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**THE PNEUMA AS AUTHORITY AND MOVING
FORCE IN PAUL, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17**

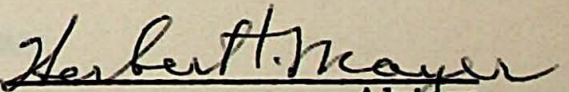
**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology**


by

Roger Beese

May 1973

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis proposes to discuss the pneuma theology of St. Paul on the basis of the much disputed seventeenth verse of 2 Corinthians 3 and related passages. The study will concentrate on the role of pneuma as authority and moving force in the Pauline congregation. The word pneuma is used frequently in Paul's letters, particularly in the Pillar Epistles, in a variety of contexts. Pneuma is unquestionably a key concept in Pauline theology. A study of Paul's pneuma theology, then, is a vital one, for it strikes close to the heart of his entire theological thinking. The centrality of his pneuma theology is even more apparent when one takes note of the close connection which Paul makes between pneuma and Kyrios, especially in 2 Cor. 3:17, where the two words are connected with estin. The thesis will attempt to define as closely as possible the relationship that Paul sees between Kyrios and pneuma. It is tempting in this context to raise anachronistic questions; such as, what connection does Paul make between the second and third persons of the Blessed Trinity, or can Paul's theology be classified as binitarian or modalistic, or would he have subscribed to the Niceno-Constantinopolitanum or to the Quicumque vult? An exegetical study, to be true to its purpose, must resist the temptation to put such questions to Paul, since Paul never shows any interest in answering questions of this type. Ontological speculation concerning the pneuma is foreign to his epistles. Paul presents the pneuma dynamically, in action, since the pneuma is not to be studied so much as experienced.

The concept of authority is also an important one for Paul, particularly in 2 Corinthians, where Paul is compelled to defend his apostolic authority as a minister of the New Covenant. Since the New Covenant is pneumatos (2 Cor. 3:6), Paul's authority is closely connected with pneuma. The paper will also explore the relationship between pneuma and authority in the Pauline congregation. It is through the pneuma that God gives various gifts and ministries to the church by which the church is to be guided and edified. The pneuma, then, is an authoritative force moving and working within the church.

On the other hand, the pneuma is also the spirit of freedom and spontaneity within the church in its early years. On the basis of 2 Cor. 3:17b this idea will also be examined. Paul supported the idea of ecclesiastical freedom, but it had to be freedom in responsibility and love. Paul was willing to give up his freedom for the sake of winning people for Christ (1 Corinthians 9). And he expects his readers to do likewise (1 Cor. 10:23-24).

After an initial investigation into the identity of the opponents of Paul in 2 Corinthians, the thesis will examine the relationship between the exalted Lord, Jesus Christ, and the pneuma. Then the pneuma will be studied as spirit of freedom and creativity, and finally the pneuma as authority within the church.

CHAPTER II

PAUL'S OPPONENTS IN 2 CORINTHIANS

In order to understand the role of the pneuma in Pauline thought according to 2 Cor. 3:17-18, it is important to have some understanding of the nature of Paul's opposition in the congregation and particularly of the opponents against whom 2 Corinthians was written. The question of the opponents in 2 Corinthians is one which has long engaged Biblical scholars, and it seems that there are about as many theories as there are scholars investigating the question. The great disagreement among scholars indicates the difficulty in stating with any certainty who the opponents are and what they were teaching at variance with Paul's Gospel proclamation. Baur contended over one hundred years ago that Paul's opponents were Judaizing Christians who had been sent from Jerusalem under the authority of Peter.¹ Walter Schmithals has maintained that the opponents in both 1 and 2 Corinthians are Jewish-Christian Gnostics. He links the evidence in both epistles and concludes that Paul is fighting on only one heretical front in both letters. He contends that the enumeration of divisions in 1 Cor. 1:12 does not indicate so many different heresies but that all the divisions are embraced under only one heresy.²

¹ Derk William Oostendorp, Another Jesus: A Gospel of Jewish-Christian Superiority in II Corinthians (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1967), p. 1.

² Walter Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians, translated from the German by John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1971), pp. 113-114.

Dieter Georgi argues that the opponents were Jewish-Christian preachers who used Hellenistic propaganda techniques for spreading the Gospel.³ Derk Oostendorp in a dissertation submitted to the Free University of Amsterdam has argued that the opponents are Jewish-Christians who preach a Gospel of Jewish-Christian superiority and the supremacy of the Torah as the revelation of God's will for the Christian. He also sees in these opponents certain pneumatic tendencies. They believed that it is by means of the Mosaic Law that Christians receive the Spirit of God. They considered their own spiritual gifts "to be evidence of the grace that God bestows on those who keep the law."⁴ Paul argues that it is his weakness which is the mark of an apostle (Theologia Crucis).⁵

Werner Kümmel describes the opponents in the following terms:

Rather, it is clear that Jewish Christians have come into the Corinthian church who boast of their indubitable apostolic dignity, their Palestinian origin . . . their contact with the earthly Jesus, their irreproachable Jewish descent, and also their spiritual gifts; they have letters of recommendation and deny all of these advantages to Paul.⁶

They are not Judaizers although they originate from Palestine, but they

³Dieter Georgi, Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), p. 301.

⁴Oostendorp, p. 80.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, Introduction to the New Testament, completely re-edited by Werner Georg Kümmel, translated by A. J. Mattill, Jr. (14th revised edition; Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1966), p. 209.

are opposed to Paul's mission and apostolic dignity. They have certain features in common with the Gnostic opponents recognizable in 1 Corinthians.

Thus Paul in II Corinthians, polemicizes, to be sure, not against a "double front" . . . but against a definite Gnostic, Palestinian, Jewish-Christian opposition created by new additional opponents, who forced Paul to defend the "legitimacy" (Käsemann) of his apostleship throughout the entire Epistle.⁷

While it is difficult to derive a clear picture of the opponents, certain features do stand out in Paul's polemic. First of all, they presented themselves and were presumably received by the Corinthians as Apostles of Christ (11:5,13; 12:11). But Paul sarcastically refers to them as "superlative" (hyperlian) apostles (11:5; 12:11) and as pseudo-postoloi (11:13). By using this terminology Paul shows that the opponents considered themselves superior to himself as apostles, but that he did not consider them legitimate apostles at all. The last four chapters of the letter indicate that much more was at stake than a few minor differences of opinion. The opponents had attacked Paul's apostleship. And he considered them false apostles. The length to which Paul goes to defend his apostolic dignity in the letter shows that this is what concerned him most and was his primary purpose for writing 2 Corinthians. His purpose, however, is not to glorify himself, for it is his weakness rather than his strength which certifies him as a legitimate representative of Christ (12:9), since Christ himself was crucified in weakness (13:4). The opponents are to be rejected because they are preaching another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different Gospel. Paul does not say of them, as he does of his

⁷Ibid., pp. 209-210.

opponents in Phil. 1:15-18, that as long as they preach Christ he will rejoice. In preaching another Jesus from the one preached by Paul they give him no cause for rejoicing at all.

The opponents boast of their Jewish heritage, that they are Hebrews, Israelites, and descendants of Abraham (11:21-22). In chapter 3 Paul contrasts the dispensation of life in the pneuma with the dispensation of death in the gramma. He emphasizes the fading nature of the Old Mosaic Covenant, carved in letters on stone. This emphasis would indicate that the opponents thought that the Mosaic Torah was necessary to the Gospel. On the other hand, Baur's thesis that the opponents were Judaizers seems unwarranted since Paul does not use the words nomos and peritomē in 2 Corinthians. This fact alone indicates that the situation at Corinth is quite different from that in Galatia, where Law and Circumcision were major issues.

Parallel terminology, however, is used in Gal. 3:21 and in 2 Cor. 3:6. The former says that if a nomos had been given which was able to make alive (zōopoiēsai), then righteousness would be by the Law. 2 Cor. 3:6 says similarly that the written code (gramma) kills, but the pneuma makes alive (zōopoiēi). Gramma is in some way parallel to nomos, as will be pointed out later, and the point in both verses is that nomos and gramma cannot make alive. In fact, the gramma kills. The nomos brings with it a curse for everyone who does not keep it all (Gal. 3:10).

Another point of comparison between Galatians and 2 Corinthians is in the discussion of the euangelion heteron (2 Cor. 11:4) and the heteron euangelion (Gal. 1:6) to which the Galatians are turning so quickly. This parallel terminology is evidence for correspondence between the

situations in the two congregations. Furthermore, in Galatians Paul is forced to submit a brief defense of his apostolic authority to show that he is both sanctioned by (Gal. 2:9) and independent of (Gal. 1:11-12,17,19) the church at Jerusalem and its pillar apostles. But in Galatians Paul defends his authority only briefly while he discusses at length the Gospel of faith without works. In 2 Corinthians the emphasis is on a defense of his authority and his ministry in the New Covenant, and Paul only hints briefly at the relation of the Mosaic Law to the Gospel.

A pneumatic element can also be detected in the background of 2 Corinthians, although the evidence here is not as strong as in 1 Corinthians.⁸ 2 Cor. 11:4 hints that the opponents were proclaiming a "different spirit" (pneuma heteron) from the one which the Corinthians had received as a result of Paul's preaching. The fact that Paul finds it necessary in 2 Cor. 11:1-4 to boast about visions and revelations, especially one which he had experienced fourteen years ago, indicates that the opponents had also boasted about the power of the pneuma in their lives. Perhaps his opponents claimed to be superior to Paul because he did not have visions and revelations as they did. Paul boasts that he did have revelations and visions; indeed he had an abundance of them (12:7). But Paul does not attempt to prove his apostleship by such revelations. His own weakness was, in fact, a stronger demonstration of his apostleship, for that very weakness made him strong in the power of Christ (12:9).

