption, unless it be God's self-justification in ours.<sup>101</sup>

Thus Jesus Christ, as the revelation of the holiness or righteousness of God, not only saves man but exposes his sin. Now we are measured against a Person rather than a precept. And because this Person is God's holy love our predicament is made unambiguously clear. But at the same time Christ takes the judgment of God's holiness upon Himself and we discover that now the Judge is on our side; that He is our Saviour. In our worst judgment is contained our salvation and this is brought home to man as repentance by God's love more than by His severity. At this point: "Our worst condemnation is not that we have sinned, but that we have refused to be saved from our sin."<sup>102</sup> This substan-

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>100</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., The Taste of Death and the Life of Grace, p. 56.

<sup>101</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 20.

<sup>102</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, p. 74.

tiates the point made above that our preaching of the Gospel of God's holy love is the vocation to which we are called. This is not a sentimental love but one in which our folly is revealed while taking the consequences of our sin upon itself. Thus God's love is a saving judgment.

#### THE IMPACT OF THE GOSPEL ON MAN

To be confronted with the holy love of God in Jesus Christ on the Cross means one of two things. Either man reacts against this love since controlled by sin he hates anything that would expose his true nature or he is re-created as a son of God. This is the experience of faith. "Faith is indwelling. It is living in the Father's house. It is constant, confidential intercourse. It is sonship as a standing relation habitually realised."<sup>103</sup> Thus wherever the Cross is truly preached emancipation results. Now man becomes a new creation, his conscience is forgiven, recreated and reassured by the redeeming and reconciling act of God's holy love in Jesus Christ. Judgment is at an end for the Christian, not by the abolition of the judgment of God's holiness but by the establishment of it. The emphasis in salvation is not the escape from slavery but the freedom for God and the neighbour. Salvation is primarily the affirmation of God's love in redeeming us and the new life which is ours. "Salvation is not escape from hell, but a life of triumphant sonship and trustful intercourse with God, such as is only possible by Christ."<sup>104</sup> Christ brings this new relationship to us and we exist in it only by being in Christ and dwelling by and in His strength.

On the basis of the objective work of God accomplished in Jesus Christ missions become an imperative for the Christian. "And our Gift of his Grace

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 200.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

is also our trust. It is not in our choice to spread the Gospel or not. It is our death if we do not."<sup>105</sup> To preach with power is to be the recipient of this Gift with its inherent power, i.e. the Holy Spirit. It is only as this power is operative in our lives that we continue to overcome sins' temptations in our lives and the slavery which this entails. Thus Christians have no choice but to declare the Gospel since failure in this regard is indicative of a dead relationship with God. But in our missionary capacity, it is noted that our primary service is to God and consequently then to man. In other words, our service to man rests squarely upon our service and worship of God. We proclaim the Gospel not so much because of the world's need but more so because of God's action in His Son.

The missionary is not the servant of humanity; he is the servant of the holiness of God to humanity. He is the messenger of the Cross because the Cross is the glorification, the revelation, of God's holiness. It is holiness and not compassion that redeems.<sup>106</sup>

This can also be said of the Church. "Never be it forgotten that in the New Testament the main function of the Church is, not the service of man, but the approach to God."<sup>107</sup> This puts the missionary endeavour squarely where it belongs; in the context of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. To remain the Church, by the very nature of the Gospel that it is called to declare, it must be involved in missions. Without this it ceases to be a Christian Church but <sup>is</sup> rather a social gathering. Forsyth points out that the apostolic character of the Church lies not in an apostolic succession but in an evangelical one.

The most apostolic Church is the Church that is evangelical in the widest sense of the word. ... It is the gospel that is the test of apostolicity; it is not apostolicity that is the test of the gospel.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 54.

<sup>106</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, pp. 230-231.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 238.



To have the reversal of gospel and apostolicity is to bring the Church under the rule of law and may also carry with it the danger of making the Gospel conformable to this theory. Thus it becomes an attempt by man to control the Gospel.