⁸The evidence in 1 Corinthians is most compelling in chapters 12 through 14, although the pneumatic background comes through in almost every chapter.

As a further demonstration of his apostleship, Paul mentions the signs of a true apostle (ta sēmeia tou apostolou) which had been performed among them (12:12).⁹ He does not say who performed them, but the context makes it clear that Paul himself did. He is not at all inferior to the superlative apostles (12:11). The sēmeia consisted in signs, wonders and mighty works. Since Paul nowhere else uses the term (sēmeia tou apostolou) it may be inferred that he was quoting the terminology of his opponents, who claimed that Paul did not perform such signs and was therefore inferior to themselves. Paul's rejoinder is that he does have the pneuma, he has performed signs and wonders, and he is not in any way inferior to his opponents.

In the argumentation of 2 Corinthians 3 Paul makes a point of contrasting the pneuma with the gramma. This emphasis leads to the conclusion that the opponents linked the pneuma with the gramma, insisting that it is impossible to have one without the other. Since Paul displays a low view of nomos (Rom. 7:6) and gramma (2 Cor. 3:6), therefore, in the judgment of the opponents, he could not have the pneuma. Paul emphasizes, on the other hand, that the pneuma is opposed to the gramma. The pneuma lies not in the Law but in the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17-18), and is a spirit of freedom.

The opponents in 2 Corinthians must be Jewish-Christians who fancy themselves to be apostles superior to Paul. They have a high view of the Torah. And they may be claiming to have more of the pneuma than

⁹Cf. Acts 2:22; Rom. 15:19; Gal. 3:5; and Heb. 2:4. See 2 Thess. 2:9 for the "pretended signs and wonders" of the lawless one by the power of Satan.

Paul does. The pneuma for them is tied to the Mosaic Torah. According to Jer. 31:31 the New Covenant would come when God placed the Torah into the people's hearts. Ezek. 36:26-27 stated that the Spirit would come to Israel when they would keep the written statutes and ordinances. From Philo the Jewish opponents might have learned that the only means of receiving the Spirit was through study of the Law.¹⁰

The opponents may be described, then, as Jewish-Christians, who believed that the Torah was still the supreme revelation of the will of God, also in the Christian community, and that through study and observance of the Torah of Moses the Spirit was given.¹¹ But Paul does not advocate the observance of the Torah. This is why Paul is not a true apostle in their eyes and does not have the Spirit. The lack of pneuma in Paul's ministry is indicated not only by the moral depravity of the Corinthian congregation but also by the lack of visible demonstration of external pneumatic signs in Paul's ministry. In that sense the opponents may be classified as pneumatic, since there are indications that they emphasized certain external pneumatic manifestations as a legitimatization of their apostleship. The opponents may well be pneumatic but not Gnostic in the accepted sense of the term, since there is no Gnostic Redeemer myth apparent in their theology.¹²

¹⁰Georgi, pp. 127-130.

¹¹Oostendorp, p. 36.

¹²Ernst Käsemann, "Die Legitimität des Apostels," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XLI (1942), 40-41.

CHAPTER III

HO DE KYRIOS TO PNEUMA ESTIN

In the thought of Paul the pneuma does not come through the observance or study of the Mosaic Torah, as it does for the opponents. Nor is pneuma evidence primarily by the abundance of ecstatic phenomena, glossolalia, visions, revelations, and miracles. For Paul the pneuma is inseparably connected with the power and presence of the exalted Kyrios at work within His church. In 2 Cor. 3:17, a much disputed passage, Paul connects Kyrios and pneuma with estin: "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." The following verse ends with the words apo Kyriou pneumatos, a construction which suggests that Kyrios and pneuma are to be identified. Does Paul, then, make a simple equation here, indicating that Kyrios and pneuma are synonymous in his theology?

On this verse there have been a host of differing opinions. Wilhelm Bousset sees the two concepts (Kyrios and pneuma) as blending together here but not altogether or completely.¹ Werner Kümmel says that such an equation contradicts Pauline Christology "da Paulus zwar weitgehend dieselben Wirkungen Christus und dem Geist zuschreiben kann, immer aber Christus und den Geist deutlich unterscheidet" ² Paul Wendland denies any direct equation here but attaches great theological significance

¹Wilhelm Bousset, Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus (5th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), p. 113.

²Hans Lietzmann, An die Korinther I. II., enlarged by Werner Georg Kümmel (5th edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1969), p. 200.

to this exegetical digression, for it indicates that the revelation and outpouring of the Spirit occurs in and through Christ.³ Eduard Schweizer does not explain 2 Cor. 3:17 as a direct assertion of identity of the two personalities but rather as an indication of the "mode" in which the Lord exists. In terms of His role for the church and His works of power within it, Christ can be identified with the Spirit, but insofar as Christ is Lord over His own power, He can be distinguished from it, just as one's self can be distinguished from the power which goes out from him.⁴ Werner Kramer points out that the genitive pneuma Kyriou in 3:17b, a genitive of belonging or origin, shows that "Lord and Spirit are not simply identical."⁵ These and many other opinions regarding this debated passage indicate that the solution is not simple. The precise connection between Kyrios and pneuma in the New Testament church and in the theology of Paul is not readily apparent from these two isolated verses. A clear picture can emerge only as the passage is studied in its context and in the light of the purpose of the entire Epistle and against the background of the whole Pauline corpus.

One of Paul's primary purposes in 2 Corinthians, as indicated above, is the defense of his apostolic authority. In keeping with that purpose Paul emphasizes that his ministry is legitimate and that he has the capacity

³Heinz-Dietrich Wendland, Die Briefe an die Korinther (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1965), p. 158.

⁴Eduard Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1968), VI, 419.

⁵Werner Kramer, Christ, Lord, Son of God, translated from the German by Brian Hardy (London: SGM Press, Ltd., 1966), p. 166.

to carry it out because God has chosen him for it and has given him the capacity (hikanotēs) to be a minister of the New Covenant (3:5-6).

Throughout the letter Paul reiterates this theme, even in sections which have other purposes. As the Epistle stands, the progression of thought is difficult to understand. This difficulty has led many scholars to conclude that at least two, perhaps three or even four letters are spliced together into what we know as 2 Corinthians. As tempting as such a solution may be, this paper will treat 2 Corinthians as a unity and will interpret the Epistle as it stands. The evidence for non-integrity is not compelling enough to make such a hypothesis the solution to the problems of the letter.

While Paul injects defensive remarks throughout the Epistle, two major sections stand out in which he presents a cogent defense of his apostleship. These are in 2 Cor. 2:14-6:10 and in 2 Corinthians 10-13. Although the change of mood in chapter 10 is especially noticeable and the marked difference between chapters 9 and 10 is difficult to understand, the last four chapters deal with the same basic problem as the early chapters of the Epistle. This is one reason for treating the letter as a unity.

Beginning at the fourteenth verse of chapter 2, Paul pictures his missionary activity as a triumphal procession in which God is constantly leading him around spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. Those who accept Paul's ministry and Gospel proclamation receive life. Paul becomes for them a life-giving fragrance. Those who reject the Gospel, experience Paul as the fragrance from death to death. Paul has an awesome responsibility, and a sense of this responsibility leads

him to ask the question in verse 16c, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who is worthy (hikanos) to carry on such a vital life and death ministry? The opponents have claimed that Paul is not worthy, he does not have the capacity to be an apostle. But Paul himself has admitted the same thing in 1 Cor. 15:9: "ouk eimi hikanos kaleisthai apostolos." And in 2 Cor. 3:5 Paul answers his own question. We are not hikanoi of ourselves. No man is worthy of such tremendous responsibility in which the eternal destiny of men is involved. "Our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:5-6).

In 2 Cor. 2:17 Paul becomes more defensive, "We are not, like so many, peddlers (kapēleuontes) of God's Word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." Here the opponents are designated as the hoi polloi who go around peddling God's Word. What does Paul mean by calling them peddlers? Dieter Georgi compares Plato's use of the term kapēleuein, which he uses against the Sophists, who go around trying to sell their "wisdom" like merchandise.⁶ In 2 Cor. 4:2 Paul expresses the same thought as he says that "we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's Word." Georgi believes that the term kapēleuein is used here by Paul first to indicate that the opponents were making money from the preaching of the Gospel, something which Paul did not do. The opponents had boasted about their superiority to Paul partly because of his refusal to take money from the congregation at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:7-8; 12:13).⁷

⁶Dieter Georgi, Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), p. 226.

⁷Ibid., pp. 234-241.

Also, their methods were spectacular demonstrations of pneumatic power.⁸ Paul sets aside such methods and proclaims simply the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, the crucified Christ. "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). Paul presents himself as a man of sincerity, commissioned by God (2 Cor. 2:17) who speaks en Christōi in the sight of God.

As he begins chapter 3, Paul asks two rhetorical questions, "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you?" The first question undoubtedly reflects an accusation made against Paul in the past, namely, that he had been commending himself. A parallel thought is presented in John 8:13-18, where the Pharisees accuse Jesus, "You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true." Deut. 19:15 required the testimony of two witnesses to establish guilt in case of a crime. The rabbis supported this, saying that the testimony of one person is not to be considered sufficient proof and that no man could testify for himself alone.⁹ Jesus retorts that his own testimony concerning himself is supported by that of the Father who sent Him (John 8:17-18).

But where has Paul commended himself before the writing of 2 Corinthians? Chapters 10 through 13 of this epistle could easily be twisted by one of Paul's opponents to claim that he is here commending himself. This leads many scholars to believe that these

⁸Ibid., pp. 210-213.

⁹Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), II, 522.

chapters constitute a separate epistle which Paul had written and sent between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. They are said to be the letter which Paul wrote to them "out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears" (2 Cor. 2:4).¹⁰ This hypothesis is accepted by many and is certainly plausible, but there is no ground for certainty. This paper, as stated above, will treat 2 Corinthians as a unity. Another possibility is that 1 Corinthians was considered to be self-commendation by the Corinthians or the opponents. Chapters 3 and 4 could be understood in this way, although Paul emphasizes there that he is really nothing of himself, but only a servant of Christ (1 Cor. 4:1). Neither Paul, who planted, nor Apollos, who watered, is anything. They are simply fellow workers for God (1 Cor. 3:5-9). A third possibility is that Paul was accused of self-commendation in an intermediate letter which is completely lost, the letter mentioned in 2 Cor. 2:4.

"Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you?" The tines of this verse are the same as the hoi polloi of 2:17. The many who are hucksters of God's Word use letters of recommendation in their activity. Maybe this is one of the "disgraceful, underhanded ways" (2 Cor. 4:2) which the opponents are using to sell their brand of religion, which Paul calls a "different Gospel" (2 Cor. 11:4). The mention of the letters of recommendation indicates that the opponents

¹⁰Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, Introduction to the New Testament, completely re-edited by Werner Georg Kummel, translated by A. J. Mattill, Jr. (14th revised edition; Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1966), pp. 210-212.

are outsiders in Corinth who needed such letters to introduce themselves and ingratiate themselves with the Corinthians. And they also needed letters of recommendation from the Corinthians to other congregations where they would seek to gain more converts. Paul did not need such letters of recommendation to the Corinthians, for he is the one who introduced them to the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:6), and so became their "father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). Paul's authority is derived from the Gospel he preaches, since this gospel was given to him directly by God, who commissioned him for it. If even Paul should ever proclaim a contrary Gospel, he would have no more authority, but would be "accursed" (Gal. 1:8-9).

Paul explains in verses 2 and 3 why he needs no ordinary letter of recommendation: "You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all men." A parallel thought is in 1 Cor. 9:2, "You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." The very existence and vitality of the Corinthian congregation attest to the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship and the validity of the Gospel which he preaches. Those who hear or read about this congregation thriving in a "Sin City" like Corinth must acknowledge the apostolic authority of Paul.

A variant reading in verse 2 (hymōn or hēmōn) raises the question, whose heart was the letter of recommendation written on? The best attested reading is hēmōn, "our hearts." The other reading is in Codex Sinaiticus and a few less important manuscripts. The RSV and Héring, however, adopt the less well-attested reading. Héring prefers

it because it "agrees better with the context."¹¹ Either reading can make good sense. If it is "your hearts" then the letter was carried around with the Corinthians so that the people who knew them could tell that Paul's ministry among them had been fruitful. If it is "our hearts," Paul is carrying the letter of recommendation around with him as a testimonial to his apostleship instead of a written letter. The overwhelming external evidence makes hēmōn the preferable reading.

Verse 3 continues the metaphor and changes it slightly. "And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered (diakonētheisa) by us, written (eggegrammene) not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." Here Paul points out that it is really Christ's letter which he is talking about. In fact, the Corinthians are a letter from Christ, written down by Paul. The letter is dictated by Christ and taken down (diakonētheisa) or "ministered" (KJV) by Paul. But it is not a physical letter written in ink. This letter is written by Christ with pneuma, the Spirit of the living God. It is a living letter, consisting of living people and written by the living Christ by means of the Spirit of the living God. Paul's ministry is alive because of the Spirit of life. This leads to the contrast with the Mosaic Torah, the sum and substance of which was given on tablets of stone. Stone tablets are dead. They are part of the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is alive, written on human hearts. Paul's ministry is a living one. He alludes to Jer. 31:31, which promised

¹¹Jean Héring, The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, translated from the First French Edition by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: The Epworth Press, 1967), p. 21.

that God would write His law in the hearts of His people. The Corinthians are a living fulfillment of that prophecy. They show by their Christian lives that the law has been written in their hearts and that by the power of the Spirit they do the will of God. In this way they are a letter of recommendation for Paul and his ministry.

Verse 4 continues, "Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God." Paul has confidence that Christ has done His job through him so well in Corinth that the Corinthians can, indeed, be his letter of recommendation, and that the opponents or anyone else may judge the quality, validity and effectiveness of Paul's ministry and his apostolic authority by looking at the members of the congregation at Corinth. But to emphasize the fact that it is really Christ working through him and giving him the strength and the authority for his apostleship, Paul continues in verse 5: "Not that we are sufficient (hikanoi) of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency (hikanotēs) is from God." Paul had asked in 2 Cor. 2:16, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Now he answers, we are sufficient for this ministry, but our sufficiency comes from God. The opponents had asked the question of Paul's worthiness or sufficiency for the task and the responsibility and the authority of being an apostle of Christ. In their judgment Paul simply did not have the proper credentials. Paul's answer is that he is not sufficient of himself, but his sufficiency comes from "God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a New Covenant, not in a written code (gramma) but in the Spirit (pneuma); for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

Paul has now set the stage for contrasting the Old and the New Covenant, the gramma and the pneuma, the diakonia of death ministered through Moses and the diakonia of the pneuma, ministered by Paul himself. The Old Covenant or dispensation (diakonia) is characterized by the word gramma, which the RSV translates "written code" and Ingo Hermann translates with the German word Gesetzesvorschrift.¹² "Any suggestion is to be rejected which would have it that the spirit of Scripture is here opposed to its letter, or its true or richer sense to the somatic body."¹³ Another concept, "no less incongruent with Paul, dominates the Platonic statements which would have it that what is written is an inadequate means to express spiritual insights."¹⁴ Gramma is basically synonymous with nomos. "It characterizes the Law in its quality of what is written or prescribed."¹⁵ Gramma is the Law as a written code, something to which the Jew could point with pride because he possessed it.¹⁶ Ernst Käsemann calls gramma "the actual, ruling perversion of the documented will of God."¹⁷ This specifically written or codified character of

¹²Ingo Hermann, Kyrios and Pneuma (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1961), p. 29.

¹³Gottlob Schrenk, "Gramma," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1964), I, 767.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., I, 765.

¹⁶Mathias Rissi, Studien zum Zweiten Korintherbrief (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, c.1969), p. 24.

¹⁷Ernst Käsemann, "The Spirit and the Letter," Perspectives on Paul, translated from the German by Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 154.

gramma was already implied in 2 Cor. 3:3, "not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" and the previous phrase, "not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God." These antitheses lead directly into the antithesis of old and new and of gramma and pneuma.

The word gramma, though not very common in Paul or in the New Testament, is also used to mean "written code" in Rom. 2:27, "Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you who have the written code (gramma) and circumcision, but break the law." Gramma is parallel to peritomē as something in the possession of the Jews which was their pride and joy, something which made them feel superior to the Gentiles. Gramma does no good for the Jew unless he keeps the nomos. Circumcision does no good either if it is only an outward symbol and not a matter of the heart. Paul says, therefore, in Rom. 2:29, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal (en pneumatī ou grammatī)."

Rom. 7:6 is another parallel, "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit (en kainotēti pneumatōs kai ou palaiotēti grammatos)." Paul reminds the Galatians that the Law (nomos) is not able to make alive (Gal. 3:21), and here Paul expresses the same thought when he writes that the gramma kills, but the pneuma makes alive. Since all men, Jews and Gentiles, are condemned under the Law (Rom. 3:9-20), the nomos cannot make alive. The gramma kills. The antithesis to works of law in Romans and Galatians is faith (pistis) or hearing with faith (akoe pisteōs). In 2 Corinthians 3 the antithesis to gramma is pneuma, whereas in Romans and Galatians it is sarx that is antithetical to pneuma.

In verses 7 to 11 Paul builds up a strong contrast between his ministry of the New Covenant and the Old Covenant ministry of Moses. The old ministry of death did come with a certain splendor (3:7), so much splendor (doxa) that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness (doxa). The Old Testament allusion to Moses putting on the veil is interpreted allegorically here so that in Paul's argument the doxa of Moses' face becomes the doxa of the Old Covenant. The ministry of the Old Covenant is one which consists in gramma, and it is characterized as diakonia tou thanatou. Its doxa was a fading glory. Derk Oostendorp puts it this way, "There was glory in the old covenant but this was partial because its ministry could not confer righteousness (and consequently life). The full glory was reserved for the ministry of the new covenant."¹⁸ Paul does not mean to say that all the people of the Old Covenant were doomed and cut off from righteousness. "Paul knew that there was grace and power in the O. T. period; but it did not come through the legal system as such. As Rom. 4 and Gal. 3:6-9 show, faith and forgiveness were the true way of life even then."¹⁹ Paul struggles with the fate of Israel in Romans 9-11, particularly with the paradox that "Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it" while "Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based on law did not succeed in fulfilling that law" (Rom. 9:30-31). The reason for

¹⁸Derk William Oostendorp, Another Jesus: A Gospel of Jewish-Christian Superiority in II Corinthians (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1967), p. 37.

¹⁹Floyd V. Filson, "The Second Epistle to the Corinthians," The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1953), X, 308. Hereafter referred to as IB.

the failure of Israel is that "they did not pursue it through faith, but as if it were based on works" (Rom. 9:32). Their downfall was not in the fact that they were in the Old Covenant's dispensation, but that they placed their reliance on works. They misunderstood the Old Covenant, seeing it only as written code and circumcision which they could claim as their exclusive possession, and not recognizing the grace and forgiveness which were a part also of the Old Covenant.