To missionize does not mean that we coerce people to believe but that we live as those who know that they are saved. We declare in our whole life and attitude that Jesus has already died for all men.

The Church must mission, being made by such a Gospel, the Gospel of a world already reconciled, already put right by God towards Him, already God's by His act and waiting only our appropriation.<sup>109</sup>

We are so apt to think in terms of saving the world by pieces. We forget that we exist in a world which is already redeemed in its entirety. God is concerned with the whole race, not just individuals within the race. Christ died for all men who have been baptized into His death. Thus the Church is called to make it plain to men that they are saved. "It makes them realize their early committal to God's prevenient grace, and choose accordingly."<sup>110</sup> Therefore, if missions are going to be an integral part of the Church's life we must preach the Gospel since it is here that mission receives its impetus as well as its power.

To remain true to the Church's destiny it becomes the preacher's task to declare this Gospel. In a sense he is between the Gospel and the world but he must always begin with the Gospel while accommodating it to the world in which he lives. "I mean one (Gospel) which is true to the New Testament on one side, and on the other is real and relevant to the religious, moral, and intellectual situation of the hour in which we live."<sup>111</sup> Thus we preach first and foremost

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<sup>109</sup>P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Revelation Old and New, p. 38.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

what God has already done, not what we can do. To begin otherwise is to start with the needs, aspirations, experiences and possibilities of human nature. It is to preach our experience of Christ rather than the grounds of this experience. To begin with man and his needs also may lead us into a dependency upon them. But in order to be for men we must be free from them. It is only the new life created by the Gospel that makes this possible.

The ideal minister must love and understand the people, but he must know and love still more the will and word of God, and he must escape the snare of an immoderate desire to be beloved.<sup>112</sup>

To concern ourselves with the Gospel is to open our lives to some agonizing experiences. There is an agony of love connected with the Gospel when we realize that our preaching brings judgment to a head. Christ realized that His salvation meant doom for many of the people He loved. "And to those<sup>to</sup> whom we are not life we are death, in proportion as we truly preach, not ourselves, but the real Christ."<sup>113</sup> But, in the final analysis, this responsibility does not rest upon us but upon the God whom we preach. He it is that brings this judgment, this demand for decision, to men, not we ourselves. Every time we have to handle the Gospel we not only gain a new intimacy with it but it judges us who would rely upon our own natural self-confidence or exuberance to present the Gospel with power. "We have to lift up Christ - a Christ who is the death of natural self-confidence - a humiliating, even a crushing Christ."<sup>114</sup> But at the same time, as we have already noted, our judgment is a saving experience. Here we are lifted up to be the very sons of God. It is this fact and accompanying knowledge that salvation rests on God's action, not our own, which saves us from disillusionment and despair in the face of a seemingly unresponsive humanity. Such knowledge can only be sustained

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

and increased by constant communion with the source of this confidence. Therefore, prayer is an absolute necessity in the preacher's life. Thus we are called to preach the Gospel which declares that all men are saved. "Preach it with your own joy in the Lord, your own gratitude to the Redeemer, your own faith in His eternal power, love and grace".<sup>115</sup>

Of the three preachers under consideration, Forsyth appears to have grasped in his preaching what we have thought to be Paul's understanding of the relationship of Gospel and law. For this reason alone he is worthy of our deepest consideration. He is much more consistent in this view than Thielicke who remains somewhat enigmatic and inconsistent since he appears to use both understandings of this relationship in his preaching. Where Thielicke's strength lies is in his ability to expound Scripture; to give us real expositional preaching. Forsyth, on the other hand, appears to use the text as a spring board into a theological discourse. Thus although he indicates a Biblical beginning he fails to carry this exposition right through his sermons. In this sense, Forsyth is disappointing particularly in the light of his understanding of the gospel. Perhaps this can be explained by the lecture style and content of the material investigated.