After making his point at some length in verses 7 to 11 that the glory of the New Covenant far exceeds that of the Old Covenant, Paul draws the conclusion for his personal ministry in verse 12, "Since we have such a hope, we are very bold (pollē parrēsia chrōmetha)." The word parrēsia can be translated with "boldness" or "openness." Paul had been accused of vacillating, saying "yes" and "no" at the same time. But he insists here that he has dealt with them in an open, forthright, honest manner. He deals boldly with their problems and their sins. He is not afraid to make the will of God plain to them. He has renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways (2 Cor. 4:2). He is no hawker or peddler of God's Word (2 Cor. 2:17). He does not say one thing in his letters and another when he is with them in person (2 Cor. 10:10-11). He speaks the plain truth with boldness. And it is his call to be minister of the New Covenant of the pneuma which gives him such boldness.

Herbert Ulonska writes that Paul can speak with parrēsia because he is a minister of righteousness, depending for his doxa on the pneuma, not on what is written down. His opponents wear a veil (their Empfehlungsbriefe) to fool the people. Paul wears no veil. The opponents should

turn to the Kyrios and have their veil of deception removed.²⁰ Ulonska thinks that throughout 2 Corinthians 3 Paul is not really speaking about the Mosaic written code but about his opponents and their letters of recommendation. He sees the Mosaic covenant as only an illustration of this point.²¹ Ulonska is stretching the evidence, however, since Paul would certainly make it clear if he intended to make his discussion of the old dispensation a mere illustration of the "letters of recommendation," which are mentioned only briefly in the opening verses of the chapter and then quickly passed over.

In 2 Cor. 3:13 Paul brings in the analogy with Moses again. He is not like Moses, the minister of the Old Covenant, who "put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor." Paul here ascribes a completely different motive to Moses for veiling his face than was implied in Exodus 34, which seems to indicate that it was because the people were afraid to look at his face because of its brightness. Paul attributes an allegorical motive and says that it was because he did not want the Israelites to see the end of the fading glory. The glory on Moses' face becomes in Paul's allegorical treatment the transitory doxa of the Old Covenant.²²

Siegfried Schulz, who believes that Paul is incorporating traditional material from a Jewish-Christian Midrash, says that the Midrash material attributed one reason to the wearing of the veil and Paul gave another

²⁰Herbert Ulonska, "Die Doxa des Mose," Evangelische Theologie, XXVI (1966), 387.

²¹Ibid., XXVI, 385.

²²Hermann, pp. 34-35.

reason. According to Paul, the veil was a symbol of the incomplete, obscure, and transitory character of the old revelation. The Israelites, both in the wilderness and in the synagogues, should have been able to see through the veil, but their hearts were hardened; in fact, over their hearts was a veil, which could not be removed until they turned to Christ. According to the traditional material, the veil was over Moses' face for the sake of the Israelites, because they could not bear the doxa either of Moses' face or of the Torah. The Jewish-Christian Midrash presents a high view of the Torah, while Paul's reinterpretation of the material presents a lower view. The Midrash emphasizes the overpowering glory of the Torah, while Paul emphasizes the transitory and fading nature of the doxa of the Torah.²³

Oostendorp maintains that the putting on of the veil was an act of God's grace, for a full glimpse of the doxa would have meant the destruction of the Children of Israel since Moses' "ministry was incapable of conferring the righteousness needed to stand in the presence of the holy God."²⁴ The veil shows that God "is unwilling to reveal His glory if it means the total destruction of His people."²⁵ In Christ the veil is taken away, for through Him God does "confer righteousness on man."²⁶

²³Siegfried Schulz, "Die Decke des Moses: Untersuchungen zu einer vorpaulinischen Überlieferung in II Cor. 3:7-18," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XLIX (1958), 12-15.

²⁴Oostendorp, pp. 39-40.

²⁵Ibid., p. 40.

²⁶Ibid.

This interpretation does not sufficiently take into account the word katargoumenou, which at the end of verse 7 was applied to the doxa on the face of Moses that was fading away and in verse 11 is applied to the diakonia tou thanatou from verse 7 and the diakonia tes katakriseos from verse 9. In verse 13 the katargoumenou refers physically to the doxa on Moses' face and in a theological way to the doxa of the old diakonia, which is now surpassed by the diakonia of the pneuma, of which Paul is a diakonos.

The word telos in verse 13 also merits a closer look. Telos, like its English equivalent "end," is ambiguous in meaning. It can mean "end" in the sense of cessation or termination. But it can also denote "end" in the sense of goal, purpose, fulfillment, or ultimate significance.²⁷ Hering translates: "so that the people of Israel could not perceive the ultimate significance of that which was to be abolished."²⁸ In Rom. 10:4 Paul writes that Christ is telos of the Law. Here too it is possible to say that He is the termination of the Law or its ultimate significance. Michel argues that the context demands the translation "end" in the sense of termination, since Christ is the eschatological event which puts an end to the nomos.²⁹ Other significant passages which might be compared for Paul's use of telos are Rom. 6:21-22 and Phil. 3:19.

²⁷ Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 819. Hereafter referred to as BAG; Gerhard Delling, "Telos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), VIII, 54-56.

²⁸ Hering, pp. 24-26.

²⁹ Otto Michel, Der Brief an die Römer (4. durchgesehene Auflage dieser Auslegung; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), p. 255.

If telos is to be translated as "goal" or "ultimate significance" in 2 Cor. 3:13, it would mean that the Israelites were unable to see the ultimate significance or goal of the transitory old diakonia. That is what had happened to the Israel of Paul's day. Their hearts were hardened (verse 14) so that when they read the Old Covenant the veil remained unlifted. Rom. 11:25 also speaks about this hardening. With hardened hearts they were unable to see the ultimate purpose, the goal, the significance of the Torah, which Paul explains in Gal. 3:23-26. The Law was a "paidagōgos until Christ came" (Gal. 3:24), and its telos or goal was "that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a paidagōgos" (Gal. 3:24-25). This is the meaning of the Old Covenant Law for Paul, and this is the meaning which the Jew of Paul's day refuses to see, indeed cannot see, for his heart is hardened and the old veil is still unlifted. This provides for Paul a theological explanation for Israel's failure to turn to Christ, a phenomenon which he experienced continually on his missionary journeys, so that after being rejected by the Jews he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-46; 18:6). In 2 Cor. 3:13, then, the two meanings of telos blend together, for the Jews were unable to see the ultimate purpose of the Law, nor were they able to see that its rule had come to an end in Christ.

Again, this does not mean that the entire Old Testament period was a disaster or that pre-Christian Israel was doomed under the Law. The faithful Israelite who took the Law seriously recognized his own limitations in keeping the Law. The Old Testament provision for sacrificial offerings and the Day of Atonement took into account the inability of man to be put right with God by keeping the Law. There was ample provision

for repentance and forgiveness. The entire Old Testament bears eloquent testimony to the fact that Israel did indeed have a gracious and forgiving God. Yet they often did not perceive the telos of that which was transitory and fading. They didn't see how it would all turn out in the end and how Christ would be both the fulfillment and the termination of the Law. A veil was over Moses' face and also over the diakonia of Moses.

The veil is taken away through Christ (2 Cor. 3:14). Some refused to turn to Christ, and for them the veil remained, for their hearts were hardened. But those who turned to Christ through the Apostle's preaching had their veil lifted. They came to see the Old Covenant in its fading splendor and the New Covenant with its permanent doxa. The same thought is expressed in verse 15, that "to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed." In this verse the veil is now over their minds rather than over Moses' face or over the Old Covenant. And this veil can be lifted from their minds when they turn to the Lord. "Lord" here obviously refers to Christ, as in verse 14.

Verse 16 is a citation of Ex. 34:34, "but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off" It is obviously not a word-for-word quotation, but it does show a parallel between Moses and the Jew who turns to the Lord (Christ). When Moses turned to the Lord (Yahweh), the veil was removed. When the contemporary Jew turns to the Lord (Christ), the veil is removed from his mind. J. D. G. Dunn, however, argues that the Kyrios of verse 16 is to be understood as identical with the Kyrios (= Yahweh) of Ex. 34:34, since 2 Cor. 3:7-18 is a Christian Midrash on an Old Testament text. It

certainly is a Midrash, but this does not prevent a change in meaning of the word Kyrios from the Old Testament to the New. Dunn does not sufficiently take into account the context, for in verse 14b Paul states very clearly that the veil is taken away through Christ, and verses 15 and 16 simply restate the same idea, using terminology reminiscent of Ex. 34:34. Dunn would translate verse 16 in such a way that Moses is understood to be the subject of epistrepseī: "When he (= Moses) turns to the Lord (= Yahweh), the veil is removed."³⁰ Hermann argues that the subject of epistrepseī must be either kardia from verse 15, an impersonal tis, or Israel.³¹ The RSV takes the second of these three alternatives and translates, "When a man turns to the Lord, the veil is removed." Dunn argues that unless Paul "can show from his text [Ex. 34:34] how the veil is removed his text has been of no real service to him."³² Paul does show from his text how the veil is removed, by turning to the Kyrios. And in the New Testament age the Kyrios is Christ, "because only through Christ is it [the veil] taken away" (2 Cor. 3:14b).

Verse 16 leads us into the crucial seventeenth verse, where Paul states that "the Lord is the Spirit." Dunn insists that Kyrios here must refer again to Yahweh, as it did in his interpretation of verse 16.³³

³⁰J. D. G. Dunn, "2 Corinthians III. 17--The Lord is the Spirit," The Journal of Theological Studies, XXI (1970), 312.