#### BILLY GRAHAM

Billy Graham represents a preacher who uses a consistent law and Gospel approach, while at the same time he also exhibits what I would consider a lack of understanding concerning the radical nature of man's slavery under the law. Graham's evangelistic methods, although up to date in terms of mass

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<sup>115</sup> P. T. Forsyth, Op. Cit., Missions in State and Church, p. 216.

communication techniques, springs from an age in which Biblical knowledge by the populace was much higher than it is today. In our contemporary scene we are confronted by a Biblically and theologically illiterate generation. Graham's obvious success is due more to the Christian Education of a by-gone era than a real communication of Christ to the contemporary man. But if this method continues without adjustment in terms of language it may very well be that his message will become unintelligible to his hearers.

But having said this the real question still remains: does he preach the Gospel he claims to preach? We cannot doubt the sincerity and integrity of this man for he has certainly indicated by word and action that he has encountered the Gospel which he professes to proclaim. But this does not mean that we are predisposed to accept the theological framework of this Gospel simply because of the enthusiasm which he is able to generate. The Gospel for Mr. Graham is the fact that God sent His Son into the world to save man from his guilt and sin. "That is the reason God sent His Son into the world - to take away the guilt and penalty of our sins and to give us the strength to overcome temptation."<sup>116</sup> God can and will forgive men. He can and will make the foulest sinner pure and clean. This is accomplished by the shedding of Christ's blood. But why is this action necessary?

It is in God's holiness that we find the reason for the death of Christ. His holiness demanded the most exacting penalty for sin, and His love provided Jesus Christ to pay this mighty penalty and provide man with salvation.<sup>117</sup>

God's holiness demanded punishment for sin and His love provided the scape goat. We need not concern ourselves with the basic division this creates

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<sup>116</sup>W. F. Graham, My Answer, (London: Morrison and Gibb, Ltd., 1961), p. 142.

<sup>117</sup>W. F. Graham, Peace With God, (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1954), p. 21.

between God's love and His judgment other than to note that it is the radicalness of man's sin that demands God's action rather than God's love. This is the extent of Graham's Gospel which we shall note usually appears strategically at the end of his sermons as the climax and invitation to repentance. Certainly for one who is called to preach the Good News the fullness and impact of the Gospel seems very limited. Graham spends a large portion of his sermon expounding the depravity of man rather than the grace of God which saves man. If we were to accept at face value the amount of time spent on describing man's sinful state we would assume that Graham's understanding of sin must be profound. But his understanding of sin is limited to the individual in a narrow moral sense rather than seeing the wider social ramifications of sin particularly in the context of the powers and principalities which control the contemporary society. But surely this follows from his limited understanding of the nature of the Gospel in this regard.

We have contended that Graham's understanding of the Gospel is somewhat superficial and in relation to this we would expect his grasp of the depth of man's sin to reflect a similar deficiency. Let us now consider his understanding of the relation of law and sin to ascertain whether this is true.

He begins:

We have pussyfooted long enough in our religion. With the advent of the hydrogen bomb and the possibility of the cobalt bomb, we must come to grips with the issues of our day. We must face the realities as they are.<sup>118</sup>

But these realities although crucial are not the direct concern of the Gospel but this concern lies more in the area of man's personal moral misdemeanours. He does not seem to recognize the systems of sin which produce such realities

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. V.



and make them necessary to protect the same system which formerly nurtured these machines of destruction. Graham further pleads for the calling of sin, sin, rather than pawning it off as an error in behaviour.<sup>119</sup> This awareness of sin he hopes to achieve by the preaching of the law. In this he is consistent for inevitably he begins his sermons by describing man's deprived state and therefore his need of God. Repeatedly a large portion of his sermon is devoted to this enterprise rather than God's action and initiative, which not only saves men but, as we have noted, reveals man's rebellion. Even when Graham realizes that although the law fulfills the function of delineating the reason for man's predicament but does not offer us the cure, he continues in this approach.<sup>120</sup>