³¹Hermann, p. 38.

³²Dunn, XXI, 312.

³³Ibid., XXI, 313.

Scholars who agree with Dunn on this point include Davies,³⁴ Hughes,³⁵ Moody,³⁶ and Scott.³⁷ Hendry also agrees that "Lord" in verse 17 means the "Lord" of Ex. 34:34, but his conclusion is somewhat different from that of the others:

The meaning is that, as turning to the Lord is shown by Scripture to have been the condition for the removing of the veil from the face of Moses, so it will be for those who read "Moses" today; only, the Lord to whom they must turn is not to be sought on Mount Sinai, but in his presence in the Spirit. The thought is of a "dynamic entity"; the Lord "is" the Spirit in the sense that he is present and active in the Spirit among men.³⁸

In both verses, however, Kyrios must refer to Christ, as it normally does for Paul.³⁹ It is Christ, the Lord of the Church, who is here linked with the pneuma. When a man turns to Christ, the Kyrios, the veil is removed from his mind, and he experiences the pneuma, through which Christ works with power in His church. As Hermann puts it, "Das Wirken des Erhöhten ist nur zu verstehen als ein Wirken mittels des Pneuma. Wo der Geist erfahren wird, da wirkt Christus selbst durch sein Pneuma im Innern

³⁴J. G. Davies, The Spirit, The Church, and The Sacraments (London: The Faith Press, Ltd., 1954), pp. 35-36.

³⁵H. Maldwyn Hughes, "2 Cor. iii. 17: Ho de Kyrios to Pneuma estin," The Expository Times, XLV (1933-34), 235-236.

³⁶Dale Moody, Spirit of the Living God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1968), p. 105.

³⁷Ernest F. Scott, The Spirit in the New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1923), pp. 180-182.

³⁸George S. Hendry, The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1956 and 1965), pp. 24-25.

³⁹Hermann, p. 39.

des Menschen."⁴⁰ Hermann calls 2 Cor. 3:17a "eine existentielle Aussage" and says that when I experience the Kyrios, "er stellt sich für mich als Pneuma dar."⁴¹ Or again he puts it this way, "Ihr erfahrt das Pneuma als in euch wirksam; aber was ihr als Pneuma erfahrt, ist in Wirklichkeit der erhöhte und pneumamächtige Herr Jesus Christus."⁴² Hermann probably identifies Jesus Christ with the Spirit a little bit more than St. Paul would be willing to do.

Neill Hamilton's discussion of the verse is instructive:

The Spirit performs a function similar to the function of the Law under the Old Covenant. The Spirit is the agent on earth which communicates the benefits of the new covenant. In connection with these same benefits of the new covenant, the Lord plays a double role. By virtue of His messianic work He is the basis upon which the benefits may be given. And in His present role as exalted Lord, He is the source of the benefits. What our phrase does then is to equate the source of the benefits with the agent of their distribution. The sense of *ho de kyrios to pneuma estin* then becomes: the Spirit so effectively performs His office of communicating to men the benefits of the risen Christ that for all intents and purposes of faith the Lord Himself is bestowing grace on His own.⁴³

Hamilton further points out that the Spirit's "office is to communicate the benefits of Christ's work. But since Christ's gifts are inseparable from His person, the Spirit mediates the presence of the Lord."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 52.

⁴³ Neill Q. Hamilton, The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul, Scottish Journal of Theology, Occasional Papers, No. 6 (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1957), p. 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

Hamilton sees an identity of Lord and Spirit, but only from the standpoint of faith. "The pattern of redemptive action is: from the Lord, through the Spirit, to the believer."⁴⁵

W. H. Thomas, commenting on the same verse and the connection between Lord and Spirit, writes, "And yet with all this intimacy of association they are never absolutely identified; they are distinguished and yet united; united and yet distinguished."⁴⁶

Werner Kramer points out that the pneuma in verse 6 "describes the quality of the new covenant." Paul could also have said, "'Now the Lord is the new covenant.' For Paul is concerned to demonstrate the real connection which exists between the Lord and the new covenant."⁴⁷ Kramer is a bit extreme here, but he is helpful in showing that verse 17 is "not a mere aside, but is directly related to the whole train of thought in this chapter."⁴⁸ He makes the matter clearer by pointing out that

Verse 17a refers primarily and simply to the fact that the Lord and the Spirit belong together. Both belong to the new covenant dispensation in which hope, boldness and liberty hold sway. . . . This means that Lord and Spirit are not simply identical.⁴⁹

Against those opponents who taught that the pneuma was to be experienced only by those who observed the Torah, Paul sets the pneuma in opposition to the gramma, underscoring what he said through a rhetorical question

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶W. H. Thomas, The Holy Spirit of God (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 35.

⁴⁷Kramer, p. 166.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

in Gal. 3:2, "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?" In the words of Ulonska, "Verbinden die Gegner den Geist mit dem Buchstaben, so Paulus mit dem Kyrios."⁵⁰ The point is that the Spirit is no longer experienced through observance of the Torah, but through faith in Christ, the crucified One. "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

Verse 18 expands the perspective from the Apostle, who is commissioned and qualified to be a minister of the new covenant, to all Christians, "And we all with face unveiled, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Not only Moses can now approach the Lord with an unveiled face, but all Christians can behold and reflect the glory of the Lord in their lives and on their faces. The verb katoptrizō is found only here in the New Testament and carries the meaning in the middle voice of looking at something in a reflection or a mirror.⁵¹ They are transfigured (metamorphoumetha) into tēn autēn eikona, the same likeness; namely, the likeness of the Lord, apo doxēs eis doxan, from glory into glory, or from one degree of glory to another. All this comes apo Kyriou pneumatos, from the Lord who is the Spirit, or the Spirit of the Lord.⁵²

⁵⁰Ulonska, XXVI, 387.

⁵¹BAG, pp. 425-426; Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, editors, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 929; James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1952), p. 338.

⁵²Both are possible translations of Kyriou Pneumatōs.

It is strange that Paul did not use the story of the Transfiguration of Christ here (unless he did not know it) with its reference to Moses and the transfigured face of Jesus.

The translation of the final phrase of this verse is an insoluble problem. It may be translated variously as "the Lord, the Spirit" or "the Lord, who is the Spirit," indicating an appositive relationship. Or if one genitive is dependent on the other, it may be rendered "the Lord who sends the Spirit" or "the Spirit of the Lord" or "the Lord of the Spirit."⁵³ In view of the identification made in verse 17a, the RSV's translation, "the Lord who is the Spirit," is undoubtedly the most desirable translation. However the phrase is translated, it surely indicates the very close connection which exists for Paul between Kyrios and pneuma.

In 1 Cor. 6:17 Paul also indicates a connection between Kyrios and pneuma, but a more subtle one, "But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him," Ho de kollōmenos toi kyriōi hen pneuma estin. This statement is part of a pericope (1 Cor. 6:12-20) in which Paul is warning against porneia (prostitution, unchastity, immorality, fornication). The exact sense in which Paul uses the word is uncertain. Verses 15-16, however, make it clear that one form of immoral behavior at Corinth was sex relations with prostitutes, especially the cultic

⁵³ F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted from the 9th-10th German edition by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 250.

prostitutes of the temple of Aphrodite with its 1000 hierodules.⁵⁴ It was undoubtedly a Gnostic element in Corinth which claimed, as in 1 Cor. 6:12, Panta moi exestin, all things are permissible to me. Behind this statement lies the Gnostic assumption that physical acts are unimportant, since they do not affect the real self.⁵⁵ Schmithals maintains that:

in Corinth "panta moi exestin" means, "Everything is permissible for me, who in possession of Gnosis have exousia over the demons," a principle which the Gnostic uttered and practiced with respect to the "deeds of the flesh."⁵⁶

Paul appears to accept the panta moi exestin for the sake of argument, but with a different twist. Christian freedom is altogether different from the Gnostic brand. "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful." The Christian has freedom, but he is not interested simply in what he can get away with. He doesn't ask the Pharisaic question "Exestin?" with regard to every situation of life. He is not under nomos, and the question of exestin is a nomistic one. The Christian lives by a different criterion. How can I live out my existence in the pneuma? How can I best live as Christ's member? How can I show love and build up the body of Christ? "All things are lawful to me, but I will not be enslaved by anything." Paul knows that freedom can be lost

⁵⁴Friedrich Hauck and Siegfried Schulz, "Pornē," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, VI, 582.

⁵⁵Clarence T. Craig, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," IB, X, 73.

⁵⁶Walter Schmithals, Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians, translated from the German by John E. Stealy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1971), p. 231.

if it is misused. Sin can be the worst taskmaster of all (Rom. 6:12). Paul warns the Galatians, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:13). But Paul's clinching argument is in verses 15-20,

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

The criterion here is not nomos, but the fact that the Christian's body is a member of Christ. The question is not exestin? but sumpherei?

Being one pneuma with the Lord is the antithesis to being one soma with a prostitute. Kramer says that the expression hen pneuma is used here "because the 'body' of the Lord belongs wholly to the sphere of the Spirit. His mode of existence is entirely 'pneumatic'."⁵⁷ The Christian's body is a member of Christ. His body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). In 1 Cor. 3:16 the entire community is referred to as the temple in which God's Spirit dwells. Here it is pointed out that this is true of each individual Christian as well. Paul can speak of the Christian as intimately related or connected to Christ and also as the dwelling place of the Spirit. In fact, the pneuma is the means through which the exalted Lord is experienced in the life of the Christian. The Lord lives and works in the individual Christian, as well as in the church as community, through His Spirit.