There is a living conviction in my soul that our problems are a result of our ignorance of divine moral law, Judaeo-Christian ethicism, and God's purpose for human redemption in Christ - our unwillingness to obey God's rule, suggestion and imperative for abundant living in any circumstances.<sup>121</sup>

Thus man's problem is not only revealed in the law but finds its source in his ignorance of and refusal to live up to its precepts. We remember Paul's adamant rejection of salvation by means of the law and his indication that the difficulty resided not in a failure to keep the law but in obeying it in such a way that man in relation to sin was led to claim salvation by virtue of his own goodness. Consequently the law does not reveal man's problem, but only the Gospel. We would therefore reject Graham's understanding of the law at this point. In his understanding of marriage Mr. Graham contends that God has a blue-print of our lives and consequently some one is already chosen for us. In other words, our life finds its destiny in law, not only before the

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<sup>119</sup>W. F. Graham, The Seven Deadly Sins, (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1956), p. 9.

<sup>120</sup>W. F. Graham, Op. Cit., Peace With God, p. 94.

<sup>121</sup>W. F. Graham, Op. Cit., My Answer, p. viii.

Christian life but after. God's grace seems to be relegated to the position of simply providing an answer to man's predicament and is therefore limited in its scope and operation. We would suggest that Mr. Graham's understanding of grace at this point is somewhat weak and unPauline.

What is his understanding of sin? He comments that: "In my opinion sex is probably America's greatest sin".<sup>122</sup> He does not simply limit sin to the lusts and appetites of the flesh but nevertheless these are the overriding concerns of his preaching. He portrays little understanding of man's sin as it is objectified in the power structures of our day. "We can thank God that we are part of a nation that seeks to solve our problems by peaceful means."<sup>123</sup> Graham refuses to recognize the evil inherent in the American system and way of life but rather notes the evil of communism. He identifies America with the good and communism with the bad.<sup>124</sup> This is one indication of his failure to understand the radicalness of man's sin in his best endeavours and consequently Graham may well lack a sufficient grasp of the radicalness of God's grace. In his discussion of the freedom of Adam and Eve, Graham suggests that we are also free to choose. But since he does not grasp the fulness of man's sin Graham does not fully grasp the slavery of man and thus his lack of freedom in this regard. We have no-freedom under the law but it is only God in Christ who can put us into this situation of faith in which we are truly free to choose. Therefore because of Graham's failure to reckon with the radicalness of God's love and man's sin he fails to recognize the depth of man's slavery. His understanding of sin seems to centre around the so-called

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<sup>122</sup>W. F. Graham, Op. Cit., The Seven Deadly Sins, p. 52.

<sup>123</sup>W. F. Graham, Op. Cit., My Answer, p. 217.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., pp. 225-226.

sins of the flesh which might well be overcome by good mental health. This will become clearer when we consider Graham's understanding of conversion which he sees as primarily a human act.

What is conversion for Billy Graham?

To express it more simply, I think that we can say that conversion is the human act by which man expresses his desire to change the course of his life, to turn toward God, and to live in accordance with Divine law.<sup>125</sup>

He continues by indicating that there are three steps in conversion; repentance, faith, and sanctification. Repentance is the renunciation of our sin which is achieved by the declaration of God's judgment, His law and its requirements. When man is confronted by this judgment he repents and receives Jesus Christ. According to Graham Jesus insisted upon this first step of repentance; i.e. the human act whereby man declares his own bankruptcy and turns to God.

He (Jesus) said repentance must come before He could pour out His love, grace and mercy upon men. Jesus refused to gloss over iniquity. He insisted upon self-judgment, upon a complete right-about face. He insisted upon a new attitude before He would reveal the love of God.<sup>126</sup>

Thus man's salvation is conditional upon man's act of repentance which Graham regards as renunciation of man's sin brought about by the proclamation of the law. While we would accept that man is to repent, his act of repentance is achieved in the light of the proclamation of the Gospel which not only reveals the extent of man's alienation but also enables him to repent. This repentance is made possible by the action of the Holy Spirit and not simply as a response to man's desire and by his own strength. Faith is also understood by Mr. Graham as essentially a human achievement. "It is the hand that reaches out and receives the gift of His love."<sup>127</sup> Then sanctification is

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<sup>125</sup>W. F. Graham, Op. Cit., Peace With God, p. 94.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

that action by which God through the power of the Holy Spirit remakes man into His child. At that point although man continues to live under the divine law the Holy Spirit grants him the moral power to obey it.

Perhaps Mr. Graham's understanding of the relationship of the Gospel and the law can best be summarized by an illustration which he uses with regard to the story of the Prodigal Son. In this illustration a boy refuses to gather firewood for his father and consequently the father throws him out of the house. But surely even at this point this is in radical contrast to the Biblical record which indicates that the son left the Father's house of his own accord? But finally the boy comes to himself and decides to return and seek forgiveness. The father softened for just a moment:

Then he grew stern and, pointing to the woodshed, said, "Son, that same stick of wood is in the woodshed. Get it, bring it in, and put it on the fire, and you can come in ... God says that you will have to get all those sticks and bring them to the altar before you can have the thrill, the warmth, the joy and the glory of His hearth.<sup>128</sup>

Graham, in this example, has reverted to the way of the law. He pleads to man that he make himself worthy by the human actions of repentance and faith and then God will accept or sanctify him. In this manner Graham has suggested that we must earn our salvation through the human actions of repentance and faith. It is not until the end of his sermon after he has brought the law to bear on man and by which he hopes to elicit the feelings of guilt that he pleads with his audience to repent and believe and then receive God's grace. In such a manner man is thrown back upon himself in order to save himself from the hell that he deserves.

"God's purpose for you and me after we have been converted is that we witness to His saving grace and power."<sup>129</sup> The Holy Spirit given to man by God when he experiences sanctification enables him to stand up to Satan, who

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<sup>128</sup>W. F. Graham, Calling Youth to Christ, (Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, Ltd., 1948), p. 40.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

tempts man primarily in the form of the lusts of the flesh. If we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour we shall also achieve happiness and peace of mind.

You should go around with a smile, having a good time in a clean and wholesome way, with Christ at the centre of your social life. The crowd of young people that knows Jesus Christ is the crowd having the best time in America to-day.<sup>130</sup>

But is this not the same motif which is suggested by the advertisement of the contemporary world that we should be 'good to ourselves' and buy this particular product? In this case the saleable product is Jesus Christ. According to Graham it is in Christ that the tensions, the anxieties and the worries of life will be eliminated. While we would agree that joy is basic to the Christian life the attributes of mental health which seem to be the objective of the Gospel is to misrepresent its purpose as well as underestimate the slavery of sin in this world. He further comments: "To safeguard our democracy and preserve the better way of life, we need, we must have, a revival of genuine old-fashioned Christianity, deep widespread, in the power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>131</sup> While our commitment to Christ will certainly have ramifications for our participation in the life of the nation Graham again seems to ignore Paul's understanding of man under the law which includes the social and power structures of society. The purpose of our preaching must be the proclamation of the Gospel and we cannot allow this proclamation to be used for the support of the status quo. In effect, Graham's preaching does not produce martyrs but wholesome boys and girls who will uphold the American way of life. Perhaps this can help to explain, to a degree, the rather large following Graham has in America. Therefore, although we do not doubt the man's sincerity, there is some question as to the content

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<sup>130</sup>W. F. Graham, Billy Graham Talks to Teenagers, (London: Oliphants Ltd., 1959), p. 35.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 21.



and results of his message. Like all preachers of the law and Gospel approach he is in danger of thrusting man back upon himself to earn his own salvation. It would appear that he has succumbed to this temptation more than Thielicke. His sermons also indicate a real lack of expositional material but starting with man inevitably leads to this result. Thus I would suggest that if we are to be true to our calling to declare the Gospel we must begin with God's action in Christ and then all things will follow after.

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