⁵⁷ Kramer, p. 168. Infra, pp. 37-38.

Another close connection between pneuma and Christ is in 1 Cor. 15:45, where Paul declares that Christ, the last Adam, by His resurrection became pneuma zōopoion. This is in contrast to the first Adam, who became psychēn zōsan. Then follows a series of attributions in which the first Adam is designated psychikos while the new Adam (Christ) is pneumatikos. The preceding verses point up the contrast. On the one hand is that which is perishable, dishonorable, and weak; on the other hand is that which is imperishable, honorable, and powerful. The passage points out that Christ belongs to the sphere of pneuma.⁵⁸ The verbal connection between Christ and pneuma is at least clear enough here to indicate again that for Paul the risen Lord can sometimes be described with the word pneuma.

Jesus Christ is connected with the pneuma again in Rom. 1:4, where Paul states that Jesus Christ was "designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness (pneuma hagiōsynēs) by his resurrection from the dead." Christ is not identified with pneuma here, but there is a close connection between His sonship to God and the Spirit of holiness. The term pneuma hagiōsynēs is used nowhere else in the New Testament. The kata pneuma hagiōsynēs in verse 4 is parallel to the kata sarka in verse 3. Christ was descended from David kata sarka but designated Son of God in power kata pneuma hagiōsynēs. Schweizer interprets this to mean "that Jesus Christ is the Son of David in His carnal existence and the Son of God in His spiritual existence."⁵⁹ For this passage "shows

⁵⁸Cf. 1 Cor. 2 and 3, where the mature believer is described as pneumatikos rather than psychikos (2:14) or sarkinos (3:1).

⁵⁹Schweizer, VI, 417.

that even before Paul pneuma denotes the heavenly sphere or its substance, and that Paul for his part adopts this understanding."⁶⁰ Schweizer sees a similar contrast between spheres of sarx and pneuma in John 3:6 and 6:63.⁶¹ He points as a decisive argument to 1 Tim. 3:16, where in Chiastic arrangement an event in the earthly sphere has been put together three times with an event in the heavenly sphere.⁶² Ferdinand Hahn cautions that although kata sarka and kata pneuma hagiōsynēs are to be considered the earthly and heavenly modes of existence, the latter is not to be understood "in the sense of a heavenly divine 'nature.'"⁶³ Nor is it a contrast between corporeality and non-corporeality. Rather "it is solely a question of the contrast between the sphere of weakness, transience, sinfulness, and the sphere of divine power, life and salvation."⁶⁴ This means that "In His heavenly mode of existence the One born of the seed of David and risen from the dead has taken over the authoritative function of the Son of God and has assumed the office of Messiah."⁶⁵ And this "has taken place, not under earthly conditions, but under the exclusive operation and within the unlimited rule of the spirit of divine

⁶⁰ Ibid., VI, 416.

⁶¹ Eduard Schweizer, "Röm. 1,3f. und der Gegensatz von Fleisch und Geist vor und bei Paulus," Evangelische Theologie, XV (1955), 569.

⁶² Ibid., XV, 570.

⁶³ Ferdinand Hahn, The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity, translated from the German by Harold Knight and George Ogg (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 249.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 249-250.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 250.

holiness."⁶⁶ Hahn's interpretation gives the clearest understanding we have found concerning the contrasting spheres of pneuma and of sarx.

The relationship of Christ to the pneuma is made even clearer in Rom. 8:9-11:

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

In verse 9 of this passage the believer is described as being en pneumatī and not en sarki, "if the pneuma theou really dwells in you." The relationship is reversible. You are in the Spirit if the Spirit is in you. And anyone "who does not have the pneuma Christou, does not really belong to him," that is to Christ. Verse 10 continues, "But if Christ is in you . . . , your spirits are alive. . . ." In verse 11 it is the pneuma tou egeirantos ton Iēsoun ek nekron who "dwells in you." And finally "your mortal bodies" will be given life dia tou enoikountos autou pneumatos en hymīn. A number of expressions are interchangeable. The Spirit dwells in you, and you dwell in the Spirit. Having the Spirit of Christ and belonging to Christ mean that Christ is in you. The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. And the one who raised Jesus will give life to your bodies through his Spirit which dwells in you. Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the one who raised Christ, and the Spirit of God are all interchangeable terms here

⁶⁶ Ibid.

and are all used in the same way. Christ dwells in the Christian through the Spirit. The Lord and the Spirit are so closely related that it means the same thing to have Christ dwelling in you and to have His Spirit dwelling in you. You cannot have one without the other.

Paul's idea of pneuma is altogether different from that of the Gnostic, for whom pneuma is a divine spark deep within a person. Gnostic redemption is primarily the awakening of that spark. For Paul there is no pneuma apart from the Kyrios. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead there is no pneuma zōopoioun. The giving of life to the believer is not an inner awakening but a creative act of the Risen Lord by His pneuma.⁶⁷ In that sense the Kyrios is pneuma, not in the sense of identity, but of function. When the believer experiences the life-giving power of the Kyrios, he is experiencing the pneuma zōopoioun (1 Cor. 15:45). And where believers are alive with the pneuma, they are empowered to confess KYRIOS IĒSOUS (1 Cor. 12:2-3).

Paul knows Christ as Kyrios, for Christ was designated as the Son of God in power kata pneuma. And it is in the realm of pneuma that Paul knows the Lord Christ. This does not mean that Paul ignores the earthly Jesus who was crucified. He makes it perfectly clear in 1 Cor. 1:23, that hēmeis de kērussomen Christon estauromenon, "We preach Christ crucified." The Christ, then, is identical with Jesus of Nazareth, who was a descendant of David kata sarka (Rom. 1:3). It is only through the pneuma that the Christian is empowered to recognize that Jesus of Nazareth is Kyrios: KYRIOS IĒSOUS (1 Cor. 12:3). The Gnostic opponents

⁶⁷Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary, VI, 420.

in 1 Corinthians cursed the historical Jesus: ANATHEMA IĒSOUS (1 Cor 12:3).⁶⁸

This is why Paul is compelled to point out that no one could curse Jesus by the Spirit's guidance. Paul insists that the crucified Jesus is Christ and Lord. The crucified Christ is the heart and center of his proclamation. Walter Schmithals maintains that 2 Cor. 5:16 is a Gnostic gloss which slipped into the original manuscript of Paul's letter.⁶⁹ The verse, "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer," would fit into the Gnostic system of those who curse the crucified Jesus. Since, however, the verse makes sense as a statement of Paul in the context of 2 Corinthians, it need not be considered a gloss.

Paul states that he no longer regards Christ from a human point of view. He is no longer offended by the cross. Before his conversion he considered Christ kata sarka, according to human standards, by which the cross is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23). Paul once regarded "Christ's lowly life and shameful crucifixion as proof that he was disowned by God and so should be rejected by men."⁷⁰ His point of view was changed on the road to Damascus, where Paul encountered Christ as Lord. Those who come to the conviction that Christ "died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:15), change their point of view about Christ and no longer measure Him by human standards. Since

⁶⁸Schmithals, p. 127.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 302-315.

⁷⁰Filson, X, 337.

this happened to Paul, he is no longer ashamed of the cross. He lives under the cross in weakness (2 Cor. 13:4). He glories in the cross (Gal. 6:14). It is a whole new way of life for him, so that now he can boast of his weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:9-10). For Paul now lives in Christ, and he has become a new creation (kainē ktisis). He is an ambassador of this crucified Christ through God, who has reconciled the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19-20).

The activity of the Kyrios within the church is often similar or identical to that of the pneuma. Rom. 8:9-11 indicated that the indwelling of Christ and that of His pneuma is substantially the same thing, that the believer experiences the power of the exalted Christ as pneuma. The idea of pneuma for Paul, "is the idea of a power into whose sphere man has come and which thus shapes his phronein, his peripatein, his hypotassesthai tōi nomōi tou Theou,"⁷¹ according to Schweizer. And Grundmann writes that "In the proclamation of Paul Christ is present as pneuma and demonstrates Himself as the dynamis of God on which is based the new existence of man by faith in this proclamation."⁷² Käsemann says that "Pneuma is for Paul . . . the power of the Resurrection because it is the power of the Risen One."⁷³

⁷¹ Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary, VI, 433.

⁷² Walter Grundmann, "Dynamis," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1964), II, 312.

⁷³ Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," Essays on New Testament Themes, translated from the German by W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964), p. 68.

Schweizer says:

This power is not anonymous or unknown. It is identical with the exalted Lord once this Lord is considered, not in Himself, but in His work towards the community. . . . Often pneuma is clearly impersonal (1 C. 12:13; 1 Th. 5:19), and it can alternate with sophia or dynamis (1 C. 2:4f., 13).⁷⁴

Theos, Kyrios, and pneuma are often used together by Paul, "because their encounter with the believer is one and the same event."⁷⁵ In 1 Cor. 12:4-6 the three terms are used together as parallels, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same pneuma; and there are varieties of service, but the same Kyrios; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same Theos who inspires them all in every one." The work of God, Lord, and Spirit are identical and interchangeable. It is all the same to say that the believer experiences God, or the Lord, or the Spirit working in Him. There are numerous other passages in which God, Lord, and Spirit, or parallel terms, are used in the same context, but they are not usually so parallel in function as they are in 1 Cor. 12:4-6. In Gal. 4:6, "God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts," the terms Theos, pneuma, and huios are used in such a way as to show that their work on the believer's behalf is basically identical.

As indicated above, pneuma can alternate with dynamis. The two terms are not synonymous, but they are parallel and found in the same contexts. The pneuma can be described on the basis of some passages as the powerful, life-giving presence of God as experienced by the Christian. By the same token, Paul states in 1 Cor. 1:24 that Christ is the dynamis and the sophia

⁷⁴Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary, VI, 433.

⁷⁵Ibid., VI, 434.

of God. In 1 Cor. 2:4-5 Paul emphasizes that his message came "in demonstration of pneuma and dynamis" so "that your faith might not rest in the sophia of men but in the dynamis of God." The normal object of faith for Paul is Jesus (Rom. 3:26), but here it is to rest on the power of God. Jesus is identical to the power of God, which is parallel to the Spirit of God. When the Kyrios works powerfully within His church, he is experienced as pneuma. Let it be repeated here that pneuma and Kyrios are not identical in substance,⁷⁶ but Paul presents them as being parallel or even identical in function, according to the believer's experience. Paul is not interested here in the ontological question but the existential.

⁷⁶By "substance" we do not mean the "substantia" of the later church's Trinitarian formulae.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

The pneuma is the Spirit of freedom and creativity within the Church. This is implied in 2 Cor. 3:6, where Paul states that the pneuma gives life, but the gramma kills. In the New Covenant of the pneuma, the Christian is no longer under the Law. He is free from the written code, which only kills and can never make alive.

Freedom from the palaiotēs grammatos, however, is douleuein en kainotēti pneumatōs. The pathēmata ton hamartion to which the Law gave rise are no longer to be fulfilled, R. 7:5f. The righteous demand of the Law will be met in those who no longer live kata sarka but kata pneuma, R. 8:4.¹

The nomos can only condemn. It cannot empower anyone to do what it demands. What the Law demands is righteousness, for it is God's Law, but it has no power to make alive. It leads to more and more sin and finally to death. The gramma kills, for "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. . . . I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; the very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me" (Rom. 7:7,9,10). But "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). "To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6b). These quotes from Romans express basically the same idea which Paul expresses in 2 Cor. 3:6 with the short formula, "The gramma kills, but the pneuma gives life."

¹Eduard Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1968), VI, 430-431.

The thought is expanded in 2 Cor. 3:17b: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" ou de to pneuma kyriou, eleutheria. The Christian no longer answers to the Law, which failed to make him alive, but he responds to the pneuma, which can and does make alive. And what the Law could not make him do by its righteous demands, the pneuma freely moves him to do without any threat or restraint. Whereas he responded to the law by doing precisely that which was forbidden (Rom. 7:7), now that he is set free from the nomos, he responds to the promptings of the pneuma by doing the will of God. He does precisely what the Law demanded in the first place, indeed he does even more than the Law ever demanded. The pneuma moves the Christian by giving him gifts, by producing fruit in him. And "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). What the Law could not accomplish by demanding, "Thou shalt love!" the pneuma accomplishes by producing the fruit of love. And in 1 Corinthians 13 Paul points out that love is the greatest of the Spirit's gifts.

The freedom in the pneuma shows itself in other areas of life, particularly in the Corinthian congregation. Worship is conducted in freedom and spontaneity. Von Campenhausen writes that "even worship is still completely unorganized, and subject to no special control. Paul himself has to intervene with his admonitions in this department--to check, for example, the practice of beginning the communal meal in disorder."² In

²Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, translated by J. A. Baker (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 66.

1 Corinthians 14 Paul urges the Corinthians to conduct themselves at worship in such a way that the whole Body is edified. Many are using the gift of tongues in their public services at Corinth. Paul reminds them that a stranger will not be able to understand what is going on. Neither will the other members of the congregation be built up by someone's glossalalia. Paul does not wish to quench the Spirit, but he asks them to strive for those gifts of the Spirit which will build up the congregation. In public worship the gift of prophecy is much more useful than the gift of strange tongues (1 Cor. 14:4). If tongues are to be used, "let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn" (14:27). And then it should only be used if an interpreter is present (14:28). Prophesying should also be done "one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. . . . For God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (14:31,33). Paul attempts to bring some order into the situation, but still allows for considerable freedom. Regarding their disorder at the Lord's Supper "The solitary piece of advice which he is able to give on this point is, 'Wait for one another.'"³ As the Christian is free from the Law, so he is also free from any prescribed ritual in the Pauline congregation, only let things be done decently and in order (14:40). The only real guide for worship is the Spirit. Paul is compelled occasionally to give specific instruction and guidance, but he keeps this at a minimum.

In the matter of church order and ecclesiastical structure, there is also freedom in the Pauline congregation. As Christ's ambassador to the congregation (2 Cor. 5:20), Paul gives guidance regarding the sundry

³Ibid.

problems they experience in day to day life. He writes letters to clear up misunderstandings, to answer personal concerns and questions of casuistry which have arisen during his absence, yet Paul does not wish to become a pope. He tells the Corinthians "not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith" (2 Cor. 1:24). He similarly plays down his own role in 1 Cor. 3:5, "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each." There are no human authorities within the Pauline congregation in its ideal state. There are only various types of ministry. And these are dependent on the gifts which the Spirit gives individually to each as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11).

In the Church "freedom" is a basic controlling principle; for the Spirit of Christ, which is the giver of freedom, urges men on not to independence and self-assertion but to loving service. It is love which is the true organizing and unifying force within the Church, and which creates in her a paradoxical form of order diametrically opposed to all natural systems of organization.⁴

The Spirit gives many different gifts, and all of them are to be used in service in the church. No one's gift is to be considered less honorable than anyone else's. "On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor" (1 Cor. 12:22-23). All gifts are for the common good (12:7). Some have the gift of the utterance of wisdom or the utterance of knowledge (12:8); another has the gift of faith and another of gifts of healing (12:9); another has the gift of miracles or prophecy, or the ability to distinguish between

⁴Ibid., p. 58.

spirits. Another has the gift of tongues or the interpretation of tongues (12:10). Not all have the same gifts, but all are to be used in service toward the whole body.

By the bestowing of such gifts in the church through His Spirit God has appointed various persons to various ministries. First, there are "apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (12:28). The first three are those which especially build up the spiritual life of the congregation.⁵ Prophets and teachers were undoubtedly the ones given the "task to continue within the individual congregation the work which the apostle had first begun on a wider scale."⁶ The teachers were concerned with handing on the traditions they had received about Christ and also with interpreting the Old Testament. The prophets would hand on direct revelations from the Spirit of Christ himself.⁷ Prophecy is the gift which Paul said the Christians should strive for above all others (1 Cor. 14:1). "In Paul's thought, therefore, the congregation is not just another constitutional organization with grades and classes, but a unitary, living cosmos of free, spiritual gifts, which serve and complement one another."⁸

This picture of congregational life is an idealized one. In reality there were, of course, people who, because of their particular gifts, tried to lord it over the others who did not have the same gifts. If

⁵Ibid., p. 60.

⁶Ibid., p. 61.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 64.

this were not the case, Paul would not have needed to write most of 1 Corinthians. The ideal he describes in 1 Corinthians 12 is the one toward which they should strive. It is the way things ought to be within the Body of Christ, within the congregation where Christ dwells through His Spirit. Paul has to warn the Corinthians "that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another" (1 Cor. 4:6). He needs to remind them that their gifts are gifts and nothing to boast about: "What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" (1 Cor. 4:7). And in a sterner vein he warns, "Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power" (1 Cor. 4:18-19).

CHAPTER V

THE PNEUMA AS AUTHORITY

Having spoken of the freedom within the Pauline congregation, we must qualify this by acknowledging that there is also a definite authority. The Christian was not given the license to do whatever might strike his fancy. To gratify the desires of the flesh (5:16) is an abuse of Christian freedom. A man who has committed incest should be delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5). Those who lead immoral lives are excluded from the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). This is not based on the standard of nomos but on the believer's own baptism (1 Cor. 6:11) which has removed him from the realm of immorality. The authority in the New Testament church is an authority based on pneuma, not on the written code. The pneuma moves within the church with the authority of the exalted Lord. In the farewell discourses Jesus tells the disciples, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13-14). And in another chapter, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). The pneuma functions as norm and power in the Christian's life. For the believer is called to walk pneumati (Gal. 5:16). Such walking by the norm of pneuma will mean a life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. "To live by the power and

according to the norm of the Spirit is thus to live in freedom from the nomos and wholly by Christos, charis, the stauros. It is thus to be free for agape."¹

The pneuma's authority over the congregation is exercised by Paul himself. Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ by divine calling (1 Cor. 1:1). He has a special position of precedence in the churches which he has founded, since he is their father in Christ. He also feels free to offer his advice to the Roman congregation which he did not found and had not visited in person.

The starting point for Paul as he asserted his authority was the fact of his apostleship.² This fact is his own personal sign of God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10), for Paul knows that he is "unfit to be called an apostle" (15:9), because of his pre-Christian activity against the church of God. As an apostle Paul is independent of all human claims and authorities.³ He points out to the Galatians that he did not receive his Gospel from men, but it was "a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:12). When God revealed His Son to Paul so that he might preach Him to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16), Paul "did not confer with flesh and blood"; he did not hold a conference with the Jerusalem apostles to learn from them the substance of the Gospel (Gal. 1:16-17). After three years he went to Jerusalem and

¹ Eduard Schweizer, "Pneuma," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1968), VI, 431.

² Hans von Campenhausen, Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, translated by J. A. Baker (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 31-32.

³ Ibid., p. 33.

visited Cephas for a two-week period and saw none of the other apostles except James (Gal. 1:18-19). Fourteen years later he went back and became acquainted with the rest of the apostles. They gave him the right hand of fellowship and had nothing to add to Paul's Law-free proclamation (Gal. 2:1-10). Later at Antioch Paul did not hesitate to stand up to Cephas when the Gospel was at stake (Gal. 2:11-14). Paul is independent of the authority of men, but still he is eager to be associated with the rest of the apostles, and so submits his Gospel message to the assembled group at Jerusalem, and he is proud of the fact that they approve of what he is doing among the Gentiles.⁴ They acknowledge him as entrusted with the Gospel to the uncircumcised (Gal. 2:1-10).

Paul's apostolate began in his experience on the Damascus Road, when his life was radically changed, and suddenly he was no longer a persecutor of Jesus Christ and His Church, but he was an apostle of Christ. Yet Paul knew that this was in the mind of God from eternity, and like Jeremiah, Paul was picked out already in his mother's womb (Gal. 1:15). In his unique position as Christ's apostle, Paul is answerable only to the Kyrios (1 Cor. 4:4-5). No congregation or any human court is qualified to judge him (1 Cor. 4:3). Paul is commissioned through Christ by God the Father (Gal. 1:1) rather than appointed or elected by men. He is called to be an apostle through the will of God (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1). Furthermore he is a slave (doulos) of Christ Jesus and is set apart for the Gospel of God (Rom. 1:1). It is proper that the congregations should look to him for guidance. And Paul gladly gives that guidance, as his

⁴Ibid.

letters witness, although at times he expresses his surprise and astonishment that they did not know better themselves (Gal. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:11; 5:1-2). He answers questions which the members have put to him in writing (1 Cor. 7:1). In 1 Corinthians wherever Paul opens a section of the letter with the preposition peri (7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1) he is taking up another question on which the Corinthians have asked his advice in a letter. He also gives advice and admonition on the basis of reports he has heard concerning specific problems in the congregation (1:11; 5:1). Sometimes it is not clear how Paul obtained his information, but he speaks concerning a situation which he knows to exist (1 Cor. 6:1-8,12-20; Gal. 1:6).

The character of Paul's advice is interesting. Sometimes he relies on his own "trustworthy" opinions (1 Cor. 7:25), which are partly conditioned by his belief that the Lord's return is very near (1 Cor. 7:26). He bolsters his arguments with quotations from the Old Testament (1 Cor. 9:8; 2 Cor. 6:16-18), with references to Old Testament narratives (1 Cor. 11:8-9), or to the Law (1 Cor. 14:34). He appeals to what is "natural" (1 Cor. 11:14) or to the prevailing custom in the churches (1 Cor. 11:16). He refers to the teaching of Christ (1 Cor. 7:10-11). He makes use of sacred tradition, handing it on faithfully (1 Cor. 11:23-25; 15:3-5), and applying it to concrete problems in the church (1 Cor. 11:17-34; 15:12). He quotes early creeds and hymns and formulations (Rom. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Cor. 12:3) which scholars have identified and analyzed. Schweizer's analysis of the formulation in Rom. 1:3-4 is an indication of the way in which Paul could alter a creedal statement in accordance with his Gospel. This Christological formula which developed in the

early Christian community combined

a Christology according to which Jesus is instituted the Son of God only by exaltation with the official view, taken over from Judaism, that Jesus is the earthly Son of David. Paul corrects this by putting huiou autou before the whole formula.⁵

Paul also does not hesitate to use ethical material from pagan sources. He makes use of Hellenistic virtue and vice catalogs to describe the difference between the life in the sarx and the life in the pneuma (Gal. 5:19-23). He does not simply use such parenetic materials at random but selects those elements which particularly fit the situation he is confronting.⁶ Paul uses the best of what he finds from a variety of sources in order to give guidance to the Christian congregations in his correspondence. He does not mean to subject them to a new nomos or to lord it over their faith. On the other hand, they need specific guidelines at times to know what is or is not consistent with a life en Christo or en Pneumati. And as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul judges himself to be qualified to give such advice and guidance, as one who has the pneuma (1 Cor. 7:40). Paul, however, is also bound by the Gospel he proclaims, and if he should ever teach a contrary Gospel, he will be accursed (Gal. 1:8). For the Gospel he has already proclaimed is not man's Gospel but was revealed by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12).

There are others who claim to have the pneuma, claiming to be pneumatikoi, but they live as psychikoi or sarkinoi (1 Cor. 3:1-4). Some claim to be apostles but are really pseudapostoloi (2 Cor. 11:13),

⁵ Schweizer, VI, 417.

⁶ Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1968), pp. 81-92.

who are "disguising themselves as apostles of Christ." These imposters acquire the air of hyperlian apostoloi (11:5,11), an expression which even linguistically brings out the impossible nature of such apostles, since an apostolos . . . of Jesus already has a position which is quite incomparable.⁷

They do not understand that it is in the nature of apostleship that the apostle must suffer (2 Cor. 11:23-29), that he must be weak for Christ (2 Cor. 11:30; 12:9-10), and that he must recognize that he is really not "anything" (1 Cor. 3:7). In the words of Jesus, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44).

The false apostles are false because they preach another Jesus than the one Paul preaches; they claim to impart a pneuma which is a false or different one, and they proclaim another Gospel from the one which the Corinthians had accepted from Paul (2 Cor. 11:4). They violate the principle for prophecy which Paul enunciates in Rom. 12:6, that if anyone claims to be a prophet, he should exercise the gift of prophecy "in proportion to our faith," which means it is to be "in agreement with the faith."⁸ Prophets, teachers, and anyone else who teaches God's message within the church must always stand "within the community, and therefore in subjection to the testimony which they have received from the apostle."⁹ Perhaps it is for this reason that Paul also numbers among the spiritual

⁷Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "Apostolos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1964), I, 445.

⁸Von Campenhausen, p. 62.

⁹Ibid.

gifts "the ability to distinguish between spirits" (1 Cor. 12:10). When the prophets speak within the worship service, the others are to "weigh what is said" (1 Cor. 14:29). And if any prophet does not recognize that Paul is writing a command of the Lord, he is obviously not a true prophet (1 Cor. 14:37-38).

Ernst Käsemann says that for Paul "the test of a genuine charisma lies not in the fact that something supernatural occurs but in the use which is made of it."¹⁰ Paul's opponents have nothing to boast about, for "No spiritual endowment has value, rights or privileges on its own account. It is validated only by the service it renders."¹¹ Since many claim to have the pneuma, "Paul distinguishes between pneuma and pneuma, himself tests the spirits, as he requires every Christian to do and thus gives proof of the Spirit and of power."¹² Paul attempts in 1 Corinthians "to bring the enthusiasts back from the heavenly places of their own imagination down to earth, to the theologia crucis et viatorum, to the agapē which is always ready and eager to minister."¹³

Against a background of opposition from "false apostles" Paul writes 2 Corinthians to defend his own apostolic authority. Although Paul may lack certain qualifications from human standards, he is not inferior to the "superlative apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5), for God has qualified him

¹⁰ Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," Essays on New Testament Themes, translated from the German by W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964), p. 67.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 83.

¹³ Ibid.

to be a minister of the New Covenant in the pneuma. As apostle and diakonos of Christ, Paul has hope and boldness, for his Lord is the Spirit who gives freedom, and through this Lord and as His ambassador Paul has authority to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified One, who is the substance of the New Covenant in the Spirit.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis has discussed St. Paul's theology of the pneuma, one of the basic concepts in his writings. In 2 Corinthians 3, especially the seventeenth verse this theology was brought to a climax with the Pauline assertion "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." In that verse we noted that the terms "Lord" and "Spirit" are both identified and differentiated. This indicates a close connection between the Lord and the Spirit without saying that they are ontologically identical. The pneuma, we concluded, is inseparably connected with the power and presence of the exalted Kyrios within His church. In the experience of the believer the Lord is experienced as the Spirit.

The Lord, who is experienced as Spirit, exercises authority within the church. He does this by giving gifts to men, so that they may function in various ministries. A basic ministry within the New Testament Church is that of apostle. Paul places himself in this category, claims to have the pneuma and to be specially commissioned by the Lord himself. He speaks for the Lord, providing guidance for the congregations committed to his care. Paul has authority and uses it to give specific guidance to the congregations and to rebuke them when they are not living in accordance with the Gospel he proclaimed to them. At the same time, he calls himself simply a servant of Christ, who is not anything without the Lord. He proclaims a Gospel of freedom in the pneuma, being always ready to point out that freedom is not license to live according to the flesh, but it is a freedom to exercise the pneuma's fruits.

Much has, of course, been written on the Spirit in Paul's theology. And no unanimity has ever been reached on the subject. No thesis can hope to exhaust the topic or to treat it from all possible angles. We have limited this thesis to those aspects suggested by 2 Cor. 3:17, concentrating on the relationship between Lord and Spirit, the authority exercised by the Lord who is experienced through His Spirit, and the freedom which reigns wherever the Spirit of the Lord is. The relationship between Kyrios and pneuma needs to be studied in greater depth and defined with greater clarity. The relationship between the gramma which kills and the pneuma which makes alive also needs to be enunciated more exactly. On the subject of the pneuma as authority the Pauline view of the Spirit can be profitably compared with that presented in the Book of Acts, the Pastorals, and the Johannine Corpus.

Studying Paul's view of the Holy Spirit is rewarding because it is so closely related to the rest of his theology. It involves the student in most of the great themes of Pauline thought. Rich and meaningful concepts like freedom, law, faith, the cross, the resurrection, the Christology cannot be avoided by one who delves into Paul's pneumatology. It is profitable because it opens up many new possibilities for further investigation. And finally it leads the scholar to reexamine his own life in the Spirit and his own church in the light of the beginnings of the Church of Jesus Christ.

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Bible, Holy. King James Version.

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